

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan Southern Worcester County Regional School District

Strategic Priority: Safe, Nurturing, Respectful Working and Learning Environment

- Goal 1: Create and maintain a nurturing, respectful safe environment for the Southern Worcester County Regional School Districts students, staff and families.
- Goal 2: Ensure an accountability system that holds all staff, students, parents and the community responsible for the safety of the school district.

Southern Worcester County Regional School District has developed this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan as required under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, in consultation with local government agencies, community agencies, school personnel, advocacy organizations, families and other interested parties. Please note that in this Plan we use the word “target” instead of “victim” and “aggressor” instead of “perpetrator.”

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I. LEADERSHIP

Leadership at all levels will play a critical role in the development and implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan (“the Plan”) in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. District leaders, including the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Leadership Team and school-based leaders will champion this initiative by focusing on Southern Worcester County Regional School District Strategic Priority stated above.

The district takes responsibility for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. Representatives from the greater school community and local community have participated in the development and implementation of the Plan.

- A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan must be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Southern Worcester County Regional School District has actively engaged with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians in the development of the Plan.

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Constituency	Strategy for Engagement	Responsible Person
Community-based Organizations YMCA, Behavioral Health Network, GB Wells	Input from listed organizations via committee and individual meetings	-Dean of Students -Pupil Personnel Director -Principal -Special Needs Coordinator
Local Government Offices (District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office)	Input from listed organizations via committee and individual meetings	- Dean of Students - Principal
Local Law Enforcement Agencies	Input from listed organizations via committee and individual meetings	- Dean of Students - Principal
Students	Input from students via individual meetings, School Improvement Council	- Dean of Students - Assistant Vocational Director
Parents/Guardians	Parent Meetings, School Improvement Council	- Dean of Students - Principal
Administrators	School Improvement Council	- Dean of Students - Principal
Professional Support Staff	Training, Individual meetings	- Dean of Students - Principal - Director of Technology -Business Manager
Teachers	School Improvement Council, Individual Meetings	- Dean of Students - Principal -Assistant Vocational Director

B. Assessing needs and resources. This Plan serves as the district's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of our existing healthy school climate initiatives. These include:

1. School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
2. Responsive Classroom (Social/Emotional/Academic Approach to Teaching and Learning);
3. Olweaus Bullying Prevention Program-Violence Prevention Curriculum
4. S.A.D.D. Program (Drug and Alcohol)
5. Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Action	Responsible Person	Completed
Assess adequacy of current programs revise or develop as necessary	Dean of Students Curriculum Coordinator	10/2010
Review current policies and procedures;	Dean of Students	10/2010

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revise or develop as necessary	Curriculum Coordinator Principal	10/2010
Review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; revise or develop as necessary	Dean of Students/Assistant Vocational Director/ Curriculum Coordinator	10/20/10
Assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services; revise or develop as necessary	Dean of Students/Assistant Vocational Director/Lead Teacher Physical Education & Health Dept/ Curriculum Coordinator	10/2010

C. Planning and oversight See attached flowchart for comprehensive reporting process. The following school/district leaders will be responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

Tasks	Leader	
Receiving reports on bullying	Dean of Students/Assistant Vocational Director or Designee	
Collecting and analyzing improved outcomes	Title VIX Coordinator/Administrative Team	
Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors	Assistant Vocational Director/Administrative Team/ School Improvement Council	
Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law	Principal/Curriculum Coordinator/Dean of Students	
Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors	Pupil Personnel Director/Special Needs Director/School Psychologist/Principal/Dean of Students	
Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use	Curriculum Coordinator/Principal Dean of Students	
Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be responsible for the implementation of them	The District, including the Superintendent, Principal, Vocational Director, Curriculum Coordinator, Special Needs Director, Dean of Students, Assistant Vocational Director, and Director of Technology	
Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct	The District will update the handbooks annually; The Code of Conduct will be reviewed by the district and the School Committee	District handbook has been updated with the revised Bullying Policy

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Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials	Principal /Administrative Team
Reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently	Principal/Dean of Students

D. Priority statement

The Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. The district 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 have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The district is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O the Plan provides 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.

A. Annual Staff Training

Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district.

Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to 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.

B. Ongoing 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. The law lists six topics that must be included in professional development. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and district-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- (ii) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective

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- interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- (iv) 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;
- (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
- (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Professional development will 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). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development includes:

- 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 (PBIS);
- 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.

