

Forming Saints and Scholars

Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan

St. Augustine School 26 Central Street Andover, MA 01810 978-475-2414

Table of Contents

Section 1: School Mission

1.1 Mission

1.2 Philosophy

Section 2: Introduction

Section 3: Definitions

Section 4: Leadership

4.1 Assessing Needs and Resources

4.2 Priorities

Section 5: Prohibition Against Bullying

Section 6: Prevention Efforts

6.1 School Culture

6.2 Faculty & Staff Training

6.3 Curriculum

Section 7: Intervention Protocols

7.1 Reporting

7.2 Safety Assessment

7.3 Investigation

7.4 Minimum Actions Required

7.5 Notification to Others

Section 8: Relationship to Other Laws

Appendices

- A. Intervention Flow Chart
- B. Bullying Incident Reporting Form
- C. Bullying Action Report Form
- D. Bullying Prevention Agreement Form

Section 1: School Mission

1.1 Mission

The mission of St. Augustine School is to form the next generation of saints and scholars in the Catholic tradition. Inspired by our patron, Saint Augustine, we are committed to the core values of truth (veritas), unity (unitas), and love (caritas) in our pursuit of academic and moral excellence.

1.2 Philosophy

At St. Augustine School, we aim to provide a categorically different kind of education - one that encompasses the formation of the whole child. We offer a robust academic program that continuously prepares students for higher-level learning, challenging them to think critically, read insightfully, write articulately, and draw empirical and philosophical conclusions about the complex world around them. At the same time, we affirm that true education seeks to form students not only in the intellectual virtues but also in the moral virtues. For this reason, we embrace the view that education without formation is education without a soul. Just as the soul gives life to the body, the formation of our students through daily religious instruction, the practice of virtue, and weekly worship gives life to our school.

In all that we do, we receive inspiration from the three core values of the Augustinian Order: Truth, Unity, and Love:

Truth (Veritas) - We affirm that cultivating academic excellence in the lifelong pursuit of Truth enables students to fulfill their God-given vocations. We provide students a rigorous and well-rounded academic experience, while recognizing that Truth is not merely a set of learning standards or a system of ideas but the person of Jesus Christ.

Unity (Unitas) - We are the Body of Christ, committed to sharing life in a community with others. We aim to cultivate a faith-filled and joy-filled community of friends in order to facilitate a collaborative and cooperative learning environment.

Love (Caritas) - We teach by word and example the greatest of Christ's commandments: to love God and one another. We form both the minds and the hearts of our students, recognizing that Love in action is the greatest expression of Truth and Unity.

Section 2: Introduction (per Archdiocese of Boston)

St. Augustine School acknowledges that its purpose for existence is rooted in the mission of the Church. In fulfilling its role within the educational mission of the Church, the School must share and live out, through Catholic Christian tradition, the message of Jesus Christ and be committed to providing an integrated Catholic educational environment that permeates all aspects of its daily life and operations. Each child must be challenged to reach his/her full potential by fostering in each child a love of learning and by providing an environment that also fosters

respect and understanding of one another. In this regard, it is essential that a safe, positive and productive educational environment be established where students can attain the highest academic achievement and where no student shall be subjected to Bullying, Cyber-Bullying or Retaliation. Bullying, Cyber-Bullying or Retaliation or other similar disruptive or violent behaviors constitute conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the School's ability to educate its students in a safe and embracing environment. The school community is expected to demand that all members behave appropriately and treat others with civility and respect. Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Retaliation are not to be tolerated.

Section 3: Definitions

For purposes of this plan, the following definitions shall apply:

- "Aggressor" means a student who engages in Bullying or Retaliation.
- **"Bullying"** is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:
 - causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
 - places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
 - creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
 - infringes on the rights of the target at the school; or
 - materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.
 - By way of example only, Bullying may involve, but is not limited to:
 - unwanted teasing
 - threatening
 - intimidating
 - stalking
 - cyber-stalking
 - physical violence
 - theft
 - sexual, religious, racial or any other type of harassment
 - public humiliation
 - destruction of School or personal property
 - social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
 - rumor or spreading of falsehoods
 - For the purpose of this Plan, whenever the term "Bullying" is used it is to denote either Bullying or Cyber-Bullying (as defined below).
- "Cyber-Bullying" means Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:
 - wire
 - radio
 - electromagnetics
 - photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

- Cyber-Bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the
 identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or
 messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition
 of Bullying.
- Cyber-Bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of Bullying.
- "Hostile Environment" means a situation in which Bullying causes the School environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.
- "Retaliation" means any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports Bullying, provides information during an investigation of Bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about Bullying.
- "School Grounds" mean property on which a School building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a School for a School-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.
- **"Staff"** includes, but is not limited to, educators, faculty, administrators, counselors, School nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, and paraprofessionals.
- "School Community" includes staff (mentioned above), students, parents, guardians, and volunteers.
- "Target" means a student against whom Bullying or Retaliation has been perpetrated.

