

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PLAN

November 2017

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Boston Public Schools
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Boston Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe, healthy and welcoming learning environment. Additionally, BPS is committed to ensuring its students experience equitable educational opportunities free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, prejudice and hate crimes. All community members are expected to treat each other with respect and appreciate the different and richly diverse personal qualities and skills of members of our school-community. This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is central to Boston Public Schools comprehensive efforts towards eliminating all violent, threatening, harmful, and disruptive behaviors and promoting learning across all settings. This comprehensive plan also seeks to enrich students’ lives by validating their sense of belonging and guiding their efforts towards achieving their personal and academic potential and becoming active and successful citizens in our diverse society.

Boston Public Schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior including bullying in all forms and types towards others in any school or at school related activities. Boston Public Schools will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, and take prompt, effective action to end that behavior and prevent its recurrence. Boston Public Schools will support this plan in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and family partnerships.

GUIDELINES

Bullying in all forms and types are part of a continuum of aggressive or sometimes violent behaviors. Some acts of bullying can and do constitute other categories of misconduct such as assault, battery, child abuse, or criminal activity and, as such, violate other Boston Public Schools policies. In such cases, principals and headmasters are obligated to follow appropriate reporting and response guidelines.

I. DEFINITIONS

Perpetrator (Aggressor) is a student who engages in acts of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a (student) victim (target) that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the victim (target) or damage to the victim’s (target’s) property;
- places the victim (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 victim (target)
- infringes on the rights of the victim (target) at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the internet. It includes, but it is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, facsimile communications and internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71 & 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying. Cyber-bullying shall include: use of digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

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 or complains about bullying, aids or encourages the filing of a report or complaint of bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

School Community Members consist of students, parents, staff, district or school independent contractors, and school volunteers.

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

Victim (target) is a student against whom bullying in any form or type, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

II. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The Boston Public Schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including bullying in all forms and types, cyber-bullying or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses and at school bus stops or in school-related activities. Schools will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying in all forms and types, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the victim's (target's) sense of safety. The Boston Public Schools will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian partnership.

Acts of bullying (in all forms and types), including cyber-bullying are prohibited:

- on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or a 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, 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 a school district, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the victim (target) or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the appropriate function of a school. (Principals, Headmasters and all school staff have a responsibility to report, follow up with incidents reported by students and more importantly investigate and implement safety and intervention plans for all students involved, including others implicated in the incident. This responsibility is applicable in all environments that bullying occurs regardless of the location the incident takes place.)
- 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. (If a Principal, Headmaster or School Personnel determines that a student knowingly retaliated against a student or person who provided information is also a violation of Boston Public Schools policies and subject to disciplinary action under section 7.2.7 of the Boston Public Schools Code of Conduct.)

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

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the Boston Public Schools has policies and procedures in place for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, staff, volunteers, independent contractors – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur, (see Appendix B).

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians or others and may be oral or written. To help our efforts, we have established a **Safe Space and Bullying Prevention Hotline: 617-592-2378** (call or text), staffed 24/7 by trained counselors. Oral reports made by or to a staff member must be recorded in writing. All employees are obligated to report promptly to the principal/headmaster or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation that staff member receives a complaint or report of or otherwise becomes aware of or witnesses.

Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other non-employees may be made anonymously (although such reporting will likely impede the ability of the district to investigate or respond appropriately). The schools will make reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, “The Boston Public Schools District’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form,” available on the district’s website, (see Attachment 2 for the Boston Public Schools District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Reporting Form and Attachment 3 for the Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Anonymous Reporting Form, found [here](#)).

Use of the Boston Public Schools District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Reporting Form is not required as a condition to making a report. Schools will:

- include a copy of the incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the school year packets for students and parents, guardians and caregivers;
- make forms available in the school’s main office, the counseling office, the school nurse’s office, and other locations determined by the principal or headmaster or designee;
- post it on the school’s website.
- provide the school community, including administrators, staff, volunteers, independent contractors, students, and parents or guardians with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation;
- provide a description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal, headmaster or designee, that will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district’s website and in information about the Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is available to students, parents and guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report promptly (orally and then in writing) to the principal, headmaster or designee when he or she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal, headmaster or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with District policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

Boston Public Schools strongly encourages 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, headmaster or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, by calling the Safe Space and Bullying Prevention Hotline (617-592-2378), but no disciplinary action will be taken against a perpetrator (aggressor) solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents, guardians and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided with practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or headmaster or their designee. All reports of bias-based bullying regarding race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, genetics or active military status will be immediately forwarded to the Office of Equity for review.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal, headmaster or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged victim (target) to protect the alleged victim (target) from possible further incidents.

