



Weymouth Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

2010-2011

Approved by the School Committee of the Weymouth Public Schools, December 16, 2010

Weymouth Public Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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BULLYING LEGISLATION SUMMARY

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed a new bullying legislation designed to expand a school district's obligations in terms of monitoring, reporting, and investigating all types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. This legislation contains an educational component for all staff and curriculum requirements for all students in grades K-12. This law applies to both public and private schools. (Please reference M.G.L. c.71, § 370)

All schools are required to create a bullying prevention and intervention plan. The following key components are required by law and are, therefore, contained within the Weymouth Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan:

1. A professional development plan must be established for all staff
2. Each district must establish a bullying prevention and intervention plan
3. A K-12 curriculum on bullying must be adopted for all K-12 students
4. Reporting requirements for all staff who witness or have knowledge of any bullying incident must be implemented
5. Investigation and disciplinary policies must be instituted for the act of bullying
6. When criminal charges may be appropriate, notification of law enforcement is needed
7. Resources and information will be available to parents and guardians including curricula, the dynamics of bullying, online safety, and cyberbullying.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Source: Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, Massachusetts DESE, August 2010

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.

LEADERSHIP

A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, the *Weymouth Public Schools' Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* was developed through a collaborative school community process. Representatives from the following groups were part of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Committee.

- Central Office
- Primary School Principals
- Adams Middle School Administrator
- Chapman Middle School Administrator
- WHS Administrator
- Police
- Special Education
- Primary Teacher
- Middle Level Teacher or Counselor
- High School Teacher
- High School Counselor
- Nurses
- Technology Director
- Town Athletics Director
- Custodian/Maintenance
- Bus Drivers
- Cafeteria / Food Services
- Parents / Guardians

Additional Groups and/or Organizations may provide ongoing resources for the district for information and data to assist in identifying the needs of the district as it relates to bullying prevention and intervention. These groups and organizations may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Weycare
- Weymouth's private schools
- South Shore Hospital
- Weymouth's various youth programs
- Weymouth Recreation
- Teen Center

Additionally, district administration met with all principals and principals consulted building based groups of students, teachers, support staff, and parents to involve additional representatives in the process.

A formal presentation of the Weymouth Public Schools' Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Proposal was given during a televised School Committee Meeting on November 18, 2010 to invite the public to make comments and suggestions during the development process. Local newspapers and television stations covered issues related to the plan and pending policy. An update was provided at a televised School Committee Meeting on December 2, 2010, again asking for additional feedback regarding the plan. Further revisions were made to the plan and a final version was submitted for School Committee approval on December 16, 2010.

Specific to the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy, a Policy Sub-Committee of the School Committee met at a meeting open to the public to update the existing policy. Based on a recommended policy developed by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees for 2010, the Policy Sub-Committee developed a new policy, which was presented at a televised meeting of the full School Committee on November 18, 2010 for the first of three readings. The final policy File: JICFB was voted and approved on December 16, 2010.

The administrative team will annually review the Plan and publicly report progress in implementing the Plan.

B. Assessing Needs and Resources

Curricula & Resources:

There are a variety of programs and curricula currently available throughout the PK-12 grades to address bullying prevention and intervention. Although schools are using different programs and resources, each school is addressing both prevention and intervention strategies. Below is a grade span summary of various programs and curricula currently in use:

Pre-School and Primary (Grades PK-4):

- Second Step
- Steps to Respect
- Hands are for Helping
- Words Can Hurt
- Student assemblies to help students identify bullying and strategies for dealing
- Child-life counselor provides small group student support and meets with parents
- Activities based on the book *Fill a Bucket* by Carol McCloud and *How Full is Your Bucket?* By Tom Rath and supporting web links to songs and videos
- Gender specific bullying programs
- Principal/psychologist lunchroom monitoring with “8 second interventions”
- Peer Mentoring
- Cross-grade Buddy Program
- Individual counseling
- Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain, Trevor Romain
- Joe the Biker
- Monthly Character Building
- Lunch Bunch pro-social group with school psychologist and speech therapist
- Weekly impulse control group with principal and school psychologist
- Review of Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Collaboration with Weymouth Police Department
- Annual parent seminars on bullying and cyberbullying
- Wellness curriculum addresses positive decisions, problem solving, conflict resolution

