

*Concord Public Schools/Concord-Carlisle Regional School District*

**Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>I.</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>DEFINITIONS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>APPENDIX A:</b>	<b>BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM</b>	
<b>APPENDIX B:</b>	<b>BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM</b>	

## I. LEADERSHIP

### District Leadership

- The Superintendent and her Administrative Team which includes the Deputy Superintendent, the Director of Human Resources, the Director of Special Education, the Director of Technology, the Director of Teaching and Learning, the three elementary principals, the principal of the Concord Middle School and the principal of Concord-Carlisle Regional High School
- District-Wide Committees that include the Elementary Steering Committee, the Mental Health Team, the Parent-Teacher Group (PTG) Presidents Committee.
- Concord Teachers' Association, Concord-Carlisle Teachers' Association

### Building Leadership

- Elementary Principals and their Leadership Teams, School Site Councils
- Department Chairs at the Concord Middle School and the of Concord-Carlisle Regional High School
- House Leaders at the Concord Middle School
- School Advisory Councils
- Student Assistance Teams (elementary and middle schools), Clinical Team at the High School

### Classroom leadership

- Faculty, staff and students

### Community Leadership

- Concord Police Department
- Town of Concord Recreation Department
- Town of Concord Director of Youth Resources
- Town of Concord Resource Coordinator
- CPS and CCRSD School Committees
- PTG Presidents' Committee

All members of the school community play an important role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. Leadership is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community understand the bullying prevention plan, their responsibility for implementing it and their responsibility for modeling respectful and responsible behavior.

#### A. Public involvement in developing the Plan.

The Mental Health Team of CPS and CCRSD (K12) (comprised of school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, the Director of Special Education, the Director of the Center for Teachers and Parents and the Director of Teaching and Learning.) convened to draft the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. This group, with input from District leadership, will set priorities and provide district leadership with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying.

The Draft was reviewed by

- the CPS/CCRSD Administrative Team (comprised of the elementary, middle and high

school Principals, the superintendent of schools, the director of Special Education, the Director of Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator and the Deputy Superintendent).

- the School Advisory Councils at each School (Alcott, Thoreau and Willard Elementary Schools, Concord Middle School and Concord-Carlisle Regional High School
- the School Resource Officer
- The Student Senate at CCRSD and the Student Council at CMS
- The Draft was posted to the School District's website for public comment on November 24, 2010.
- Feedback from the various constituencies was considered in revising the draft before sending it to the school committee for approval/adoption
- School Committee approved the plan on December 14, 2010

#### B. Assessing needs and resources.

The district leadership team, with input from families and staff, will:

- assess the adequacy of current programs;
- review current policies and procedures;
- review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and,
- assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services.

Based on our findings, we will:

- revise or develop policies and procedures;
- establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and,
- set priorities.

Needs Assessments:

- 1) The district will conduct a school climate and school safety survey that will be administered students, staff, parents, and guardians. (District Leadership Team, Early Spring 2011)
- 2) Each school will use X2 (the student information management system) to collect and analyze building-specific data on incidents of unkind and bullying behaviors. The analysis will include identifying vulnerable populations and "hot spots" in school buildings, on school grounds, and on school buses. (Building Principals, Spring 2011)
- 3) Analyze results from the 2010 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Fall, 2010)
- 4) Survey results and incident reports from X2 will be used to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services.

#### C. Planning and oversight.

Building Principals are responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

- receiving reports on bullying;
- investigating reports of bullying
- collecting and analyzing school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes;
- supervising the implementation of the bullying prevention curricula
- supervising building personnel with regard to their compliance with the plan

District Leadership is responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

- creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
- planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law;
- planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- choosing the curricula that the schools will use;
- developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them;
- amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct;
- leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and,
- reviewing and updating the Plan annually, or as needed.

D. Developing priority statements.

- The district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.
- The district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.
- We understand that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.
- The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and 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, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at his/her school.

## II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The District will provide ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited

to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include expectations for staff and their 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 will 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. 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 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 for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, mindfulness, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school and classroom planning and decision-making;
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students;
- integrating kindness and mindfulness into the school-wide culture;
- articulating these skills to facilitate the transition from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school; and,
- integrating social competency and digital citizenship into the curriculum

- C. Written notice to staff. The district will provide all faculty and staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct. Faculty and staff will be required to “sign off” on required training to document their participation.

### **III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

#### **A. Identifying resources**

The Concord Public Schools have the following staff that is qualified to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. The staff listed assists their school in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors.

- Grades K through 5 staffing includes a school psychologist and school social worker at each of the three elementary schools, and district-wide behavior specialist.
- Grades 6 through 8 staffing includes a school psychologist, four guidance counselors, and on-call psychologist.

The Concord-Carlisle Regional School District has the following staff that is qualified to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. The staff listed assists their school in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors.

- Grades 9 through 12 staffing includes 3 school psychologists, 4 social workers, 8 guidance counselors and on call psychologist.

The school climate and safety survey that will be administered to students, staff, parents, and guardians in the December of 2010, will assist us in evaluating the staffing we have in place as well as identify the need for additional resources and staff.

