



Duxbury Public Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

November 2014

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INTRODUCTION

An *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools* was signed into law by the legislature in May 2010. This law prohibits bullying and retaliation and requires the District to take certain steps when addressing bullying incidents. These requirements are included in the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (Plan). The Plan includes the requirements of the law and information about the policies and procedures that the District will follow to prevent and respond to bullying and retaliation. The Plan was developed in consultation with school and local community members, including parents.

The Duxbury Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying.

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Public involvement in developing the Plan

In the spring of 2012, as required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan was reviewed and revised in consultation with the four School Councils with information received from surveys of teachers, parents and students. There was a public presentation on November 6, 2013. The School Committee approved the Plan on XX. The School Committee reviews the plan biennially.

B. Assessing needs and resources

The Plan is the district's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying. As part of the planning process, school leaders sought input from families, staff and community members in order to assess the adequacy of current programs, review policies and procedures, review existing data on bullying and behavioral incidents and assess available resources including curricula, training and educational programs.

The following steps allow for initial and periodic needs assessments:

- 1) Surveying students, staff and parents on school climate and school safety issues
 - Surveys related to the Plan commence in early Spring
 - Surveys are the responsibility of the four School Councils
 - Execution Date: May
- 2) Analyzing District and building-specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying will be done by:
 - District Administrative Team
 - Building Administrative Team
 - Building Leadership Teams
 - Curriculum Leadership Team
 - Instructional Advisory Group
 - School Councils
 - Bullying Prevention & Intervention trainers
 - Execution Date: May

At least every four years beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey to address school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

C. Planning and oversight

Leaders responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

- 1) Receiving reports on bullying
 - Principals and designees

- Execution Date: Ongoing
- 2) Collecting and analyzing building data to assess the current climate and to measure improved outcomes
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Principals
 - Execution Date: July
 - 3) Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Principals and designees
 - Execution Date: July
 - 4) Planning for ongoing professional development
 - District Professional Development Steering Committee (Assistant Superintendent chair)
 - Building-based Professional Development Committees (Principal chair)
 - Execution Date: July
 - 5) Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors
 - Building-based counseling and administrative staff
 - Building-based student assistant teams
 - Execution Date: July
 - 6) Developing new or revising current curricula that the District will use
 - District Administrative Team
 - Building Administrative Teams
 - Building Leadership Teams
 - Instructional Advisory Group
 - Execution Date: May
 - 7) Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan
 - District Administrative Team
 - Building Administrative Teams
 - School Councils
 - School Committee
 - Execution Date: June
 - 8) Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated
 - School Councils via School Improvement Plans
 - School Committee review
 - Execution Date: May
 - 9) Leading parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials
 - District Administrative Team
 - Building Administrative Team
 - PTAs/PTOs
 - School Councils
 - Execution Date: September
 - 10) Reviewing and updating the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
 - District Administrative Team
 - Building Administrative Team
 - PTAs/PTOs
 - School Councils
 - Bullying Prevention and Intervention Team members

- School Committee
- Execution Date: July

D. **Priority Statement**

The Duxbury Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying or other harmful and disruptive behavior.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take 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, harassment, or teasing.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Plan reflects the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 by providing 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 on the Plan**

Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include:

- 1) Yearly staff orientation
- 2) Training during new teacher induction
- 3) Re-training of certified staff
- 4) Trainings by certified staff trainers during school year professional development days and faculty meetings
- 5) Appropriate and current documents provided by building administrators

B. **Written notice to staff**

The District will provide all staff with an annual notice of the Plan, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, in the school handbooks and the code of conduct.

C. **Ongoing professional development**

- 1) As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, the content of school-specific and District-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:
 - Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying
 - Developmentally 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 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
 - Internet safety issues relating to cyber-bullying
- 2) District professional development planning includes:
 - Promoting and modeling the use of respectful language
 - Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and differences
 - Building relationships and communicating with families

- Constructively managing classroom behaviors
- Using positive behavioral intervention strategies
- Applying constructive disciplinary consequences
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management and empathy for others
- Engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students
- Engage staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc and bullying behaviors

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing 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. {See Appendix A}

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Promoting positive school climates and ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, student aggressors, families and others are addressed, are the responsibilities of the entire Duxbury Public School community. Teachers, instructional assistants, administrators, specialists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and all other staff members are held accountable for vigilance in identifying potential and actual bullying situations. Each individual influences the school environment through positive role modeling, instruction and support. This section of the intervention and prevention plan identifies specific resources and services available to provide counseling, support and referral to community agencies for students and families of students that may be bullying targets or student aggressors.

The District's process for identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors and their families consisted of a school-by-school inventory of professional staff and programming that support the foundation of positive school environments by focusing on early intervention and intensive services. Listed below are the specific existing positions that provide counseling, support and develop safety plans for students that have been targets of bullying.

