The Evergreen Center is committed to providing all students regardless of age, ability, or legal status with a safe learning environment. 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. To this end the Evergreen Center strictly prohibits bullying, retaliation, and cyber-bullying.

The Evergreen Center will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, in the Central Education Facility, residences, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. It is recognized that students with disabilities are at a higher risk to bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Evergreen Center will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target’s sense of safety.

DEFINITIONS
Definitions for the purposes of requirements related to Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 legislation are as follows:

**Bullying:** The repeated use by one or more students [aggressor(s)] of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of requirements related to this law, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

**Cyber-bullying:** The bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

**Retaliation:** 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.

Students enrolled at the Evergreen Center exhibit significant cognitive impairments and skill deficits. Due to the nature of the population served at the Evergreen Center, the definition of “bullying” and “retaliation” does not include students who exhibit aggression, self injurious behavior or property destruction as a manifestation of their disability.
REPORTING
The majority of students served at the Evergreen Center do not possess the cognitive or verbal ability to self report instances of bullying or retaliation. Students who are capable of self-reporting and are targets or witnesses to bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation should immediately report this to a staff member.

Staff of the Evergreen Center are responsible for reporting any suspected incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation they witness. Such reporting shall be made verbally and in writing to their immediate supervisor or Agency Charge, using the Incident Report Form. The verbal report must be made immediately upon observation or report from a student; a written report must be submitted by the end of the shift. Failure to report instances of suspected bullying shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians who witness or suspect incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation should report this to staff in person, when possible, or by phone to the Vice President of Program Operations or Agency Charge Person.

The Supervisor and Agency Charge Person will notify the Vice President of Program Operations of any allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation. The Vice President of Program Operations is responsible for notifying the Executive Director.

Any students, parents or guardians, staff or other persons who wish to report incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation anonymously may do so by phone or mail. Anonymous reports by phone or mail should be made to the Vice President of Program Operations or Agency Charge Person. No disciplinary action will be taken against a student based solely on an anonymous report.

INVESTIGATION
When notified of any allegations of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation the Vice President of Program Operation shall immediately investigate. The activities of investigation shall include staff and/or student interviews, review of the incident and any other information pertinent to the incident or individuals involved. The Vice President of Program Operations shall submit a written statement of findings to the Executive Director with recommendations. It shall be the decision of the Executive Director to approve the Vice President of Program Operations recommendations or to take alternative action.

During the course of an investigation all witnesses and persons providing information shall be protected from retaliation. The Evergreen Center will take care to protect the confidentiality of reporters, witnesses, targets, and alleged aggressors. An Interdisciplinary Review Team will be held to determine if additional steps such as a reevaluation of appropriate peer grouping and/or an additional assignment of temporary support staff is necessary.
If through the investigation it is determined that bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation did occur appropriate action will be taken with the aggressor, such as individualized skill building activities focused on the development of positive social behaviors. If necessary, disciplinary action will be taken, consistent with the students Behavior Support Plan. Behavior Support Plans may be developed or revised to address areas of concern identified during an investigation.

The target of confirmed bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation may be provided additional supports as determined by the Interdisciplinary Review Team. These supports may include, but are not limited to assignment of temporary support staff within the established classroom ratio.

**NOTIFICATION**
Upon a determination that bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has occurred the parent or guardians of the target and aggressor will be notified by phone and in writing by the Vice President of Program Operations. Any disciplinary action, implementation of support strategies, or preventive action affecting the student will be detailed in this written correspondence. In the event of criminal charges being pursued, the Executive Director will notify local law enforcement.

**FALSE ACCUSATION**
A student determined through an investigation to have knowingly and intentionally made a false accusation will be provided with educational activities designed to teach social competencies related to accuracy in reporting. Behavior Support Plans may be revised to address areas of concern identified during an investigation.

**SUPPORT SERVICES**
If deemed necessary by the outcome of the investigation, additional behavior supports, counseling and or referral services will be made available to targets and/or aggressors. Specific services will be determined by an Interdisciplinary Review Team. Parents, guardian, or other family members of involved students requesting additional services should contact the Director of Family Services.

**TRAINING**
Evergreen Center staff receive training on the Anti-Bullying Policy during orientation and as part of Annual CORE training. This training includes all aspects of this policy including the definitions of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, reporting and investigation procedures, and prevention. While the population served by the Evergreen Center does not possess the cognitive ability to knowingly participate in the act of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, general professional development for staff will include; Information on strategies for interventions to stop bullying incidents; Information regarding the complex interaction and
power differential that can take place between an aggressor, target, and witnesses to bullying; and Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying, as required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370. Training will address the specific challenges of the Evergreen Center’s student population and the expectations of staff in supporting a safe environment and protecting at risk students, as well as training to differentiate bullying from the manifestation of student’s disabilities.

A copy of the Anti-Bullying policy and procedures is included in the Parent Handbook which is provided at enrollment as well as distributed annually. Information for families, including reinforcing anti-bullying, bullying dynamics and online safety and cyber-bullying can be found at http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/parpub.html. At the request of parents or guardians, further information and resources will be provided by the Director of Family Services.