

AELPCS ANTI- BULLYING POLICY

Appletree Early Learning Public Charter School responds to the issue of bullying very seriously whether amongst children or adults, and has strict procedures that will be adhered to should there be any evidence within the school. AppleTree is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

What is bullying?

Bullying means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

1. May be based on a youth's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place or residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and
2. Can reasonably be predicted to:
 1. Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property;
 2. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth's physical or mental health;
 3. Substantially interfere with the youth's academic performance or attendance; or
 4. Substantially interfere with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Bullying includes actions taken by one or more people with the deliberate intention of hurting another person (in any of the above ways). This policy is designed to support the schools behavior policy, equal opportunities and anti discrimination policies.

Bullying is about a pre-meditated act, which relies on a stage of cognitive development in order to think the process through.

Aims and Objectives

- Bullying is wrong and is damaging to individual people. AppleTree PCS proactively implements policies and procedures to prevent this, by developing a school in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.
- Bullying is prohibited from all AELPCS school grounds and functions sponsored by AELPCS, including:
 - On any transportation provided by AELPCS (such as buses to field trips)
 - Through any electronic communication;
 - On an AELPCS campus

- With AELPCS property
- And/or to the extent that it interferes with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from AELPCS' services, activities, or privileges.
- We aim to deliver a safe and secure environment where all children can play and learn without fear or anxiety.
- This policy aims to produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying and staff have a responsibility to eradicate bullying in our schools.
- We do not tolerate any kind of bullying as stated above on any grounds, and support all parties involved to gain a full understanding of our school core values.

Code of Conduct and Consequences

[AppleTree](#) has developed universal school rules and language to help children understand behavioral expectations. All adults in the building reinforce these rules throughout the school day, creating a consistent, positive school culture. The first ECR unit, "Get Ready to Learn!", was designed to provide children with an introduction to the school rules, and targeted practice opportunities to begin internalizing the rules. It is helpful if families can adopt this language if they find it useful. The [AppleTree](#) school rules are listed below:

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Use your inside voice and be kind.
3. Stay in your own space.
4. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
5. Try your best!
6. Relax and enjoy learning.

[AELPCSAppleTree](#) teachers use the specific, universal, proactive strategies outlined below, as well as additional classroom management tools, to help children follow the school rules and develop appropriate school-behaviors.

1. Teachers and instructional staff use clear and concise language when delivering praise, reprimands or instructions.
2. Teachers explicitly teach all rules and procedures multiple times. During each instructional episode, children model and practice the targeted skill or behavior.
3. Teachers praise students' effort frequently to reward children for trying their best ("You are really paying attention to your friends" or "You are working so hard on your art project!").
4. Teachers implement an established series of consequences for children who are not following directions. The sequence includes:
 - a. A non-verbal reminder such as a look or gesture (finger over lips to discourage talking).
 - b. An individual verbal reminder ("Please do not throw the blocks.")

- c. Removal from the current activity that includes a chance to observe children behaving appropriately ("You need to sit in the "sit and watch" chair and watch your friends playing in the blocks without throwing them." A timer is then set for 1 to 2 minutes to allow time for the child to regulate their behavior and return to the group when ready.
- d. Debriefing to help children identify and use acceptable replacement behaviors in situations previously associated with problem behavior.

Rough and Tumble Play

Appletree PCS acknowledges and highlights the need to recognize rough and tumble play as distinct from inappropriate or aggressive behavior. Television or films, which include superheroes, often influence young children or weapon play and they will mimic this behavior through their play. We endorse the following strategies to manage this kind of play:

- Set boundaries for the games to be set out in
- Use planning opportunities to discuss the concept of 'good' and 'bad'.
- Support the play to find alternative solutions to weapon play, exploring different scenarios.

Hurtful Behavior

Very young children are 'egocentric' which means that they put their own feelings before others, and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over exuberance. We acknowledge that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported and that very young children do not intentionally wish to cause hurt. If hurtful comments are made, our strategies are:

- To recognize that very young children are not always able to manage or regulate their own feelings and deliver them with language or appropriately
- Assist in this management to support their cognitive development.
- Offer support the student body by discussing the inappropriate behaviors through social skills groups and the ECR curriculum.

Anti - Bullying Procedure

The role of the Principal

- It is the responsibility of the Principal to implement the schools anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff is aware of the policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying.
- The Principal ensures that all children begin to learn that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behavior at Appletree PCS. The Principal monitors that anti-bullying procedures are being implemented on a regular basis.
- The Principal ensures that all staff is in receipt of sufficient training to be equipped to deal with any incidents of bullying.

- The Principal acts as the point of contact for complaints of bullying, including anonymous reports; no formal response shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- The Principal acts as the point of contact and is responsible for investigating complaints of violations of the bullying policy and retaliation. The contact list of principals may be found on the final pages of the Parent Handbook.

The role of staff

- Staff in the school take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. A record is kept of all incidents of bullying that happen in the school and these are shared with the principal and administration.
- For all incidents of bullying behavior, the challenging behavior form should be completed. We record all incidents of bullying that occur within the school. The form includes the date, time, location, context of the incident, and names of the individuals present.
- In the event of a bullying incident:
 - Staff shall appropriately redirect the behavior, prevent retaliation and protect the target of the bullying.
 - Consequences for the student engaged in bullying include but are not limited to: temporary time out from classroom activity, visit to principal's office and / or suspension. Consequences are unique to the incident and vary based on the nature of the incident, developmental age and any history of problem behavior.
- AELPCS prohibits retaliation against:
 - Any person who reports bullying
 - Any victim of bullying
 - Any witness of bullying and/or anyone else with reliable information that a person has been subject to bullying. AELPCS may impose disciplinary action against a person who engages in retaliatory behavior.

The role of parents

- Parents, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact the principal immediately. Parents may report an act of bullying anonymously.
- Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti bullying policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.
- Parents are expected to help develop their child's social skills at all times, in support of the school interventions.

Appeals Process

- Parents who are not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation into bullying complaints may appeal in writing within 30 days of the conclusion of the initial investigation to the Director of School Leadership (contact information in parent

handbook).

- A secondary investigation conducted by the Director of School Leadership or his designee will be completed within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal, unless:
 - Circumstances require additional time to complete a thorough investigation, and these circumstances have been communicated in writing. The additional time is not to exceed 15 days.
- Any person filing an appeal has the right to seek further redress under the Human Rights Act.