- Building character programs
- Numerous books focusing on anti-bullying and kindness
- Disciplinary procedures (parent notification)
- Monitoring of student reporting of incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment
- Anti-bullying and positive behavior/actions posters and bulletin boards throughout buildings to create awareness and reinforce acts of kindness
- Increased staff in identified “hot spots” such as recess and hallway/locker areas
- Students taught the difference between “tattling” and “reporting bullying”
- Upper grades mentor lower grades
- Thought for the day with theme of “Be the person you want others to be”
- School newspaper article on “kindness”
- Programs to foster community responsibility
- Clubs to promote working together in a positive and collaborative manner
- Various web-based resources

Middle Levels (Grades 5-8)

- Rachel’s Challenge
- Chain Links (Club created after Rachel’s Challenge Program)
- C.H.A.T (Chapman Homework After-school Tutoring)
- Girls’ Club
- District Attorney’s Office Presentation
- Sky High Movie and presentation by Guidance Staff to teams
- Best Buddies Program
- Guidance Annual Presentation to each team
- Make a Difference
- Camfell Productions “Dare To Move” – Dealing with goal setting/positive choices/bullying
- Girls in Cyberbullying
- Review of Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Collaboration with Weymouth Police Department
- Annual parent seminars on bullying and cyberbullying
- Wellness curriculum addresses positive decisions, problem solving, conflict resolution
- Building character programs
- Disciplinary procedures (parent notification)
- Monitoring of student reporting of incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment

High School Level (Grades 9-12)

- Rachel’s Challenge Presentation
- Rachel’s Challenge Training sessions
- For Rachel Club

- Guidance groups
- Health Class lessons
- Physical Education – 6 rotations on bullying topics
- Peer Mediation
- Peer Facilitation
- WCAT civic and social information
- Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)
- Review of Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Collaboration with Weymouth Police Department
- Annual parent seminars on bullying and cyberbullying
- Wellness curriculum addresses positive decisions, problem solving, conflict resolution
- Building character programs
- Diversity promotion
- Rotary Interact
- Words Not Weapons
- Best Buddies
- Girls Group
- Gay Straight Alliance and GLS Education Network Safe Space
- Monitoring of student reporting of incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment
- WHS Counseling Services
- Norfolk District Attorney’s Office Community Meetings
- Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)
- Peer Leader Training for Adolescent Depression Awareness and Suicide Prevention
- Dean’s Involvement – parent and student conferences

Bullying / Cyberbullying Data and Behavioral Incidents:

Data on all behavioral incidents are collected and recorded in each school by principals and their designees. This information is available at the school level, may be recorded in X2, the student information management system, and when appropriate, reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Weymouth Public Schools does not currently have a comprehensive process for systematically collecting and analyzing data; however, our goal is to develop a more effective process. Improved data collection will allow us to examine data to be used to guide our discussions, develop goals, provide appropriate and sufficient supports, and inform instruction.

Support Services:

The Weymouth Public Schools provides students at all levels with supports such as school psychologists, guidance counselors, adjustment counselors, social workers, behavior specialists, and school nurses as needed. Together, these specialists work as a team to provide in-class supports, interventions, progress monitoring, counseling, and staff consultation to ensure

appropriate interventions and support to ensure the emotion, behavioral, social, and physical well being of all students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All staff will be required to participate in annual professional development training effective for the 2010-2011 academic school year. This training will include both educational and non-educational staff, including but not limited to administrators, teachers, custodians, maintenance, office staff, coaches, drivers, club/activity advisors, and all paraprofessionals.

To expedite the training process, the Weymouth Public Schools implemented a train-the-trainer model to ensure that all staff is trained in a timely manner. Currently, over 40 educators have received instruction in conducting bullying prevention and intervention training through the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC)* and over 20 educators have attended presentations by the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office.

