

Agency: Bridges Public Charter School

Compliance Report for Bullying Prevention Policy with the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012

The Bridges Public Charter School Bullying Prevention Policy was compared to the requirements stated in the 2012 Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012 (YBPA) for compliance.

The Bridges policy covers many of the required elements, but must address the following to be deemed in compliance with the YBPA.

I. Scope

The Bridges policy does not currently capture all of the required guidelines regarding the scope of coverage of the bullying prevention policy. First, the Bridges policy does not include that bullying on transportation offered or sponsored by the school. Further, the current language regarding electronic communication is insufficient. Although Bridges defines “cyberbullying” on page 2 and makes clear that the policy covers “acts of bullying, cyberbullying....outside of school grounds if the act creates a hostile school environment at school for the victim” (pg. 2) this is not consistent with the requirements of the YBPA. The YBPA establishes that agencies must make clear that electronic communication is covered if it (1) occurs on school property (this is sufficiently covered); (2) occurs with school property (e.g. if a student borrows a laptop or a tablet and uses it to bully outside of school), and; (3) through electronic communication “to the extent that it interferes with the youth’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges that Bridges provides.” This latter language is broader than the “hostile environment” language Bridges currently includes and needs to be included for compliance.

For Compliance: Add transportation sponsored by Bridges to statement of scope. Additionally, ensure language regarding scope for electronic bullying includes language as specified above.

II. Code of Conduct and Consequences

Bridges includes a list of potential consequences on page 6 but does not include the required flexibility language as defined in the YBPA. Specifically, consequences must be designed to (1) appropriately correct the bullying behavior; (2) prevent another occurrence of bullying or retaliation; and (3) protect the target of bullying. Further, applicant of consequences must be flexible in method and severity based on (1) nature of incident; (2) developmental age of the person bullying, and; (3) any history of problem behavior from the person bullying.

For Compliance: Add the above language regarding the nature and flexibility of consequences on page 6.

III. Reporting

Bridges does not currently include the required language pertaining to the ability to report bullying anonymously. Specifically, Bridges must add that bullying may be reported anonymously provided no formal response will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

For Compliance: Add anonymous reporting and language regarding formal response.

IV. Investigation

Bridges does not include the name or contact information of the investigator as required by the YBPA. This information should be specific, including the name of the person responsible (rather than simply the position title) and contact information (phone number and email).

For Compliance: Add the name and contact information for the investigator.

IV. Retaliation

Bridges covers retaliation but does so in a confusing and inconsistent manner. Bridges defines retaliation as only being against those who report bullying on page 2, and expands this definition on page 4 to include the target/victim and the bystander. Within these two definitions, Bridges does not include those with reliable information about the incident.

For Compliance: Make the definition on pages 2 and 4 consistent and reflective of the requirements of the YBPA, specifically that retaliation is prohibited against (1) a victim of bullying; (2) a witness of bullying; (3) a person who reports bullying, and; (4) someone with reliable information that a person has been subject to bullying.

V. Appeals

Bridges current appeals process (page 4) is not consistent with the timing requirements set forth in the YBPA. Specifically the appeals process must include the following:

- o An appeals process for the person accused of bullying, a target of bullying, and anyone who is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation.
- o Such party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation may appeal to the designated higher-level authority
- o Appeals must be made within 30 days of the conclusion of the initial investigation
- o The secondary investigation shall be completed within 30 days of receipt of appeal, unless:
 - Circumstances require additional time to complete a thorough investigation
 - The higher-level authority sets forth those circumstances in writing
 - The additional time is not to exceed 15 days
- o Those filing an appeal shall be informed of the right to seek further redress under the Human Rights Act.