The principal, headmaster or designee may determine that it is appropriate to contact-parents or guardians of the ‘victim’ (‘target’) prior to or during any investigation, to discuss and address safety concerns during the investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations 603 CMR 49.00.

The principal, headmaster or designee will take additional steps to promote safety after the investigation, as necessary. The principal, headmaster or designee shall document the safety measures taken. Responses to promote safety during the investigation may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan (a written plan is preferable); pre-determining seating arrangements for the ‘victim’ (target) and/or the alleged perpetrator (aggressor) in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member(s) who will act as a “safe person” for the ‘victim’ (target); and altering the alleged perpetrator’s (aggressor’s) schedule, and access to the ‘victim’ (‘target’) (for example, by revising the alleged perpetrator’s entry into and exit from the school building, and his/her hallway and stairwell routes during transition times).

The principal, headmaster or designee will also implement, as needed, appropriate strategies to protect from bullying and retaliation a student who has reported or complained about bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged incidents of bullying will be maintained to the extent possible given the school’s obligation to investigate and respond appropriately to the matter.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to parents or guardians:

Within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint, the principal/headmaster or designee must notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the ‘victim’ (target) and/or the alleged perpetrator (aggressor) of the allegations of bullying or retaliation, and-the procedures for responding.—Notice will be consistent with state regulations 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, nonpublic school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal, headmaster or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal, headmaster or designee of the other school(s) of the incident (and documenting the communication) 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 23.00.

C. Notice to Law Enforcement:

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal/headmaster or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the alleged perpetrator (aggressor), the principal/headmaster or designee 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 Boston Police Department.

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/headmaster or designee shall contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator (aggressor).

In making this determination, the principal/headmaster will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with local law enforcement/school resource officer, and other individuals the principal/headmaster or designee deems appropriate.

1. Investigation:

The principal/headmaster or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so; will consider all available information, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. The principal/headmaster or designee will complete the investigation as soon as practicable, generally not to exceed five (5) school days after receipt of the complaint or report, except for good cause (as documented in the investigatory file).

During the investigation the principal/headmaster or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others, who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances related to the complaint or report, as necessary to complete the investigation. Where deemed appropriate, the principal/headmaster or designee will conduct interviews of students in consultation with the school counselor. The principal/headmaster or designee will remind the alleged perpetrator (aggressor), ‘victim’ (target), and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal/headmaster or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process.

The principal/headmaster or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Except where this Plan otherwise states, procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with district policies and procedures for investigations and for possible disciplinary action. If necessary, the principal/headmaster or designee will consult with the Operational Superintendent regarding consultation with legal counsel pertaining to the investigation of or response to a complaint or report of bullying or retaliation.

2. Determinations:

The principal/headmaster or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal/headmaster or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to stop the bullying behavior, prevent its reoccurrence, and to ensure that the victim (target) is not restricted or limited in participating in school or in benefiting from the school's programs and activities.

The principal/headmaster or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, including remedying the effects of the bullying on the victim, and 2) determine what other responsive actions and/or disciplinary action are necessary and appropriate.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal/headmaster or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher (s) and or school counselor, and the victim's (target's) or perpetrator's (aggressor's) parents or guardians, to discuss concerns, including identifying with the perpetrator's (aggressor's) parents/guardians challenges that may have contributed to the perpetrator's bullying behavior, and for both students to access supports and services needed

Notice of Determination

Upon making a determination, the principal/headmaster or designee will promptly, and by no later than the next school day, try to contact by telephone the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the victim (target) and the perpetrator (aggressor), and to send them a letter or email, to provide notice of the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action will be taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation.

