

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Riverside School

Riverside Community Care

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I. Leadership

Leadership at all levels plays a critical role in the development and implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. As Leaders we have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and to promote an understanding and respect for diversity and differences. Leadership is defined as the entire school faculty, local community representatives, and parent advisory committee. Leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying current on research and preventative measures in order to effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the plan.

- A. Public Involvement: (M.G.L. c 71 sect 370) The Riverside School Plan is developed in consultation with all members of the school community, teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians and will draw upon the expertise of all of its members. This plan will be presented and evaluated yearly or as needed.

- B. Assessing Needs and Resources: Currently our school enrolls many students who have been the target of past bullying. This plan was developed in order to enhance the schools capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying, assess professional development needs, provide sound education around bullying, and to assess the need for support services. This plan will be presented both to the school faculty and the parent committee yearly for evaluation. In addition once every four years beginning with the 2015/16 school year the school will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary- developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our school. In addition the school will annually report bullying incidents to the Department.

- C. Planning and oversight: The principal or designee in conjunction with the quality management department will be responsible for receiving reports on bullying, collecting and analyzing data , recording and tracking incidents, developing or revising current policies and protocols under the plan including Internet safety policy , the principal or designee will be in charge of implementing and new or revised policies. The principal along with school staff members will review and plan for ongoing professional development and supports in order to respond to the needs of targets and aggressors, implement, assess and revise curricula, amend student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other student's will not be tolerated. In addition the Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the plan each year or as needed as well as involving parents around activities and updates as needed. In addition the principal along with school staff will lead parent efforts and distribution of information as well as reviewing and updating the plan yearly.

D. Priority Statement: The Riverside School is committed to providing a safe, supported and productive educational environment free from bullying for all students including students that may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics that may include race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. This will be done through but not limited to a highly structured therapeutic setting with access to clinical staff, participation in ongoing group therapy such as Coping with Conflict, direct instruction in social pragmatics and cooperative activities and ongoing Human Rights groups. We are committed to providing a place where students are able to experience personal growth and achieve their highest academic potential free of fear, harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation. 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 is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the school 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 except when a reported bullying incident involves the principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases the Quality Management Department shall be responsible for investigating the report and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target.

II. Training and Professional Development

A. Annual staff training: Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include: staff responsibilities 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. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years. The principal or designee will oversee the professional development plans of all staff who work with the students. The principal or designee will be responsible for annual training of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan for all school staff. As of Spring 2017, Riverside School will adopt the MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center) as its primary curriculum for training staff in Bully Prevention and Intervention.

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 on the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c.71 section 370, the content of school wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Age appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Age appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

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.

Additionally professional development will 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, anger management, and empathy for others;
- Engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students; and
- Engaging staff in the responsibility for implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the community, and bullying behaviors.

C. Written notice to staff. The school will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, through yearly training and review.

III. Access to Resources and Services

A. Resources: The following resources and curricula are identified for but not limited to bully prevention awareness and service implementation and will be reviewed and updated annually or as needed to reflect student and staffing needs as well as updates to curricula and current research.

- United for Human Rights: Bringing Human Rights to Life
- Helpguide.org Conflict Resolution Skills
- Pacer: We Will Curriculum
- Access to Clinical Staff
- Stopbullying.gov
- Riverside Emergency Services
- Good Character: Character Education – Live Wire Media
- Personal Growth and Development Groups
- CDC: Measuring Bullying Victimization, Perpetration, and Bystander Experiences: assessment tools
- Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center: A guide for Parents
- Mutual Respect Contract
- ERIC-Educational Resource Information Center: www.eric.ed.gov
- Take Action Against Bullying: www.bullybeware.com
- Stop Bullying Now: www.stopbullyingnow.com
- A Call to Stop Bullying: Stop bullying: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- Generation On: <http://www.generationon.org>
- Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center: <http://www.marccenter.webs.com>

Books:

- *Carlos Is Gonna Get It* by Even Emerson
- *The Skin I'm In* by Sharon Flake
- *The Misfits* by James Howe
- *The Revealers* by Doug Wilhelm
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *Speak* by Laurie Anderson

All students will have access to the above resources and will participate in weekly groups to address need area. In addition each student will be assigned a clinician that they will meet with a minimum of 1 hour per week.

B. Counseling and other services: Licensed clinicians, consulting psychiatrist, nurse, as well as other support staff are identified resources for students and their families. Each student is assigned a school clinician who is responsible for development of safety plans, identifying need for social skill groups, need for individually focused interventions, and assisting with the Bully prevention intervention services for all students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, or that are exhibiting bullying behaviors. If culturally and linguistically appropriate resources will be located outside of the current school environment then referrals will be made through the Riverside Community Care Outreach Services and/or Riverside’s Risk Management Team.

C. Students with disabilities: As required by M.G.L. c 71B, Section 3, and 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 service: The Riverside School is part of Riverside Community Care, which provides community outreach services that may be utilized if appropriate. In addition families have access to the schools master's level clinical staff.