Section 4: Leadership

Leadership at all levels of the School community has played a critical role in developing and implementing this Plan in the context of other School and community efforts to promote a positive School climate. We all have a primary role in teaching students to be respectful of one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. The Principal and designated members of the Staff, working under the oversight of the Pastor and the School Advisory Board are collectively responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to Bullying. It is also the responsibility of the Principal and such designees to involve representatives from the greater School and local community in developing, implementing and periodically reviewing the Plan.

4.1 Assessing Needs and Resources

The Plan is intended to be the School's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of Bullying within the context of other healthy School climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, School leaders, with input from families and the Staff, assessed the adequacy of current programs; reviewed current policies and procedures; reviewed available data on Bullying and behavioral incidents; and assessed

available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This "mapping" process assisted the School in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, the School revised or developed policies and procedures; established partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

4.2 Priorities

The School expects that all members of the School community will treat each other in a respectful manner and with respect for differences.

The School is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from Bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of Bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

The School will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the School community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to Bullying.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of Bullying or Retaliation, in our School, on School Grounds, or in School-related activities. We will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of Bullying and Retaliation and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the Target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our School community, including curricula, instructional programs, Staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

This Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing Bullying, and the School is committed to working with students, Staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of Bullying and Retaliation. The Principal, working under the oversight of the Pastor and the School Advisory Board, is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

Section 5: Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds owned, leased or used by a School;
- On property immediately adjacent to School Grounds;
- At any school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program on or off school grounds;
- At a school bus stop;
- On a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the School.

Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not School-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the School if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;

- infringe on the rights of the target at school;
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the School; or
- bring discredit or harm to the name of the school or the reputation of the student body.

Retaliation against any person who reports Bullying or Retaliation, provides information during an investigation of Bullying or Retaliation, or witnesses or has reliable information about Bullying or Retaliation is also prohibited.

St. Augustine School recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics.

Section 6: Prevention Efforts

St. Augustine School actively strives to prevent incidents of bullying before they arise through the following mechanisms: building a positive, faith-filled school culture, providing training for faculty and staff, and implementing an anti-bullying curriculum for K-5 students.

6.1 School Culture

As expressed in Mission and Philosophy statements, St. Augustine School is committed to cultivating a school culture in which all students are called to become the saints and scholars that God is calling them to be. This means that our education is focused on teaching our students not only how to read, write, or solve math problems but also how to live a virtuous life. In this way, we seek to form the whole person - mind, body, and soul - through the following:

- School prayer three times per day
 - Morning Prayer at 8:45am
 - Angelus Prayer at noon
 - Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3:00pm
- Daily religious instruction, including on topics of morality
 - Instruction on the *Theology of the Body*
- Incorporation of the faith throughout the curriculum
- School-wide attendance at weekly Mass
- Opportunities to serve in the community

We believe that insofar as our commitments to above practices serve to form each individual child and orient them to the good, that these practices also serve to mitigate the frequency and severity of bullying incidents in our school. Our school culture, founded on teachings of Christ and his Church, leaves no room for incidents of bullying.

6.2 Faculty & Staff Training

Massachusetts General Laws, Ch. 71, § 37O, require annual Staff training regarding the Plan but do not require non-public Schools, such as St. Augustine School, to provide ongoing professional development for all Staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, School nurses, cafeteria workers,

custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals. However, if the School determines that such professional development is desirable and capable of being delivered within the School's budget, the Plan may state the content and frequency of ongoing professional development as determined by the School's needs, and list other topics to be included in these Staff programs. The locally identified additional areas of training should be based on needs and concerns identified by the School Staff.

Annual Staff Training on the Plan

Annual training on the Plan for all School Staff, and, in the discretion of the Principal, volunteers who have significant contact with students, will include Staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Principal or his or her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of Bullying or Retaliation, and an overview of any Bullying prevention curricula to be offered at the School. Staff members hired after the start of the School year shall participate in School-based training during the School year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

Written Notice to Staff

At the beginning of each School year, the Principal or his or her designee shall provide written notice to the School Staff of the RCAB Policy and the Plan. Relevant sections of the RCAB Policy and the Plan relating to the duties of School Staff shall be included in the School employee handbook.

On-going Professional Development.