All notices to parents and guardians must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal/headmaster or designee cannot report specific information to the victim's (target) parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken, but should inform them of any corrective action taken to protect the victim, including a "stay away" order or other directive that the victim (target) must be aware of in order to report violations.

Upon completion of the investigation and determination of action, the report should be emailed to saws@bostonpublicschools.org for entry into the electronic database. All open reports will be shared monthly with the Operational Leaders and Safe and Welcoming Schools Specialists for follow up and review.

3. Responses to Bullying:

The Boston Public Schools have incorporated a range of individualized strategies and interventions that may be used in response to improve and enhance a student's skills or to prevent further incidences of bullying and/or retaliation.

a. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building

Upon the principal/headmaster 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 the perpetrator (aggressor) appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71 & 370.

Skill building approaches that principal/headmaster 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 school counselors and/or other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students improve and develop appropriate ways and alternatives to achieving their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to promote and enrich parental partnership and 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 referrals as needed and appropriate for additional supports and services

b. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal/headmaster or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal/headmaster or designee, including the nature, frequency, and seriousness of the conduct, the length of time the prohibited conduct has occurred, whether the perpetrator has engaged in any prior acts of bullying or retaliation, the age of the students involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the Boston Public Schools Code of Conduct and with the school's code of conduct/student handbook. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal/headmaster or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the Boston Public Schools Code of Conduct.

c. Promoting Safety for the Victim (target) and Others

The principal/headmaster or designee(s) will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment designed to protect the victim's safety, enhance the victim's (target's) sense of safety and the safety of other school community members.

Within one week following the determination and the ordering of corrective, remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal/headmaster or designee will contact the victim (target) to determine whether there has been a reoccurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive services are needed. If so, the principal/headmaster or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them promptly.

IV. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Nothing in the Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to address or remediate discrimination, including harassment, based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

Nothing in this 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 37H1/2, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, threatening, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this Plan covers the behavior.

Current Massachusetts Laws

- Assault, G.L. c. 265, s 13A
- Assault and Battery, G.L. c. 265, s 13A
- Assault and Battery with a Dangerous Weapon, G.L. c. 265, s 15A
- Assault with a Dangerous Weapon, G.L. c. 265, s 15B
- Civil Rights Violation, G.L. c. 265, s 37
- Assault or Battery for Purpose of Intimidation, G.L. c. 265, s 39
- Stalking, G.L. c. 265, s 43
- Criminal Harassment, G.L. c. 265, s 43 A
- Identity Fraud, G.L. c. 265, s 37E
- Malicious Destruction of Property, G.L. c. 266, s 127A (schools and educational facilities are covered under the statute as well).
- Annoying Telephone Calls, G.L. c. 269, s14A
- Hazing, G.L. c. 269, s17
- Disturbance of School Assembly, G.L. c. 272, s 40
- Threats, G.L. c. 275, s 2
- Dissemination of Harmful Material to a Minor, G.L. c. 272, s 28

Boston Public Schools Superintendent Circulars

- *Superintendent's Circular EQT-1*, Nondiscrimination Policy and Statement
- *Superintendent's Circular EQT-2*, Student, Family and Other Third Party Reports of Bias-Based Conduct
- Superintendent's Circular EQT-3, Sexual Misconduct Toward Students
- *Superintendent's Circular EQT-4*, Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity

- *Superintendent's Circular EQT-6, Sexual Misconduct Toward Employees*
- *Superintendent's Circular SSS-18, Bullying Prevention And Intervention Plan*
- *Superintendent's Circular LGL-1, Hazing Law*

V. LEADERSHIP

District and school leadership at all levels in the Boston Public Schools will play a critical role in the ongoing development and implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. School leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. School leaders have a responsibility for setting priorities and for staying up to date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying.

BPS submitted the Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and posted it on the BPS website in December 2010. The Plan has been and will continue to be reviewed and updated at least biennially, as mandated by M.G.L. c. 71 & 370.