Standards - All staff will receive training that includes the following standards:

1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents
2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
3. Information regarding power differentials and the often complex interactions that occur between and among an aggressor, a target, and witnesses to a bullying incident
4. Current research on bullying, including
 - a. Students at risk for bullying
 - b. Indicators of bullying behavior
 - c. Categories of students at risk as aggressors
5. Information on the incidence and unique nature of cyber-bullying
6. Information on Internet safety issues related to cyber-bullying

Training Schedule

- Annual in-district training for all staff
- Initial training of 90 minutes minimum for all staff
- Additional training available for targeted staff including, but not limited to administrators, coaches, guidance and adjustment counselors, nurses, and other personnel more likely to witness bullying or receive reports of bullying
- Training is required for all new hires unless they can demonstrate prior adequate training
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention training will be added to the Teacher Induction Program

Additional Professional Development

- Specific extended cyber-bullying training
- Distribution of literature related to bullying and cyber-bullying
- Resources / links available on website
- Webinars and teleconferences related to bullying and cyber-bullying
- Out-of-district professional development such as provided by MARC, district attorneys' offices, legal offices, and other venues
- Additional targeted professional development has and will continue to be provided based on the needs and/or concerns identified by staff and administration. Examples follow:
 - "Ryan's Story", John Halligan, speaker, Norwell High
 - More information at <http://ryanpatrickhalligan.org/>
 - "Preventing Health Risks and Promoting Healthy Outcomes Among Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Questioning (LGBQ) Youth"
 - "Mean Girls" conference
 - "Teaching Students to Get Along"
 - "Bully Busters" workshop
 - Mass Aggression Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State College- Workshops
 - Girls and Cyberbullying
 - Train-the-Trainer sessions

* Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC), located at Bridgewater State College, is recognized throughout the Commonwealth as a leader in bullying and cyber-bullying prevention and awareness.

PRIORITY STATEMENT

The Weymouth Public Schools Fundamental Values:

- All students have the right to attend school in a safe environment.
- Each person should be treated with respect and dignity.

The Weymouth Public Schools expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a manner that demonstrates respect for individuality and diversity. All types of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation are prohibited. Any confirmed instances bullying will be subject to actions and consequences as outlined in the Weymouth Public Schools Bullying Policy.

The Weymouth Public Schools is committed to working with students, staff, families, the community, and law enforcement in preventing all types of bullying. Thus, the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* has been established for the prevention, intervention, and timely response to reported incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.

DEFINITIONS

As cited in *An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*, Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 and *A Summary for Parents and Guardians, and Student Handbooks* as prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Definition of Bullying

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Definition of Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying, 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 cyber-bullying.

Scope of Definition of Bullying

Bullying shall be prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- 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.

Bullying extends to occurrences:

- at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related,
- or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school if the bullying:
 - creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
 - infringes on the rights of the victim at school or
 - materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

The legislation broadly defines bullying both on and off school grounds. The Weymouth Public Schools interprets this to mean that the school is required to investigate alleged instances of bullying that may occur off school grounds if a connection can be found between the conduct and a hostile environment at school or how the alleged conduct disrupts the “educational process” at school.

Related Bullying Terminology and Definitions

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

Hostile environment 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 the student’s education.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is directed.

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.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND CURRICLUM PLAN

Per the legislation, every grade within the Weymouth Public Schools will implement a curriculum that addresses bullying prevention using age appropriate instruction. A standard, evidence-based curriculum program will be implemented for grades K-12, based on the statewide academic standards to be developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by June 30, 2011. Until such time that these standards are released, the following curriculum resources and activities will be used to guide a bullying prevention program that teaches students about:

1. Types of bullying including cyberbullying
2. Strategies for dealing with aggressors
3. Ways for students to report bullying
4. Conflict resolution
5. Respectful and empathetic approaches to working and playing with those who are different from you

Curriculum Resources – The following curricula will be used to guide educators in age appropriate bullying prevention and intervention instruction:

Grades	Program Name	Program Source/Publisher
PK-5	Second Step	Committee for Children
3-6	Steps to Respect	Committee for Children
7-8	Program to be investigated	TBD
9-12	Curriculum for Teaching Emotional Self-Regulation Skills	Massachusetts General Hospital
K-12	BrainPOP Video Series to include cyberbullying; email & IM; digital etiquette; bullying; internet safety; blogs; etc.	BrainPOP.com and BrainPOP Jr.
K-12	MARC Curriculum – when released and properly researched	Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, Bridgewater State College, MA

Programs and Activities - The following programs and activities will be used to support educators, parents, and support staff in implementing a bullying prevention and intervention program:

Grades	Program Name / Topic	Program Source/Publisher/Focus
K-12	Internet Safety and Cyberbullying Prevention and Intervention	Trained staff will conduct programs in which students receive age appropriate information regarding Internet safety