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for Staff to create a School climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of Staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to Bullying. Professional development may be informed by research and may include information on:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent Bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop Bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an Aggressor, Target, and witnesses to the Bullying;
- research findings on Bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for Bullying in the School environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of Cyber-Bullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to Cyber-Bullying.

Professional development may also address ways to prevent and respond to Bullying or Retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans.

Additional areas identified by the School for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others:
- engaging students in School or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

Faculty will also have access to DESE's compiled <u>list of bullying prevention and intervention resources</u>, evidence-based curricula, best practices and academic-based research. The resources may include, but shall not be limited to, print, audio, video or digital media; subscription based online services; and on-site or technology-enabled professional development and training sessions.

6.3 Curriculum

St. Augustine School utilizes the *Second Step* Bullying Prevention Unit in an effort to teach students how to recognize, report, and refuse bullying. This research-driven curriculum provides age appropriate lessons to students in Grades K-5, and our School Counselor and classroom teachers work together to implement the lessons. Parents are encouraged to contact the School Counselor directly if they would like to view or discuss the *Second Step* Bullying Prevention curriculum.

With respect to cyberbullying, our Technology curriculum includes lessons on internet safety and cyberbullying, and students in Grades 6-8 also receive an Internet Safety presentation from the Andover Police Department on an annual basis.

Section 7: Intervention Protocols

The School will: 1) include a copy of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians and 2) make it available on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

7.1 Reporting

Reports of Bullying or Retaliation may be made by Staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a Staff member shall be recorded in writing. A School Staff member is required to report immediately to the Principal or designee any instance of Bullying or Retaliation the Staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not School Staff members, may be made anonymously. The School will make a variety of reporting resources available to the School community including, but not limited to, a Bullying Incident Report Form (a copy of which is attached to this Plan as Exhibit A).

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The School will: 1) make it available in the School's main office and 2) post it on the School's website.

Please note that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting by Staff

A Staff member will report immediately to the Principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be Bullying or Retaliation. The requirement to report to the Principal or designee does not limit the authority of the Staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with School policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The School expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of Bullying or Retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged Aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a Staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of Bullying with a Staff member, or with the Principal or designee.

7.2 Safety Assessment

Before fully investigating the allegations of Bullying or Retaliation, the Principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged Target and/or to protect the alleged Target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety Plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the Target and/or the Aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a Staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the Target; and altering the Aggressor's schedule and access to the Target. The Principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from Bullying or Retaliation a student who has reported Bullying or Retaliation, a student who has witnessed Bullying or Retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of Bullying or Retaliation.

7.3 Investigation

The Principal or designee will promptly investigate all reports of Bullying or Retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. The purpose of the investigation will be to conclude (1) if bullying has occurred, and (2) what is the extent and severity of the bullying incident(s).

During the investigation the Principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, Staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Principal or designee (or whoever is

conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged Aggressor, Target, and witnesses that Retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Principal or designee, other Staff members as determined by the Principal or designee, and in consultation with the School counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of Bullying and Retaliation will be consistent with School policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or designee will consult with the Office of the General Counsel of the Archdiocese about the investigation.

See Appendix A for a flow chart of the typical protocols followed when an incident of bullying is reported.

7.4 Minimum Required Actions

If the Principal or his/her designee determines that Bullying and/or Retaliation has occurred, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken. The range of disciplinary actions for students may vary according to the age of the aggressor and severity of the incident. Parents of targets, aggressors, and bystanders will be notified when an incident of bullying is reported. Some consequences may include but are not limited to parent meetings, meetings with guidance counselor, office detention, suspension, or expulsion. All disciplinary actions in response to bullying will be at the discretion of the administration.

If an incident of Bullying or Retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Principal or his or her designee informed of such incident shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Retaliation against a student, because a student has filed a report or assisted in the investigation of an incident of bullying, is also prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or notification to authority if necessary.

St. Augustine shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both alleged Targets and Aggressors, affected by Bullying or Retaliation, as necessary.

Procedure for restoring a sense of safety for a target may include increased adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is likely to occur.

The school may provide counseling to the targets and aggressors to address their particular needs. Students who have been either the target or the aggressor will be provided these services.

7.5 Notification to Others

If the Principal or his/her designee determines that Bullying and/or Retaliation has occurred, appropriate notification of others will occur.

Notice to Parents or Guardians

Upon determining that Bullying or Retaliation has occurred, the Principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the Target and the Aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to Another School

If the reported incident involves students from more than one School district, charter School, non-public School, approved private special education day or residential School, or collaborative School, the Principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal or designee of the other School(s) of the incident so that each School may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of Bullying or Retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the Aggressor, the Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on School grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in School, the Principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the Aggressor.