STAFF	CONTENT	FREQUENCY	ON-GOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	DISTRICT BASED
Teachers	Bullying and Cyber-bullying;	Annually	August PD	MARC/ Worcester County District Attorney's Office
Para-professionals	Bullying and Cyber-bullying Staff Overview	Annually	August PD	MARC/ Worcester County District Attorney's Office
Support Staff	Bullying and Cyber-bullying;	Annually	August PD	MARC/ Worcester

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				County District Attorney's Office
Administrators	Bullying and Cyber-bullying	Annually	August PD, or as needed	MARC/ Worcester County District Attorney's Office
Counselors	Bullying and Cyber-bullying	Annually	August PD	MARC/ Worcester County District Attorney's Office
School Nurses	Bullying and Cyber-bullying	Annually	August PD	MARC/ Worcester County District Attorney's Office
Cafeteria Workers	Bullying and Cyber-bullying;	Annually	August	MARC/ Worcester County District Attorney's Office
Custodians	Bullying and Cyber-bullying;	Annually	August	MARC/ Worcester County District Attorney's Office
Bus Drivers	Bullying and Cyber-bullying	Annually	August	MARC/ Worcester County District Attorney's Office
Athletic Coaches	Bullying and Cyber-bullying	Annually	TBD by Season	School Based

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C. Written notice to staff. In accordance with the district’s Bullying Policy, p. 5 D. Notice, it provides all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

Action	Deadline	Responsible Person
Written notice of Plan in employee handbook (assurance of knowledge and accountability)	September	Principal/ Dean of Students
Written notice of Plan in Code of Conduct	July	Dean of Students/ Principal
Posted on BPRVTHS Website under Plans & Policies	December	Director of Technology

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting positive school climate is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. See chart for strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the district’s capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, these services are available that reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets, aggressors and families.

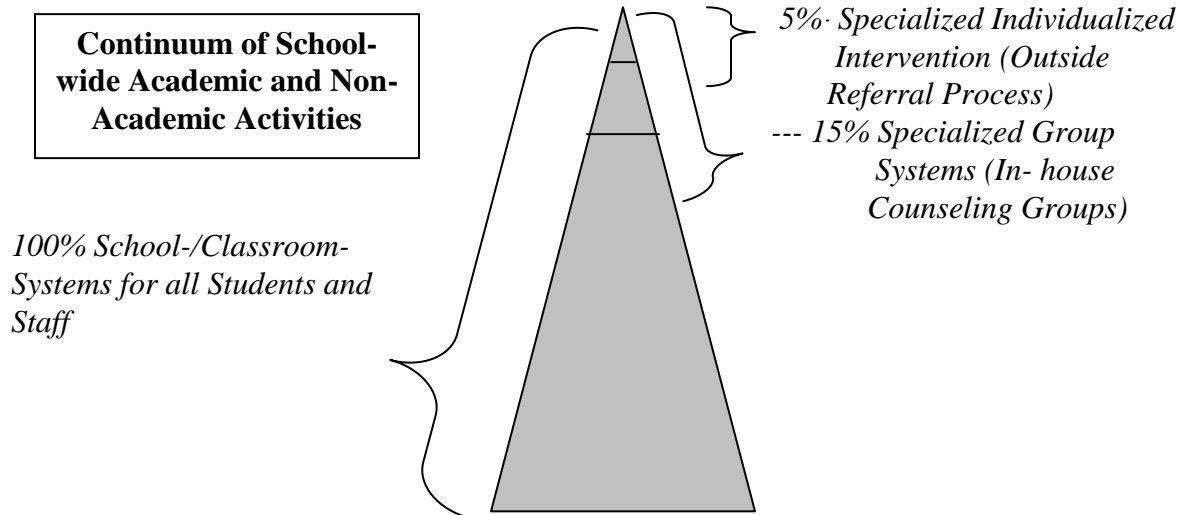
Counselors are provided an updated contact list annually for referring students and families to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

A. Identifying resources. The Plan includes the school’s or district’s process for identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This includes a review of current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services.

Action	Process	Department
The district’s process for identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families is described in the School Counseling Program	Counseling and other services will be provided by counselors, School Psychologist, Behavior Specialists, Referral to outside agencies and services	Pupil Personnel/Director of Special Needs School Psychologist
Review of current staffing	The following staff/initiatives	Director of

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and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services.	support positive school environments: Counselors, School Psychologist Environment initiatives; School –based and classroom-based strategies, Small groups; individual sessions, Safety planning, Behavior Interventions Plans, and Referral process for intensive services.	Student Support Services Special Needs Coordinator
Local processes for identifying existing and needed resources.	Mapping activity including local stakeholders	Dean of Students, Pupil Personnel Director



B. Counseling and other services. Culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the school and district are available for staff and families. In addition, the Plan identifies staff and service providers who assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying by aggressors and interventions by bystanders, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors.