Public Involvement. As required by M.G.L. c. 71 & 370, the initial Plan was developed in consultation with various constituencies. From May through December 2010, the Boston Public Schools reached out to parents, teachers, school administrators, students, central administrators, Boston Health Commission, and community stakeholders to develop this Plan. In addition, members of the Superintendent's task force met throughout the fall of 2010 to assist in the development of this initial Plan. This process will be conducted biennially. Consultation included, at a minimum, notice and a public comment period prior to adoption.

Assessing Needs & Measures. During the summer and fall of 2010, the planning team met with various school and city agencies to assess what work was already underway and how these resources could be coordinated. The District reviewed the Bullying Prevention curriculum that was already in place. There were early meetings to assure that the Student Handbook contained anti-bullying language and the AUP (Acceptable Use Policy) contained language defining cyberbullying. The student Code of Conduct was also amended to include language prohibiting bullying and clearly defining the consequences connected to it.

The School Department established a Safe Space and Bullying Hotline (617-592-2378) for anonymous reporting of bullying and safety related incidents in the Boston Public Schools. The Superintendent has placed the Bullying Prevention Intervention Initiative under the leadership of department of Succeed Boston program.

Planning & Oversight. The Boston Public Schools, in accordance with MA Law M.G.L. c. 71 & 370, has designated the principal/headmaster or designee of each school as the person responsible for receiving reports, recording incidents and investigating all incidents. The principal/headmaster or designee is responsible for responding to and resolving all cases.

The following school or district leaders are responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

1.) Receiving reports on bullying	Senior Director of Succeed Boston or his/her designee and school leaders
2.) Collecting and analyzing building-or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes.	Succeed Boston with Operational Superintendents and Operational Leaders
3.) Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports and for accessing information related to victims (targets) and perpetrators (aggressors).	Succeed Boston
4.) Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law	Succeed Boston
5.) Planning supports that respond to needs of victims (targets) and perpetrators (aggressors).	School leaders with support from Operation Superintendents and Operational Leaders
6.) Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use.	Office of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness/Succeed Boston
7.) Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet Safety Plan, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them.	Succeed Boston and School Committee
8.) Amending district-wide and school based student and staff handbooks and code of conducts.	Code of Conduct Advisory Council, school leaders, Office of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness/Succeed Boston
9.) Leading the parent or family partnership efforts and drafting parent information materials.	Office of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness/Succeed Boston / Office of Engagement

10.) Reviewing and updating the Plan biennially, or more frequently as needed.	Anti-Bullying Task Force
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Each School Community Member is responsible for:

- complying with this Plan, where applicable;
- ensuring that (s)he does not engage in bullying behaviors toward another person on school grounds or in a school-related activity;
- ensuring that (s)he does not retaliate against any other person for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing or a report or complaint, or for cooperating in an investigation of bullying;
- cooperating in the investigation of reports or complaints of bullying, retaliation, or bias-based bullying.

VI. PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES AND GUARDIANS

The Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies to support and partner with students, and families in an effort to increase the capacity of each of our schools as well as the district to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration in parental partnerships.

Bullying prevention and intervention curricula are available on www.bostonpublicschools.org. These are used by the schools, can be downloaded and a paper copy provided to parents and families include information about: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyberbullying. Parents and guardians will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Schools will work in partnership with School Site Councils and parent organizations to create parent resource and information networks. As requested, Safe and Welcoming Schools Specialists will join with these parent groups to offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the school(s).

Schools will annually inform parents and guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about how to submit a report, the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The schools will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and the Boston Public Schools Internet Acceptable Use 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 and guardians. Each school will post the Boston Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and related information on its website.

VII. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Boston Public Schools ongoing professional development plans reflect the requirements under M. G. L. c. 71 & 370 to provide ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, itinerants, school nurses, bus monitors, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and all other adults who are in contact with students on behalf of the District.

Annual staff training on the Plan: Boston Public Schools will offer professional development to all administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and all ancillary staff members under the employment of the Boston Public Schools. This professional development will include; Identifying Bullying Behavior, Types of Bullying, Roles of Perpetrators/Victims/Bystanders, Rights and Responsibilities under the Law M. G. L. c. 71 & 370, Information of our most at -risk populations and Internet Safety and Responsibility. Student Training will also focus on other skills including care, empathy and learning how to appropriately assert themselves in challenging situations.

