

A Positive School Climate at the Classical Magnet School

The Classical Magnet School takes great pride in our ability to prepare students for success throughout their lives. We understand that a key component in preparing children for success in life is assuring that they have a well developed sense of self and community. Our students need to be able to interact with other members of our school community in a manner which fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance. We need everyone to help create a school climate which acknowledges and celebrates the differences amongst us and validates the essential elements of the human experience which unite all human beings.

To this end Classical Magnet has taken a deliberate and direct approach toward the fostering of relationships amongst our community members and the building of a positive school climate. We continue these efforts, and join our fellow schools across the state to embrace the initiatives contained in the new state "An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws". We applaud the shift in focus brought forward by the law acknowledging the need to create a positive climate. Instead of focusing on the interventions and disciplinary actions associated with poor behavior, we as a school community will actively plan and pursue the creation a safe, healthy and respectful environment for everyone.

Our school is creating a Safe School Climate Committee (SSCC) which will be charged with writing and monitoring a plan to improve and build upon our already positive school climate. Working together, staff, parents and students will identify positive elements of our culture, and build on them, while simultaneously eradicating the negative behaviors which occasionally arise. Our ultimate goal being to instill in each individual a sense of personal responsibility that guides them in their interpersonal interactions.

Part of this work will be to closely monitor activities that can diminish our attainment of our goal. Specifically, the school will join schools from across the state in our attempts to root out bullying. As you may be aware the definition of bullying has evolved over time, and we embrace the new definition put forth in the legislation. We hope that you will come to understand both the definition of bullying and the need to end it. We have included a definition of bullying for you review.

Bullying means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, such as cyber bullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his property;
- Creates a hostile environment (a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the condition of the school climate) at school for such student
- Infringes on the rights of such student at school
- Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

As we move forward as a school toward our goal of building a positive school climate, please consider the actions that we can each take on a daily basis, and in the smallest of ways, to model respect, empathy and care for our fellow human beings. We will all benefit from our efforts to build an even more positive school climate. We hope that you will join us in attaining that goal to make our school the best it can be.

FAQ

What should I do if I think a child might be the target of bullying?

We need all members of the school community to report allegations of bullying to school officials so an investigation can be initiated. You should call or go to any one of the school's administrative offices and request an incident form, fill it out and turn it in.

Can we make a report of harassment/bullying anonymously?

Yes. You will be asked to fill out a form documenting the allegation, but the source of the report can be anonymous. Although the school will not use you or your child's name in the investigation, you should be aware that during the course of the investigation into an alleged incident, the individual accused of bullying may make assumptions about who made the report. Furthermore, no disciplinary action can be taken based solely on information obtained in an anonymous report.

When will I be notified that the other student received a consequence for bullying my child?

The school has ten school days to conduct an investigation and report to you the findings of that investigation. The investigation may determine that no disciplinary consequences are warranted and if they are the report will not include information regarding any consequences since all children have their privacy protected under the federal FERPA laws.

Can I request a meeting of the parents all children involved in the alleged incident?

You have a right to request a meeting through the school, and in some rare cases a meeting may be held. However, the school is not required to hold a meeting or to release phone or email information to you. The school will speak with the families involved during the investigation and determine if a meeting would be productive. You will not be notified who rejected the opportunity for a meeting if your request is denied.

What should I tell my child if they are afraid and do not want me to say anything?

Dealing with issues of harassment and bullying is tricky and you should be sensitive to the feelings of your child. Working with school staff, you should take time to listen to and affirm your child's fears. However, in the end you should encourage your child to speak up, allowing adults to intervene and bring a stop to the alleged bullying. We also need to work together to re-establish your child's belief that they are safe, avoiding comments or actions which heighten their fear unnecessarily.

Is there someplace I can go to learn more about bullying?

There are large number of resources available to families around these important issues. Resources can be found in the school guidance office, at your local library and at www.Stopbullying.gov a website created by the federal government to provide information and resources to parents.