



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Holtz Educational Center believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The district, schools, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. Bullying is contrary to our school beliefs, state and federal laws and the policies of the school districts we serve. Part of a healthy environment is the freedom to openly disagree. With this freedom comes the responsibility to discuss and resolve disagreements with respect for the rights and opinions of others. Holtz Educational Center will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. No staff or student shall intimidate, harass, or bully another staff or student through words or actions. The bullying policy described here, aligns with other Holtz Educational Center policies and will be enforced by all school personnel.

Prior to the start of each school year, Holtz Educational Center provides the entire school community including all existing and newly hired school personnel, students and parents/guardians, with the school handbook, which includes written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Director and School Principal, is documented in the Parent/Student Handbooks and posted on the school website as well as displayed with the other school policies and procedures within the building. Each bullying policy that is adopted includes the engagement of a variety of school stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians.

### Definitions:

- A. “Bullying”, including “cyber-bullying”, is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
  - a. placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
  - b. causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;

- c. substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
  - d. substantially interfering with the student's or students' substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- B. Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Reporting:

- A. All staff members are required to report any instance of bullying or retaliation that the staff member witnesses, or becomes aware of, **immediately** to either the Director or School Principal. The requirement to report the incident to the Director or School Principal does not limit the authority of the staff member to intervene or respond to an incident in a way that is consistent with school policies and procedures in place related to behavior management and discipline. This policy applies to students on or off school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during all instructional and non-instructional activities held throughout the school day, and during school-sponsored activities.
- B. Holtz Educational Center will continue to:
- a. include a copy of the Bullying/Retaliation Reporting Form in the Parent/Student Handbooks,
  - b. ensure that the Bullying/Retaliation Reporting Form are available in the school's main office, as well as any other locations determined by the Director and School Principal, and
  - c. include a link for anonymous reporting of bullying on our school's website
- C. Reporting by Staff
- a. Any staff member that encounters an interaction that may be construed as bullying will first be asked to try to address the incident between the target(s)/victim(s) and aggressor(s)/perpetrator(s). The staff member is expected to immediately report the incident to either the Director or the School Principal so that the situation can be investigated.
  - b. The report should include as much of the following information as possible:
    - Date, time and location of the incident,
    - Individuals involved and their roles (e.g. target/victim, aggressor/perpetrator, bystander/witnesses),
    - Details of the incident,

- Information about if/how the incident is part of a pattern of bullying, harassment or retaliation (e.g. prior documented incidents), and
  - Any actions taken by staff to defuse the situation.
- c. When first reporting the incident to the Director or School Principal, it may be given orally or via email. A formal report must be completed using the Bullying/Retaliation Reporting Form and submitted as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours after the initial report of the incident.

D. Reporting by Students, Parents/guardians, and non-Holtz employees

- a. While school staff are required to submit a Bullying/Retaliation Reporting Form directly to the Director or School Principal, students, parents/guardians, or any other individuals who are not employed by the school are not required to complete a Bullying/Retaliation Reporting Form in order to report an incident or concern and, unlike Holtz employees, can remain anonymous.
- b. Students, parents/guardians or other individuals who are not employed by the school, may choose to report incidents of bullying/retaliation through a variety of ways and are able to choose whether or not to share their contact information with the school. To share concerns related to bullying/retaliation with the Director or School Principal, non-school employees can submit information either in written form by mail or email, in-person, or via telephone:

Melinda Pieniazek, Director  
[mpieniazek@holtzeducationalcenter.org](mailto:mpieniazek@holtzeducationalcenter.org)  
630-541-6441; Ext: 2

Robin Biggs, School Principal  
[rbiggs@holtzeducationalcenter.org](mailto:rbiggs@holtzeducationalcenter.org)  
630-541-6441; Ext: 6

Bullying/retaliation can also be reported and submitted anonymously through the school's website through the link below, or by notifying the school by using the Bullying link found under Current Students on the website:

<https://www.holtzeducationalcenter.org/current-students.html>

If the Bullying/Retaliation Reporting Form is not used by students, parents/guardians or other individuals to report bullying or retaliation, then the school staff to whom the initial communication is made, would be responsible for completing the form and submitting it to the Director or School Principal.