In addition to the topics listed above, Boston Public Schools will continue to offer a 14 hour professional development throughout the year through Succeed Boston. The advanced professional development for “Bullying Intervention Specialists” (see attachment 1) will continue throughout the year. This intensive training will build and develop capacity at all schools to appropriately and effectively identify and respond to bullying and retaliation.

Schools will annually be provided with written protocols on reporting and investigating bullying allegations. Principals/Headmasters will be updated at as needed of protocol and policy changes in Boston Public School’s efforts in Bullying Prevention and Intervention. The Operational Superintendent will be responsible for updating Principals/Headmasters or designees. In an effort to maintain compliance, the Operational Superintendent will be notified of cases that have exceeded the timelines and his/her designee will follow up to ensure all concerns are addressed and responded to appropriately, and consistent with this Plan.

VIII. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Boston Public Schools will provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the school’s or district’s curricula. Curricula will be evidence-based. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches.

- listen empathically; start and encourage conversations with students about bullying;
- use appropriate tone, volume and an even rate and rhythm;
- be empathic and compassionate, encourage and validate the qualities in all your students;

- focus on feelings not just facts;
- do not overact as that can lead to anxieties amongst some students. Remain calm, unimpressed and professional;

- be nonjudgmental but proactive and ready to intervene when necessary;
- make yourself available, let students know that they are not alone and should seek adult assistance when bullied; they should not have to respond to bullying by themselves;
- encourage students to report bullying and always follow up;
- whenever bullying or any other type of harassment comes up in conversation, give a clear message that you disapprove of it; your silence could be mistaken or perceived as acceptance and approval;
- use restatements to clarify messages; specifically, what is being said by the student(s), the adult(s) and others involved;
- don't use peer mediation or restorative practices in cases of bullying because of nature of perpetrator-victim dynamics, especially the innate power imbalance that is typically present;
- help all students develop assertiveness and conflict-resolution skills and focus more intensely on students who are involved in bullying incidents;
- model and exemplify behaviors of respect and tolerance that you expect from your students;
- track bullying incidents and how they were addressed; share effective strategies with others;
- deal with bullying behaviors consistently and immediately and focus on outcomes, not punishments;
- always consider the needs of students with exceptionalities when they are involved in bullying incidents;
- foster respecting differences across all settings as this approach often leads to equal treatment and acceptance amongst students.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts

- creating a strong anti-bullying plan that will be enforced first and foremost by adults;
- empowering bystanders who witness bullying activities to effectively and safely intervene;
- promoting acceptance, tolerance and respect in order to improve and promote a school climate that includes and connect with all students in meaningful ways;
- recognizing the dynamics and complexities involved in perpetrator (aggressor)-victim (target) relationships;
- develop intervention programs that will reduce the prevalence of bullying behaviors and create a safe school climate that fosters positive learning experiences for all students;
- develop creative strategies to promote social competence for children who engage in bullying behavior, victims (targets) of bullying, and bystanders;
- to develop ways to help students who engage in bullying to find more socially appropriate and acceptable ways of interactions and building meaningful connections with others, especially those they perceive to be vulnerable or different;
- to build an effective support system for protecting victims of bullying.

IX. ACCESS TO SUPPORT, RESOURCES & SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting safe, healthy and welcoming school environments is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs and concerns of all students are first validated and then addressed. These students include victims (targets), perpetrators (aggressors), or bystanders of bullying in all forms and types, including cyberbullying. The Boston Public Schools will also respond to and provide support and services around the overall well-being of families whenever needed.