#### **B. Counseling and other services.**

The Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District participate in the METCO program. All faculty are required to take Encouraging Multicultural Initiatives (EMI) to better understand issues related to racism and discrimination. District Leadership expects that the lessons learned in this course will be incorporated into each teacher’s classroom management strategies. Additionally, we have a guidance counselor whose primary function is to supplement regular guidance services to better meet the needs of our Boston students and their families. We also take advantage of counselors and social worker at METCO, Inc. in Boston.

Additionally, the Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District support Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and straight identifying students. The Spectrum at CCHS has been in existence for 20 years and is an organization whose mission is to eliminate homophobic comments and the bullying of gay students.

Services and programs that CPS and CCRSD offer include:

- Weekly Clinical Team Meeting at CCHS
- Weekly Mental Health Team meetings at the elementary schools and the middle schools
- Access to school guidance services, school psychologist and Special Education Services
- Transition to outside therapy
- Intake program at CCHS for students returning from hospitalization or who have school avoidance (Lighthouse)
- Child study teams
- Counselor referral forms for teachers
- K12 Mental Health Team
- Monthly and as needed consultation with outside mental health professionals contracted by the districts
- Community resources connecting with staff
- Behavior modification plans
- Media literacy curriculum
- Social pragmatics course at the elementary level (Open Circle)
- Social skills groups with counselors (K12)
- Functional Behavior Assessments
- Behavior plans
- The Network (transition program for 9<sup>th</sup> graders)
- District behavior specialist

The school climate and safety survey that will be administered students, staff, parents, and guardians in the spring of 2011, will assist us in evaluating the programs we have in place as well as identify needed resources and services.

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, harassment, or teasing.

D. Referral to outside services.

The Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School district has establish a referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services using Project Interface Project INTERFACE maintains a mental health and wellness referral help line. It is a free, confidential referral service for participating communities. Callers are matched from an extensive database of licensed mental health providers. Each referral meets the location, insurance, and specialty needs of the caller.

**IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

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;
- engages students as active participants in the creation of PSA, podcasts and videos

- about bullying prevention behaviors and mindfulness;
- 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 developing empathy and engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- developing students' skills for resilience;
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference; and,
- developing student understanding that all members of the school community including themselves are responsible for understanding and following through with the plan.

Each school will begin the school year with an assembly and class meetings to review the Bullying Prevention Plan. This will be followed-up by small group instruction on specific parts of the plan.

Additionally, schools will engage students to create messages and visual reminders that will be displayed around the school which support kindness and "upstanding" behaviors. Instructional technology specialists will create a digital behavior checklist to remind students of their responsibilities as good digital citizens. We will create a bus behavior contract, a bulleted list of key things that students need to do to be respectful and appropriate on the bus. We will expect parents to discuss the contract with their child, sign it and return it to the school.

Currently, grades K through 5 have Open Circle and Lesson One as a social skills curriculum. Grades 6 through 8 learn about making healthy decision-making in Health class. Grades 9 through 12 about making healthy decision-making in Health class and the Freshman Advisory program helps students address social issues and transition issues at our high school.

**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 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.

There are a number of activities the schools within our districts are doing to engage students to create a sense of belonging and community and that encourage thoughtful and kind behavior. These include:

- Peer mentors at the middle school
- Teen buddies (a partnership between high schools students and elementary students)
- Peace table for problem-solving
- Positive behavior plans
- Community service initiatives
  - CCHS students donated over 10,000 hours of community service to the surrounding communities in 2009-10. Every student is required to perform 40 hours of community service in order to graduate. Performing community service is a research-based way of creating a positive school climate.
- Incident management teams
- METCO family Friends and Mentors
- Student support teams
- Lunch groups
- Cross grade buddies
- “Spectrum” CCHS’s GLBT/Straight Alliance
  - Spectrum has been supporting GLBT and straight identifying student for over twenty years at CCHS. Habits of Mind curriculum at the middle school
- Concord quality and Concord Kindness Award
- Freshmen Advisory 2010 - 11
  - All freshmen students participate in a program that provides them with two upperclassmen mentors and a faculty advisor. Students who have had difficulties with harassment have already come forward and shared their concerns with their mentors, who in turn, let an adult know. We also know that over 50 upper class leaders are setting a very positive tone for our school climate. The Freshman Advisory was developed based on *Changing Systems to Personalize Learning: The Power of Advisories* from the Education Alliance at Brown University.
- Student Advisory 2011-12
  - CCHS is creating a school-wide advisory program that will personalize the CCHS learning experience for every student. This program will start for all students 9-12 in the Fall 2011. It will provide all students with an adult advocate to help them navigate and access learning resources and make connections. The program will include a Bullying Curriculum that will be administered throughout the year. The Student Advisory program will be developed based on *Changing Systems to Personalize Learning: The Power of Advisories* from the Education Alliance at Brown University.

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

### **A. Reporting Incidents of Hurtful Behavior and Bullying or Retaliation**

Hurtful Behavior – Any and all verbal, written, physical or electronic attempt to harm another person or their property should be reported to the principal or his/her designee immediately.