Grades	Program Name / Topic	Program Source/Publisher/Focus
7-12	Rachael's Challenge	http://www.rachelschallenge.org/
9-12	Shout It Out Video	Kingdom County Productions
K-12	Role Playing	Educator directed

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The bullying legislation imposes mandatory reporting requirements for *all* members of the school staff to immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation. Staff members must report incidents, which they have either witnessed or become aware of, to the principal, the school designee, or both. The form identified as the “Weymouth Public Schools Alleged Bullying Intake Form” can be found in the appendix section of this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. A copy of the reporting form will also be available in the following locations:

- Student Handbook
- Main office of each school
- Counseling Offices
- Guidance Offices
- Nurse's Offices
- Website

Anyone can report a bullying or retaliation incident, including students, staff, parents or guardians. Reports may be made in writing or orally to the principal or another staff member. Reports may also be made anonymously to the principal of each school, or to the Assistant Superintendent, Susan Kustka at 781-335-1460 ext. 20315, or at susan.kustka@weymouthschools.org.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying, cyberbullying 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 using the district's *Alleged Bullying Incident Intake Form*. 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.

Each school will make reporting forms available on their website, in the main office, guidance offices, and in the nurses' office. Use of a reporting form is not required as a condition of making a report. The *Alleged Bullying Incident Intake 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.

1. 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 bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. 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. 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.

1. 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, 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, witnessed bullying or retaliation, provides information during an investigation, or who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. 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.

- 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. The principal or designee may consult with police liaison's to assist in making this determination.
- 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 interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee 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 alleged 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 regarding the investigation.

- D. 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 actions are 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 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, 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.

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 or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. 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.

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.

INVESTIGATION, DISCIPLINARY POLICIES, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Investigation - Please reference the *Weymouth Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy*, and the *Bullying Investigation Procedures* documents in the appendix section of this plan.

The school principal or designee will conduct a prompt investigation of every report of bullying, cyber-bullying, or for retaliation for the reporting of a bullying incident. The principal has the following duties when incidents of bullying have occurred:

1. Take appropriate disciplinary action as outlined in the student handbook, employee handbook and district policy manual.
2. Notify the parents or guardian of the target and notify the parents or guardian of the aggressor
3. Notify the parents/guardians of the target(s) of actions taken to prevent further acts of bullying and/or retaliation
4. Notify the parents/guardians of the aggressor of actions taken to prevent further acts of bullying and/or retaliation
5. Notify law enforcement, when appropriate, if the principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action will follow the guidelines of the student handbook, employee handbook, and Weymouth Public Schools Policy Manual. Disciplinary actions will consider the age, intent, cognitive abilities, emotional status and actions of the aggressor(s) and may range from discussions with the involved parties to excluding students from school under the disciplinary code. The complete Weymouth Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy can be found in the appendix section of this plan.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout the reporting, investigation, and disciplinary process. Confidentiality will be used to protect anyone who reports bullying or retaliation, who

provides information during an investigation, or who is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

Special Education

As required by M.G. L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines that a child has a disability which affects “social skills development” or the student is “vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of the child’s disability,” the Team will determine what to include in the IEP to address the skills and/or proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to these issues. Cognitively appropriate resources will be used with special education students to assist in teaching bullying prevention and intervention skills.

Internet & Electronic Communication Device Use

The Weymouth Public Schools has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that guides the use of electronic communication devices and other technologies in the district. The AUP will be reviewed annually to ensure that the content of the AUP reflects the rapidly changing technologies and related safety concerns. All students, employees, and parents will be notified of the policy and will be required to sign the AUP.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

The Weymouth Public Schools is committed to ensuring that our students and staff feel safe and supported within the school community. The district will continue to work with students, staff, parents and guardians alerting all to the need for more heightened observation of bullying behaviors. Following investigations, if deemed appropriate by the principal, a personalized action plan may be developed to address the needs of the target and/or to work with the aggressor to change behavior and to recognize the harmful effects of his/her actions.

When deemed appropriate by the principal, the district will provide counseling or other support for both aggressors and targets. The district will also assist students and families with access to both school and community resources.

PARENT/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Parents and guardians will receive annual written notice of student-related sections of the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* and the district’s Internet safety policy. This notice will contain information related to anti-bullying curricula including the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The schools or district will make notices available to parents or guardians in hard copy and electronic formats, and in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will also be posted on the Weymouth Public Schools’ website.