IV. Academic and Non-Academic Activities

A. Prevention and Intervention Approaches: Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research, be evidences based and utilizing age appropriate instruction that emphasizes the following:

- Human Rights training
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaging in acted of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance.
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying, including the underlying power of imbalance
- Emphasizing safe and appropriate use of electronic communication and technologies
- Enhancing students skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communication
- Engaging students in a safe and supported school environment that is respectful of human rights and diversity
- Use of technology, scripts, and role play to develop skills
- Teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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
- support of students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

V. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation: Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be made orally or in writing.

- Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing.
- All school staff members are required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation that the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.
- A school staff member is required to report immediately to the Regional Director and the Human Rights advocate, when the principal or designee is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation that the staff member witnesses or becomes aware of.
- Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school staff members, may be made anonymously.
- The school will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, contact mailbox and e-mail address, on line access, as well as the Riverside Consumer and Human Rights complaint system.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school will:

- include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the intake packets for students and parents or guardians;
- make it available in the principal's office and the counseling office, and any other locations determined by the principal or designee; and
- 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.

Annually, the school will provide the school community, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurse, facilities, all school staff, students, parents or guardians, interns and consults with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee and the human rights officer will be incorporated in student and handbooks, on the school website and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents and guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff: A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee or to the human rights officer when the principal or designee is the alleged aggressor, when he or she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to

report as provided does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with the school or agency policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others: The school 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, or human rights officer when the principal or designee is the alleged aggressor. 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, or human rights officer when the alleged aggressor is the principal or designee.

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

- Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, clinical support, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining grouping 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 a student from bullying or retaliation who has reported bullying or retaliation, has witnessed bullying or retaliation, who provides information during an investigation, or who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

- Obligations to Notify Others

1. 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, 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.

2. 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.
3. 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 collaborate with the division director, quality assurance director, and with applicable school policies and procedures, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

- C. Investigation: The principal or designee in conjunction with the Quality Management department 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 along with the clinical coordinator or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and any other persons deemed as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the clinical coordinator where appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee and others involved in the investigation 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 policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

- D. Determinations: The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, the bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps 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 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.

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

E. Responses to Bullying.

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:

- offer individualized skill-building sessions based on the school’s anti-bullying curricula;
- provide relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with clinicians and other appropriate school personnel;
- implement a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meet with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopt behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- make 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 Act (IDEA).

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. One strategy that the principal or designee may use, is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

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

F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

We are committed to providing a place safe environment, free of fear, harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation. We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including

any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, by a staff member. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, by a staff member and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety.

Reports of bullying by a school staff member may be made by a student orally or in writing. Oral reports made to a staff member will be recorded in writing. Staff members are required to report immediately to the principal or designee, or Division Director and the Human Rights Advocate, when the principal or designee is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, however no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged staff member solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The school will make a variety of reporting resources available to students including but not limited to Process and Reports provided in Parent/Student Handbook, on-line access on school website and with human rights officer or Riverside's Human Rights committee.

- Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation by a staff member, 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, clinical support, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining grouping arrangements for the target in the school; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the alleged 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 a student from bullying or retaliation who has reported bullying or retaliation by a staff member or who has witnessed bullying or retaliation by a staff member, who provides information during an investigation, or who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

- Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation by a staff member has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target, 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.
- Notice to Another School or District: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation by a staff member has occurred, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the sending school of the incident. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

- Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation by a staff member, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

In making this determination, the principal will collaborate with the division director, quality management director, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

- Investigation: The principal or designee in conjunction with the Quality Management Department will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation by a staff member and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the age of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee along with the clinical coordinator or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and any other persons deemed as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged staff aggressor, target, and witnesses the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the clinical coordinator where appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee and others involved in the investigation will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation as will the Quality Management Department.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with human resources and 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, the bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target 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 and if a “stay away” order or other directive that the target must be aware

of in order to report violations.. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

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

VI. Collaboration with Families

- A. Parent education and resources: Each year the school will offer Parent Advisory meetings for parents and guardians that will focus on the parent components of the anti-bullying curricula and social competency curricula used by the school. In addition any pertinent information or data will be shared with parents and guardians. This information will be offered at a specific time if outside of the Parent Advisory meeting as requested by the parent.
- B. Notification requirements. Each year the school 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 will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school'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.

VII. Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- 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 through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- 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 the school 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. Problem Resolution System

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

IX. Definitions

Aggressor: is a student or member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation towards a student.

Bullying: as defined in M.G.L. c.71, § 370, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of the school staff 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.

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 § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment: as defined in M.G.L. c.71 § 370, 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.

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

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

X. Relationship to Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a publicly funded school or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and course of study of such publicly funded school on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. . Nothing in the Plan prevents the school 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 to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, §§41 and 42, M.G.L. c. 75 § 5, or other applicable laws, or school policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.