Reports may be verbally or in writing. Electronic communication used to report an incident should not include students' full names.

Bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form,<sup>1</sup> a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report, however, the person receiving the report will be required to document the incident.

The school or 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 main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or 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 or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

Faculty, staff, parents and students will be required to sign a statement indicating that they have received and read the district's policies and procedures. The schools will keep a record of these signed statements.

### **Reporting by Staff**

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be hurtful, bullying or retaliation. It is the responsibility of the staff member to intervene to the behavioral incidents consistent with district's policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline first and then report it to the principal or designee as previously indicated. Our district regards faculty and staff's obligation to report as analogous to the mandate to report child abuse or neglect (51A).

### **Reporting by Students**

Students, who believe themselves to be a target of bullying, who observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are encouraged to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target or witness shall not, however, be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for Sample Incident Reporting Form.

Students 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.

### **Reporting by Parents or Guardians, and Others**

The district expects parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report.

Reporters need to understand that any report of bullying and retaliation requires the school to conduct an initial investigation. If you call to make a report, it will be documented and investigated if appropriate. Because of the school's responsibility to prevent bullying and intervene when incidents of hurtful behavior or bullying occur, it is advisable to file a report even if it isn't a complaint.

Students, parents or guardians, and others who want to report an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student will be able to access a PDF version of our Reporting Form on our website. A hard copy of our Reporting Form will be included in our back to school packets and will be available in school and district offices. The District will consider establishing a telephone "tip line."

### **B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.**

#### **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 will include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

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

#### **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 parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

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 will comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

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

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

### 3. Investigation.

The Principal or designee, upon receipt of a viable report, will promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying will be discussed.

The school principal or a designee will promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Report Form designed to document either hurtful behavior, bullying or retaliation. The investigation may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

The Principal or designee will assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality will be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred, he/she will take

appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal will consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The Principal or designee will contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the parents or guardians will be contacted and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation will be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school will document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file will be maintained by the Principal or designee.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

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. 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.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation. If bullying or retaliation is found, the action being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation will be communicated to the parents of the aggressor. 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, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations. If bullying or retaliation is found, the parents of the target will be informed of the school's plan to monitor the situation and to help ensure the safety of their child.

## E. Responses to Bullying

### 1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior to the aggressor. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/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; and
- 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 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.

### 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. Possible strategies may include but are not limited to

- Increasing adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur,
- Adjust transportation arrangements
- Change schedule
- Teaching skills that will increase the child's resiliency
- Notify relevant faculty and staff to alert them to the need for increased vigilance

#### 4. Follow-up

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.

## VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent education and resources. The district offers 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 or school. The programs are offered through our

- Center for Teachers and Parents
- Open Circle Program
- Concord-Carlisle Parent Initiative Organization
- Parent Teacher Groups
- Special Education Parent Advisory

We also benefit from partnerships with community organization such as The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

- The Elliot Center
- The Concord Clergy Laity Group
- Project Interface
- The Concord-Carlisle Community Chest
- The Concord Youth Services Coordinator
- Social Worker for the Town of Concord
- Concord Police Department – School Resource Officer

B. Notification requirements. Each year the school or 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 cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or 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 school or 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, cyberbullying, 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, § 370(b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying. It may be tailored to meet the specific priorities of the school or district. Alternative language is included in the draft priority statements in Part I.D above.*

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, 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 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, § 370, 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, § 370, as noted below. Schools or districts may add specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but may not alter their meaning or scope. Plans may also include additional definitions that are aligned with local policies and procedures.*

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, 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.

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.

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.

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, cyberbullying, 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.

- Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are encouraged to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.
- Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.
- A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.



# BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM

**1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

**2. Check whether you are the:** Target of the behavior  Reporter (not the target)

**3. Check whether you are a:**  Student  Staff member (specify role) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent  Administrator  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact information/telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. If student, state your school:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. If staff member, state your school or work site:** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Information about the Incident:**

**Name of Target (of behavior):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Incident(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time When Incident(s) Occurred:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible):** \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  Student  Staff  Other  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  Student  Staff  Other  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  Student  Staff  Other  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.**

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FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

10: Form Given to: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

**II. INVESTIGATION**

1. Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Interviews:**

Interviewed aggressor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed target Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed witnesses Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the aggressor?  Yes  No

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously?  Yes  No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION  Yes  No

Summary of Investigation:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

**III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION**

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

YES

NO

Bullying

Incident documented as \_\_\_\_\_

Retaliation

Discipline referral only \_\_\_\_\_

2. Contacts:

Target's parent/guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_

District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Law Enforcement Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Action Taken:**

- Loss of Privileges     Detention     STEP referral     Suspension
- Community Service     Education     Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Describe Safety Planning:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Follow-up with Target:** scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ **Initial and date when completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Follow-up with Aggressor:** scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ **Initial and date when completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Report forwarded to Principal: Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
(If principal was not the investigator)

**Signature and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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are needed to see this picture.