The district will make resources available to parents and the community to assist in bullying prevention and intervention. Resources may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Access to BrainPOP and other bullying prevention and internet safety videos
 - BrainPOP login information can be obtained from each school's principal (Every school has its own log in and password)
 - Several BrainPOP bullying video clips are free without a subscription at www.BrainPOP.com and www.BrainPOPjr.com
- Rachael's Challenge presentation for parents - Rachel Scott, the first victim in the Columbine High School shooting. She touched the lives of thousands with her kindness & compassion as inspired by her many journal writings. The Rachel's Challenge program spreads her messages worldwide through powerful educational and corporate presentations.
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention links and resources on the Weymouth Public Schools website
- Parent informational sessions conducted by groups such as the Weymouth Public Schools, the District Attorney's Office, the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, etc.
- Distribution of *Parent and Guardian Bullying Prevention* literature

APPENDICIES



Definition of Bullying: 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 causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property; creates a hostile environment at school for the target; infringes on the rights of the target at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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 a: Student Staff member (specify role) _____
 Parent Administrator Other (specify) _____

Your contact information/telephone number: _____

3. If student, state your school: _____ Grade: _____

4. If staff member, state your school or work site:

Describe the incident in detail:

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): _____

Immediate Safety / Transportation Concerns? If yes, specify where: _____

Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it and indicate each as either a student, staff, or other):

Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ Date: _____
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

Form Given to: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

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 attach an additional page if necessary.

Please comment regarding how this incident disrupted the educational process.

Please describe any physical evidence including photos, text, drawings, or messages (phone, computer, etc.)

Were student(s) referred to law enforcement?

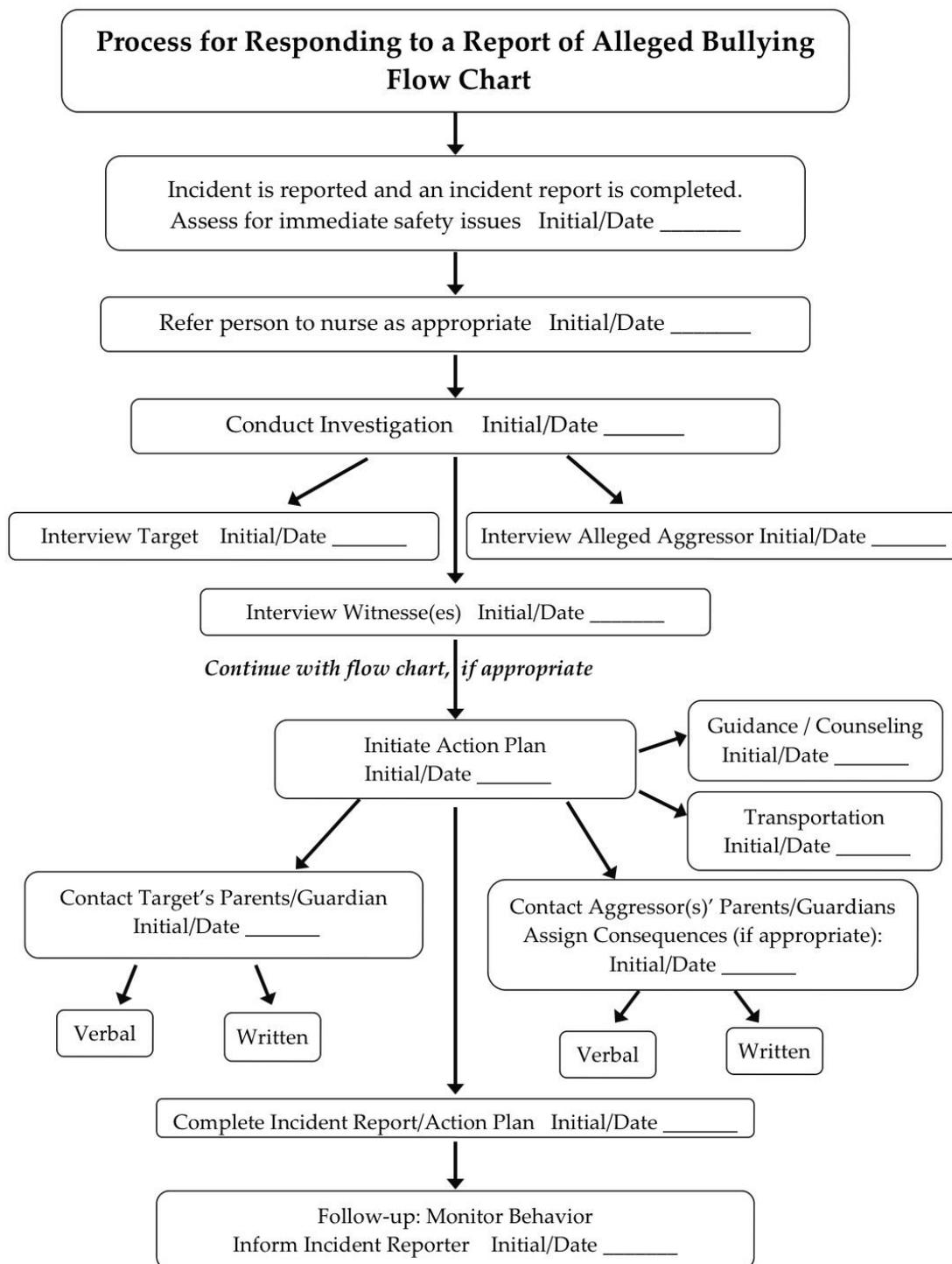
Was an arrest made?