- a. Identifying resources: School counselors and other staff, together with building Administrators, will work to identify the school's capacity to provide counseling, case management and other services for students primarily (victims, perpetrators and bystanders) and their families if deemed appropriate and necessary. Schools will conduct an annual review of staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments, focusing on early interventions and intensive services, and develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. The Boston Public Schools will continue to work in collaboration with local and state agencies to adopt evidenced-based curricula and to provide additional preventive services to students, parents and guardians, faculty and staff.
- b. Counseling and other services: School counselors, and other staff, nurses, school psychologists and special educators provide a variety of skill-based services to students within the educational setting that include ongoing emotional support, risk assessment, crisis intervention, and help with community based counseling referrals, when appropriate and needed. School counselors, and other staff, meet with parents and teachers as needed to help address students' academic, emotional, and behavioral concerns as collaboratively as possible. School counselors, and other staff, work with administrators to provide linguistically appropriate resources to identified and needed families. School counselors, and other staff, maintain up-to-date information on community based mental health referrals as well as Community Service Agencies (CSA) within the local vicinity, providing services to Medicaid eligible students. School counselors, and other staff, school psychologists and intensive special needs educators work collaboratively to develop behavior plans and social groups specific to the needs of individual students and the groups as a whole. In addition, school counselors, and other staff, school psychologists, and special education professionals' work together to educate and support parents, conduct parent workshops, and apprise parents of outside resources to support and enhance their skills so they can continue to support their children.
- c. Students with disabilities: As required by M.G. L. c. 71B & 370, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines that the student has an autism spectrum disorder or has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- d. Referral to outside services: The Boston Public Schools will establish a referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services as needed. School counselors and other specialists will help students and families' access appropriate and timely services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and policies.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Protocols:

All calls to the Safe Schools and Bullying Prevention Hotline (617-592-2378) will be sent electronically to the school leader. More serious and repeated reports will also be forwarded to the Operational Superintendent. All reports of bias-based bullying regarding race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, genetics or active military status will be immediately forwarded to the Office of Equity for review. Please contact your OS and/or your OL for guidance, if needed.

1. All complaints filed directly with schools should be documented, with investigation and findings on the Safe Schools and Bullying Prevention Reporting Form (see attachment 1.)
2. The completed investigation should be forwarded to saws@bostonpublicschools.org. The reporting form is available on the BPS website and can also be found [here](#).
3. Upon receipt of the report, the school must notify (within 24 hours after receiving the report), the parent or guardian of the alleged victim of their intention to investigate the incident. *It is highly recommended that a safety plan be put in place for students who have been confirmed as targets and that interventions are documented in SIS for both the target and the aggressor.* (Template attached.)
4. Bullying incidents must be investigated and completed by the school leader, including action steps **within 5 school days**. All open cases will be distributed monthly to the Operational Leader and Operations Superintendent.
5. All allegations of staff on student bullying/harassment will be forwarded directly to the Operations Superintendent for investigation.

X. PROTOCOLS

How to Respond to an Allegation of Bullying:

Step 1: Upon receipt of a bullying allegation notify the reporter **within 24 hours** that you have received the report, that you are investigating and will notify them of your findings **within 5 days**.

Step 2: Set up a meeting with the alleged victim (target).

- Are there safety concerns?
 - If yes, set up a safety plan and notify the parent. Consider class seating, bus, lunch, recess and “specials”. With the help of the victim (target), identify a trusted adult the student can go to for assistance
 - Notify the trusted adult of the plan
 - Notify the teacher(s) of the allegation and the trusted adult
- take a statement from the victim (target) and get names of witnesses

Step 3: Set up a meeting with the alleged aggressor.

- Are there any safety concerns?
 - Develop an action plan that keeps the victim and aggressor separate and notify the parent. Think about class seating arrangements, lunch bus, “specials” and recess
 - Notify teacher(s) of the allegation and any safety or action plans developed.

- take a statement from the alleged perpetrator (aggressor)

Step 4: Document statements from all witnesses.

Step 5: Assess whether the situation meets the standard for bullying:

- power imbalance
- repeated
- intentional

Step 6: Does this allegation involve a protected class? (Race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, genetics, or active military status.) All reports regarding Civil Rights Violations of protected classes shall also be forwarded to the Office of Equity for tracking and, if necessary, further investigation, (Sections 1, 21.1 and 21.2 of the Code of Conduct).

- if yes, contact the Office of Equity, equity@bostonpublicschools.org;
- if no, proceed to step 7

Step 7: Complete Sections 2 and 3 of Attachment 1.

- document dates of meetings and calls with parents;
- document all interviews;
- determine if the allegation is bullying, retaliation, simple conflict or Code of Conduct violation;
- document action taken;
- schedule a date to follow up with all parties;
- document incident in SIS under the Conduct Module;
- return completed form to: Safe and Welcoming Schools
SAWS@bostonpublicschools.org.