- 1) **School-wide**
 - School Resource Officer (SRO)
- 2) **DHS**
 - School Psychologist
 - Student Assistance Counselor
 - Guidance Counselor
 - Nurse
 - Transition Room teacher
- 3) **DMS**
 - Health Teacher
 - Grade 6 Health teacher
 - School Psychologist
 - Guidance Counselors
 - Social Worker
 - Nurse
- 4) **Alden**
 - School Psychologist

- Guidance Counselor/Adjustment Counselor
 - Social Worker
 - Nurse
- 5) **Chandler**
- Nurse
 - School Psychologist
 - Social Worker

The district offers a variety of social skills and educational programs as tools to prevent bullying. These include general curricula, co-curricular, theme activities, small group and individual social skills training, behavior intervention plans, direct interview, instruction from the resource officer and school-wide presentations. Listed below are examples of these activities.

- 1) **Chandler**
- School-wide book read with lesson instruction
 - Kindergarten – *King of the Playground*
 - Grade 1 – *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Teasing*
 - Grade 2 – *No One Knew What to Do: A Story About Bullying*
 - School-wide use of “GREEN” as school positive behavior system
- 2) **Alden**
- A series of three Guidance presentations per grade, additional lessons provided to classrooms on an as-needed basis throughout the school year
 - Making conversations lesson and activity
 - Accepting differences
 - Social Thinking (expected/unexpected behaviors across the school environment)
 - Feeling left out/including others
- 3) **DMS**
- All students participate in activities that support Peace Builders
 - Assemblies with the School Resource Officer
 - Cyberbullying presentation by the School Resource Officer and Guidance
 - ‘Character Counts’ murals
 - Guidance Counselor interventions
 - WEB (**W**here **E**verybody **B**elongs) orientation and follow-up academic and social activities
 - Peer Mediation Program
 - Respect All People Program
 - School Improvement Club
 - Theme presentations and activities by Guidance Counselors and English teachers
 - Programming themes on:
 - Praise People program
 - Give-up Put Downs
 - Seek Wise People
 - Notice Hurts
 - Help Others
- 4) **DHS**
- Assemblies with the School Resource Officer (SRO)
 - ‘Rachel’s Challenge’ programming
 - ‘Invisible Children’ programming
 - Principal’s Advisory meetings
 - LINK Crew Orientation
 - Advisor-Advisee programming
 - MA Interscholastic Athletic Association Leadership Conferences

- Athletic Captain’s Council
- Assemblies with grade level building administrators
- Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)
- A World of Difference (AWOD)
- SRO speaking in grade 9 health classes

When the District determines that a student has a disability that affects social skill development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of a disability, the Special Education Team considers what should be included in the IEP to develop the skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing {See Appendix A}. Some of the commonly included elements are:

- Social skills instruction (individual, small group, classroom)
- Goals and objectives for self-advocacy, self-esteem and/or appropriate peer relations
- Social thinking strategies
- Functional behavior assessments and positive behavior plans
- Modified discipline codes
- Student monitoring and environmental controls
- Enhanced communication between the Team, parents, administration and other involved agencies

The established protocol for referring students and families to outside services is consistent throughout the District. When a student or family is identified in need of outside services, a referral is made to the school psychologist, adjustment counselor or student assistance counselor. These professionals have working relationships with outside agencies to facilitate the referral process for students and families. The counselor contacts the family and/or other persons knowledgeable of the situation and determines the appropriate agency. They provide the contact information to the parent and instructions regarding the process. If requested by the parents and with proper authorization for release of information, the counselor will also contact the agency. A list of community-based resources is available upon request from school administrators and counselors.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The District provides age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention and intervention in each grade. Curriculum utilized is evidence-based. Instructional approaches include classroom presentations, whole school initiatives and focused strategies for bullying prevention/intervention and social skills development. Timely and pertinent professional development supports bullying prevention efforts at each school and throughout the District.

The following approaches are communicated in establishing a safe school and classroom environment for all students and underscore the importance of bullying prevention and intervention initiatives:

- ❖ Clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines
- ❖ Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including especially for students with the following characteristics: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender), mental, physical, development or sensory disability, students with disabilities, homeless or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics
- ❖ Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline
- ❖ Utilizing positive behavioral supports
- ❖ Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students
- ❖ Modeling, teaching and rewarding pro-social, healthy and respectful behaviors

- ❖ Utilizing positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development
- ❖ Internet safety
- ❖ Supporting student interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength

A. **Specific bullying prevention approaches**

There are four common programming approaches which bullying behavior is addressed. These common approaches are: (1) curriculum connections, (2) climate development, (3) co-curricular activities and (4) policies and consequences. The District's bullying prevention and intervention curricula is informed by current research, which emphasizes the following instructional approaches:

- 1) Using scripts and role plays to develop skills
- 2) Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance
- 3) Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance
- 4) Emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies
- 5) Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications
- 6) Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference
- 7) Recognizing that certain students are more susceptible to bullying and as such making specific proactive plans for individual student to ensure bullying does not occur

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

A. **Reporting bullying or retaliation**

Students, parents or others may make oral or written reports of bullying or retaliation. Reports made by students, parents or others who are not District staff members may be made anonymously. The District will make an anonymous reporting form available at each school and on the District website. Anonymous reporting via a voicemail box or an email address will be researched and evaluated appropriately during school year 2010-2011. Schools will: 1) include a copy of the anonymous reporting form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents and 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office and other locations determined by the principal or designee. The anonymous reporting form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents. Reports made by a staff member will be recorded in writing. A District staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. The principal or designee will utilize an internal reporting form to record documented cases of bullying. Building-specific disciplinary protocols will be followed per respective codes of conducts.