Action	Department
Culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the school and district are available for staff and families.	Guidance
Counselors, Behavior Specialists, Teachers, Evaluation Team Leaders, Support Staff and Administrators and service providers assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying by aggressors and interventions by bystanders or retaliation, providing social skills programs to	Team Leaders, Special Education

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prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Some tools include behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.	Office, School Psychologist, Guidance Department
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- C. Students with disabilities. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying for aggressors, harassment, or teasing.
- D. Referral to outside services. The district has established a referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services. Clear protocols help students and families access appropriate and timely services. Referrals comply with relevant laws and policies. Current local referral protocols have been evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and have been revised as needed.

Action	Department
The referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services (that complies with relevant laws and policies) has been reviewed.	Pupil Services/Director of Special Needs
Current local referral protocols have been evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and have been revised as needed.	Pupil Services

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The law requires each school or district to provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the district's curricula. Southern Worcester County Regional School District will utilize the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program through Clemson University. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

Through an aligned management system, each of the following strategic priorities will serve to help ensure system-wide accountability:

- **High Academic Achievement For 21st Century Success**

Goal 1: Increase district wide proficiency in ELA (English Language Arts), Mathematics, Science and Social Studies for all students.

Goal 2: Increase post secondary options for all students.

Goal 3: Increase participation and performance for all students on PSAT (Preliminary

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Scholastic Aptitude Test), SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and ACT (American College Test).

• **Safe, Nurturing, Respectful Working and Learning Environment**

Goal 1: Create and maintain a nurturing, respectful safe environment for the Southern Worcester County Regional School District students, staff and families.

Goal 2: Ensure an accountability system that holds all staff, students, parents and the community responsible for the safety of the BPRVTHS community.

GRADE	PROGRAM/CURRICULUM	INTEGRATED programs INTO CURRICULUM named below (in collaboration with counseling staff)
9-12	Olweus Bullying Prevention Program	Health

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students’ skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Staff will also teach students about the student -related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Student-related sections of the Plan will be shared with students annually during the appropriate lessons.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom

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routines;

- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the district has put in place a policy and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. This revised policy and procedures will ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur. The district has described detailed procedures for staff reporting of incidents, processes for communicating to students and families how reports can be made (including anonymous reports), and procedures to be followed by the principal or designee once a report is made.

In accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, BPRVTHS submits the following reporting procedures:

Reporting bullying or retaliation: Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by a member of school staff, (including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional) parent or guardian or others and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff members becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents, or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. An individual may make an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation, however, no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis on anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action. Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of

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making a report. The school district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's discipline office, nurse's office, and the guidance office; 3) post it on the school's website.

At the beginning of each school year, the district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal and designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school website, and in the information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by staff

A staff member will report **immediately** to the principal or designees 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 or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The school district 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. Students, parents, or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided a 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.

3. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

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 instances.

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.

Obligations to Notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the

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parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it.

- b. 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.
- c. Notice to Another School or District. 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.
- d. 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.

If bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the school will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent reoccurrence and ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or benefitting from school activities. As with the investigation, the response will be individually tailored to all of the circumstances, including the nature of the conduct and the age of the students involved. In addition to taking disciplinary action, the following are examples of steps that may be taken to prevent recurrence of bullying or retaliation:

- Holding parent conferences
- Transferring student's classroom or school
- Limiting or denying student access to a part, or area, of a school;
- Enhancing adult supervision on school premises;
- Excluding from participation in school sponsored or school related functions, after school programs, and/or extracurricular activities;
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students.

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- Personalized action plans and directives future conduct, including providing the target with a process for reporting any concerns about future conduct immediately.
- Arranging for communication between the parties, if appropriate, to assist them in resolving issues which have arisen between them.
- Provide counseling (or other appropriate services) or referral to such services for the target and/or the aggressor and/or for appropriate family members of said student.

A. Investigation

The principal or designee will investigate promptly 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.

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 or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

B. Determinations

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

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The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

A. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

B. Relationship to other laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent,

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harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

The Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the district to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration. The law requires the district Plan to include provisions for informing parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district or school including: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyber-bullying. Parents and guardians will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. School-specific and district-specific approaches to collaboration will take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and the families.

- A. Parent education and resources. The district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the School Improvement Council, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and similar organizations.
- B. Notification requirements. The district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. The district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The district will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The law requires each Plan to include a statement prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The statement must be included in the Plan and included in the student Code of Conduct, the student handbook, and the staff handbook. The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on

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or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and

- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below. The district has not altered their meaning or scope.

Aggressor, perpetrator of bullying or retaliation as defined in G.L. c. 71, §37O

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, 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:

- 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 himself or herself or of damage to his or 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. Bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying, is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include but not 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, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or

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insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is 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.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

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