Attachment 1

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SAFE SCHOOL AND BULLYING PREVENTION HOTLINE REPORTING FORM
(617) 592-2378

Succeed Boston/ Safe and Welcoming School Center
saws@bostonpublicschools.org

Please note: All allegations regarding bullying based on account of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, genetics, or active military status will be also submitted to the Office of Equity for review of potential civil rights violations.

1. Person Taking the Report: _____

Date _____ Time _____

2. Report from: Hotline ___ Superintendent's Office ___ Mayor's Help Line ___ Other ___

3. Contact information/telephone number of reporter: _____
(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.)

4. Check whether the caller is the: Target of the behavior Reporter

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

6. Does this allegation involve a protected class? Y or N circle one _____

7. (Race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, genetics, or active military status.) All reports regarding Civil Rights Violations of protected classes shall also be forwarded to the Office of Equity for tracking and, if necessary, further investigation, (Sections 1, 21.1 and 21.2 of the Code of Conduct). If yes, contact the Office of Equity, equity@bostonpublicschools.org

8. Name of Target (of behavior): _____

9. School: _____ Grade: _____

10. Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): _____

11. Date(s) and Location(s) of Incident(s):

12. Time when Incident(s) Occurred:

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

Name: _____

Student Staff Other

Name: _____

Student Staff Other

14. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary. (List evidence of bullying allegation, if any, and attach if possible (i.e. screenshots, photos, etc.))

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

15. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ Date: _____

16. (Please note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

17. Form Given to: _____

Position: _____ Date: _____

18. Recipient signature: _____ Date: _____

II. INVESTIGATION

19. Investigator(s): _____

20. Position(s)

21. Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____

22. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor? Yes No

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

24. Any previous incidents of aggressor involved in bullying or retaliation? Yes No

25. Summary of Investigation: _____

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

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

26. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

- Bullying YES NO
- Retaliation YES NO

If yes, go on to #27, if no go to #28.

27. If yes, describe Safety

Planning: _____

Follow-up with Target:

Scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Follow-up with Aggressor:

Scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

28. If no, incident documented as:

Progressive discipline used? YES NO
If yes, what?

Is it a Code of Conduct violation? YES NO

If yes, which?

29. Action Taken:

- Loss of Privileges
- Detention
- Suspension
- Community Service
- Education
- Other _____

30. Contacts:

Target's parent/guardian: _____ Date: _____

Aggressor's parent/guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature and Title: (If principal was not the investigator)

Date report forwarded to Safe and Welcoming Schools Center: _____

Date entered into database:

Please submit to SAWS@bostonpublicschools.org

Attachment 2

SAFE SCHOOLS AND BULLYING PREVENTION HOTLINE – (617) 592-2378
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Anonymous Reporting

1. Has the school been notified?

YES _____ **NO** _____

2. If yes, what action was taken?

3. Who was the school contact?

If reporter answers “no” to question 1

4. Is there a reason you did not contact the school?

5. Inform the caller that the school will be contacted and that if the caller leaves contact information they will receive a follow up call from the Safe and Welcoming Schools.

6. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ Date: _____

Attachment 3

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
14 Hour Professional Development
“Bullying Intervention Specialist Training”

Purpose - Teachers can take the knowledge obtained through this training and lead the Bullying Prevention and Intervention in their home schools.

Rationale - In order to increase capacity and effectively address bullying prevention and intervention, each school will have at least 2 staff complete a 14 hour training leading to certification as a “Bullying Intervention Specialist”. These Specialists will lead the annual bullying prevention and intervention training at their schools and will spearhead the creation and maintenance of Safe, Welcoming and Bully Free Schools.

Trainings will be posted on www.mylearningplan.com

Topics:

- Bully Prevention Intervention Law
- Suicide Identification and Prevention
- Welcoming Schools
- Civil Rights, sexual harassment and bias
- School Administration and Teachers Responsibility
- Aggressors/Targets/Bystanders
- Resources/services in school and with outside partners
- Bullying specific to LGBTQ students
- Social and emotional learning
- Parent Workshops
- Development and implementation of school-based programs