In making this determination, the Principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable School policies and procedures, consult with the School resource officer, if any, and other individuals the Principal or designee deems appropriate including, but not limited to, the Office of the General Counsel of the Archdiocese.

Section 8: Relationship to Other Laws

Nothing in the plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school to take disciplinary action or other action in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior regardless of whether the plan covers the behavior.

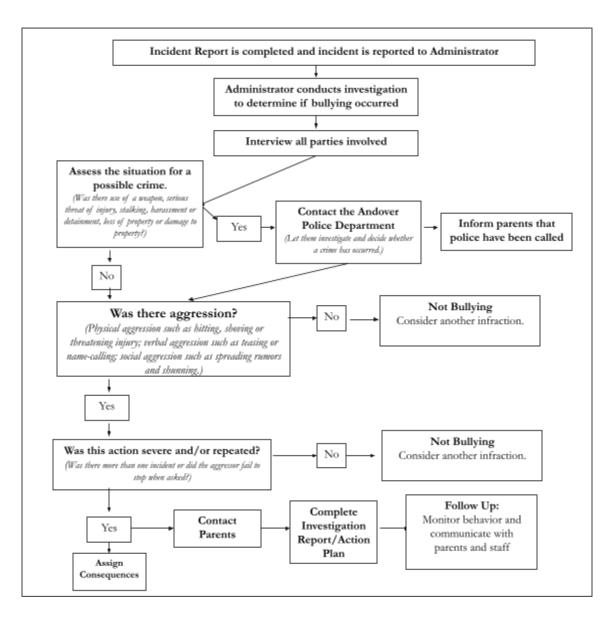
In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the School to take disciplinary action or other action under Mass. Gen. Laws. Ch. 71, Section 37O (d)(v), other applicable laws, or local School policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

In no event should the Plan be construed in any way so as to limit or modify the obligation of mandated reporters to timely make required so-called 51A Reports where appropriate.

Appendix A: Intervention Flow Chart

St. Augustine School





Appendix B: Bullying Incident Reporting Form

St. Augustine School



Confidential

Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated at St. Augustine School. If you are a student, parent/guardian, staff member, volunteer or visitor and wish to report an incident of alleged harassment and/or bullying, please complete this form and return it to the Principal or Designee of the school. All St. Augustine employees are required to report alleged violations. This form can be completed anonymously. Every reported act of bullying or harassment will be investigated and parents/guardians will be informed.

C	Check whether you are the: Target of the behavior Reporter (not the target)
C	Check whether you are a: Student Staff member (specify role:
C	a. If student, state your grade:
	b. If staff member, state your grade or position:

		the behavior):			
	Date(s) of Incident(s):				
	Time When Incident(s) Occurred:				
	Location of Incident(s):				
6.	Witnesses (List people who saw the inciden	t or have informa	ation about it)) :	
	Name:	Student	Staff	Other	
	Name:	Student	Staff	Other	
	Name:	Student	Staff	Other	
	ibe the details of the Incident (including rands and said, including specific words us				

7.

Appendix C: Bullying Action Report Form

St. Augustine School



Confidential

Principal/Designee Conducting Investigation:

1.

Interviewed Acqueed A	~~~~~~~(0).	
Interviewed Accused Ag	ggressor(s):	
Name:	Date:	
Name:	Date:	
Interviewed Target:		
Name:	Date:	
Interviewed Witnesses		
Name:	Date:	
Name:	Date:	
Name:	Date:	
Any prior documented I	Incidents by the aggressor?	Yes

4.	Summary of Investigation (Please attach a separate sheet or other reports/documentation
	Bullying Not substantiated
	Retaliation Discipline referral only
5.	Follow-up Contacts:
	Target's parent/guardian Date:
	Aggressor's parent/guardian Date:
	Law Enforcement Date:
6.	Action Taken:
	Loss of Privileges Detention Suspension Referral
	Community Service Education Risk Assessment None
	Other
7.	Describe Safety Planning:
	Follow-up with Target: scheduled for
	Initial and date when completed:
	Follow-up with Aggressor(s): scheduled for
	Initial and date when completed:
Signa	ature and Title:
Date	

Appendix D: Bullying Prevention Agreement Form

St. Augustine School



We, as members of the St. Augustine School community, have read and agree to be governed by the policies, practices, and guidelines of the Catholic School Office of the Archdiocese of Boston and St. Augustine School as set forth in the St. Augustine School Bully Prevention Plan for 2022-2023.

Parent/Guardian Signature(s):		
	Date:	
	Date:	
Student Signature(s):		
	Rm:	Date