At the beginning of each school year, the District will provide the school community, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, 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 or designee and the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school

and District website and in information about the Plan.

Expectations

Reporting by Staff

- A staff member will report immediately to the principal designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor 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.

Reporting by Students, Parents and Others

- The District expects students, parents and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely based on an anonymous report. Students, parents 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.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation – Allegations of Bullying by a Student

1) Student Safety

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:

- 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
- Altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target

As necessary, the principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation. The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting the target from bullying or retaliation to 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.

2) Obligations to Notify Others

- Notice to parents or guardians
Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents of the target and the student aggressor and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- 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.
- 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. In addition, 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 student aggressor.

C. 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 and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. The principal, designee or other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate, may conduct interviews. 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 will maintain a written record of the investigation.

D. Determinations

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigating, 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 student's teacher or school counselor and the target's or student aggressor's parent, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents 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. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, school officials are generally prohibited from informing the complainant of specific disciplinary action taken against a student—unless it involves a “stay away” or other directive that the target should be aware of so as to report violations.

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

E. Responses to Bullying

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the building administration will utilize a wide-range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.

- 1) Teaching Appropriate Behavior through Skill-building. Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider:
 - Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the district's anti-bullying curricula

- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel
 - Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
 - Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
 - Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills
 - Making a referral for evaluation
- 2) **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 school's code of conduct. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which will be rendered in compliance 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 will be subject to disciplinary action.
- 3) **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. If it has been determined that bullying has taken place on the school grounds, the principal or designee will take measures 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.

F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

1) Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee, or the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor 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.

2) Obligations to Notify Others

- **Notice to parents or guardians**
 Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee (or the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor) will promptly notify the parents of the target and the aggressor and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which parents are contacted prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CPR 49.00.
- **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 (or the superintendent or designee when the

principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor) 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 (or the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor) 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.

Investigation

The principal or designee (or the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor) 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). During the investigation, the principal or designee (or the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor) will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents and others as necessary. The authority responsible for the investigation will remind the alleged aggressor, target and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. The investigator will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Determinations

The principal or designee (or the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor) will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigating, 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. The principal or designee (or the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor) will promptly notify the parents of the target and the staff 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.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

The District recognizes the need to engage and collaborate with families in order to increase capacity to prevent and respond to bullying. Essential aspects of effective collaboration are resources for families and communication with them. The Plan will address provisions for informing parents about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the District. Information will include:

- ❖ How parents can reinforce curricula at home and support the Plan
- ❖ The dynamics of bullying
- ❖ Internet safety and cyberbullying

A. **Parent education and resources**

The District will offer education programming for parents that relates to any parental components of an anti-bullying curriculum and any social competency curricula used by the District. The principal will approve any collaborative programming. When schools have anti-bullying programming, attempts will be made include sessions for parents to attend so they hear the message delivered to their children. This will assist in gaining general awareness of the issue for parents. Programming information will be differentiated for parents and educators, i.e., grades pK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Programming will be sought to assist parents in teaching their children how to respond appropriately to bullying. Common themes with pK-12 programming, confidentiality mandates and legal definitions of bullying will be communicated yearly. Pertinent surveys for parents and students will be coordinated through School Councils in order assist in the development appropriate professional development and programming. Appropriate resources for parents to understand and manage bullying prevention will be made available on the District’s website.

B. **Notification requirements.**

On a yearly basis, the District will inform parents about relevant initiatives and curriculum. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. Parents will be notified each year about the student-related sections of the Plan. Approaches to collaboration will take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and the parents. The District will post the Plan and related information on its website. Other suggestions to assist in the notification process that may be utilized:

- 1) Articles in the Clipper, Reporter and Ledger
- 2) Panel discussions and presentations on local access TV and Dragon TV
- 3) Continued use of the District website
- 4) Providing parents with confidentially guidelines
- 5) Have parents and students sign an anti-bullying contract

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

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 cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- A) On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on 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
- B) 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 to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs.

VIII. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 370 of chapter 71 of the General Laws to include (g) (v): The Plan shall inform parents or guardians of the target about the Department’s problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the

problem resolution system. This information will be made available in both hard copy and electronic formats:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.

IX. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.

- A) *Aggressor* is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.
- B) *Bullying*, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:
 - 1) Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property
 - 2) Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property
 - 3) Creates a hostile environment at school for the target S
 - 4) Infringes on the rights of the target at school
 - 5) Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school
- C) *Cyberbullying* is 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. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.
- D) *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 insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.
- E) *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.
- F) *School 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.
- G) *Target* is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

X. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the 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 because of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the 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, M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 41 and 42, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