Was bullying based on sex, race, color, national origin, and disability? If yes, refer to principal for possible civil rights investigation.

Outcome: Finding of Bullying Not substantiated as a bullying incident

Please follow the attached flow chart, *Process for Responding to a Report of Bullying*

APPENDIX B: Investigation Flow Chart



APPENDIX C: WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

File: JICFB

BULLYING PREVENTION

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

“Bullying” 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:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be access by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Weymouth Public Schools;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Weymouth Public Schools if the act or acts in questions:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

Reporting

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 obligated 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 any anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or member 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.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall 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 shall be discussed.

The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall 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 shall 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 shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall 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 investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation 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. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

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

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

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

Retaliation

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

Target Assistance

The Weymouth Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for K to 12 students.

Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the Weymouth Public Schools website.

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's
Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

LEGAL REFS: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
603 CMR 26.00
MGL 71:370
MGL 265.43, 43A
MGL 268:13B
MGL 269:14A

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing

JK, Student Discipline Regulations

APPENDIX D: Summary for Parents/Guardians & Student Handbooks

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

On May 3, 2010 Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This new law prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents. Parts of the law (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) that are important for students and parents or guardians to know are described below.

These requirements will be included in the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan"), which must be finalized no later than December 31, 2010. The Plan will include the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including parents and guardians.

Definitions

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

Bullying 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/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any 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.

Hostile environment 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 the student's education.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

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.

Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds,

- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place 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,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a school computer or over the Internet using a school computer),
- at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic devices, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts 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 prohibited.

Reporting Bullying

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the principal or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously. Please reference the WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan for reporting details and contact the building principal and/or Assistant Superintendent Susan Kustka at Central Office to report alleged incidents.

School staff members must report immediately to the principal or his/her designee if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals.

When the school principal or his/her designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Professional Development for School and District Staff

Schools and districts must provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally 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 cyberbullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Sept. 2010

APPENDIX E: WPS Employee Handbook Summary

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

On May 3, 2010 Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This new law prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents. Relevant sections of the law (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) are described below.

These requirements will be included in the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, which must be finalized no later than December 31, 2010. The Plan will include the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including staff, and parents and guardians.

Definitions

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

Bullying 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/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any 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.

Hostile environment 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 the 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.

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

Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited: (i) on school grounds, 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 that is owned, leased, or used by a school district or school and (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile

environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

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

Responsibility of Staff to Report Bullying

A member of a school staff is required to report immediately any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the principal or to the school official identified in the Plan as responsible for receiving such reports, or both. Please reference the WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan for reporting details and contact the building principal to report alleged incidents and/or Assistant Superintendent Susan Kustka at Central Office.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, counselor, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional.

Upon receipt of such a report, the school principal or his/her designee shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school principal or designee shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Professional Development

Schools and districts must provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally 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 cyberbullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.