#### Privacy and Procedures:

- A. Consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Director or School Principal will contact parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying no later than 24 hours after the initial report was made, and discuss with them, as appropriate, the availability of district supports available to their children through their resident district (e.g., social work services, counseling, school psychological services) as well as other interventions, and restorative measures that are available through Holtz Educational Center.
  - a. Notice to Parents or Guardians - Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Director or School Principal or a designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target(s)/victim(s) and the aggressor(s)/perpetrator(s) (or the aggressor(s)/perpetrator(s) if he/she/they is/are school staff) by telephone of this and of the procedures for responding to it. At this time, the Director, School Principal, or designee will provide the parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying information about the investigation and provide them with an opportunity to meet with the Director or School Principal to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations.
  - b. Notice to Student, Student's Resident District/ Another District - If the reported incident involves aggressor(s)/perpetrator(s) or target(s)/victim(s) from different school districts, the Director or School Principal will promptly notify the LEA assigned to Holtz) of the incident so that each school may be informed and take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations.
  - c. Notice to Law Enforcement - At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Director or School Principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor/perpetrator, the principal or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

## Investigation

The process for investigating and intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- A. The Director and School Principal will contact the school's administrative team to implement the process for investigating whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction immediately upon learning of an incident of alleged bullying or retaliation has occurred. Furthermore, the Director or School Principal will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within their district of residence, at Holtz, and within the community in which they reside, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.
- B. Holtz Educational Center will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- C. The school will include school personnel with knowledge, experience, and training in bullying prevention in the investigation process.
- D. If the Director or School Principal is not able to be notified immediately after the incident of bullying occurred, then they should be notified as soon as possible after the report is received.
- E. The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of the investigation confidential.
- F. Staff who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.
- G. Any staff who witnesses or receives a complaint should use the Bullying/Retaliation Reporting Form to document the incident. *(Revised 2/2020.)*

## Reprisal/Retaliation

Holtz Educational Center prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and the consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

## **Prevention/Intervention**

- A. To ensure bullying does not occur on school campuses, Holtz Educational Center will provide staff development training in bullying prevention and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to build each school's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment
- B. Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in developmentally-appropriate and age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to skill remediation and disciplinary action.
- C. To prevent conflict, each school within Holtz Educational Center will incorporate social skills instruction including conflict resolution education and problem-solving techniques into the curriculum. This is an important step in promoting respect and acceptance, developing new ways of communicating, understanding, and accepting differing values and cultures within the school community and helps ensure a safe and healthy learning environment.
- D. Holtz Educational Center will provide training to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills students need to choose alternatives to self-destructive, violent behavior and dissolve interpersonal and intergroup conflict.
- E. The Director and School Principal will discuss with parents and the student's resident school district the interventions that can be used, and if necessary convene an IEP meeting to document individual, supports, strategies and interventions that can be provided to address bullying. These supports, strategies, and interventions may include supports that are available at both Holtz Educational Center as well as through their home district, and may include but are not limited to support from the school's BCBA, speech and language services, occupational therapy services, goals that target social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, teaching self-advocacy skills, social skills training, community-based services, school social work services, restorative measures.

## **Consequences and Results of Investigation(s)**

- A. Holtz Educational Center recognizes that students may require specialized instruction for bullying prevention, self-advocacy, social skills instruction, and problem-solving

instruction. Additional interventions that can be taken to address bullying will be determined by the students IEP team. Factors for determining consequences of bullying include:

- Age, development, and maturity levels of the parties involved
- Degree of harm (physical and/or emotional distress)
- Surrounding circumstances
- Nature and severity of the behavior(s)
- Incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
- Relationship between the parties involved
- Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred

- B. If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent of the student should contact the principal.
- C. Resources for identification, prevention, and recovery can be found on the school's website. For student's needing specialized instruction, this may be addressed via parent-teacher conference or during an IEP meeting. In addition, the student's home school may provide additional resources. (*Revised 2/2020.*)
- D. If the Director or School Principal determines that a false allegation of bullying or retaliation has been made, appropriate actions will be taken, and may include disciplinary actions for those incidents where the accuser is a student or school staff.

**Policy Evaluation Process:**

- A. To assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the school's bullying policy, Holtz Educational Center will collect and analyze data from any reported incidents of bullying related to the following:
- a. 1) The frequency of victimization.
  - b. 2) Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school.
  - c. 3) Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs.
  - d. 4) The types of bullying that are common or occurring.
  - e. 5) Bystander intervention or participation.
- B. All information derived from the evaluation process will be posted on the school website, taking care to ensure that all information shared publicly is done so in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 (b).

**Schedule for Review**

- A. This policy will be reviewed and re-evaluated at least once every two (2) years and be updated to reflect any necessary and appropriate revisions.