

# PLYMOUTH RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## BULLYING PREVENTION / INTERVENTION PLAN

2015-2016

### RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, RELATIONSHIPS: THE THREE “Rs” FOR SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

The Hingham Public School District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. Acts of bullying by students and staff which include cyberbullying are prohibited. Retaliation by students and staff against a person who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is also prohibited.

Our school district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target’s sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying and the district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this plan for preventing, intervening and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation. This Plan applies to students and members of staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals.

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

I.	Leadership
II.	Training and Professional Development
III.	Access to Resources and Services
IV.	Academic and Non-academic Activities
V.	Policies/Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation
VI.	Collaboration with Families
VII.	Prohibition Against Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation
VIII.	Problem Resolution System
IX.	Definitions
X.	Relationship to Other Laws
Appendix	Bullying Prevention/Intervention Incident Reporting Form



**Essential Element I: Leadership**

- A. Public Involvement in Plan
- B. Needs Assessment
- C. Planning and Oversight
- D. Priority Statement

**A. Public Involvement in Plan**

1. The Hingham Public Schools District Bullying Prevention/Intervention Plan was developed in collaboration with a Bullying Prevention Planning Task Force with 29 members, representing teachers and staff, administrators, parents, law enforcement and community representatives. Two informational summer meetings for the Task Force parent volunteers were conducted on Aug. 12 and 19, 2010. The Task Force met on Sept. 20 and Nov. 5, 2010. In addition to the meetings of the district Task Force, parent representatives from the group met regularly with each of the six principals with school councils (etc.) to develop and write the school-based Bullying Prevention/Intervention Plans.
2. Notice and a public comment period on the Plan was scheduled from Nov. 22 to Dec. 6, 2010. The proposed district Plan was announced in the superintendent’s newsletter and posted on the district website for comment. Principals at all schools included notice of the Plan and the public comment period in school newsletters and principal/parent list serves.
3. The Hingham School Committee approved the Plan at the Dec. 6, 2010 school committee meeting.

School: The following groups were consulted in the development of the Plan: Parent liaisons to the district, the Bullying Prevention Committee, PTO and the PRS School Council.

The various groups offered suggestions for using surveying techniques and interpreting surveys, conducting needs assessments, providing administration ideas and concerns from the parent population, and developing & communicating the Plan to parents.

**B. Needs Assessment**

District/school leaders, with input from families and staff, assessed adequacy of current programs, reviewed current policies/procedures, reviewed available data on bullying and assessed available resources to identify areas of need and set priorities. At a district Leadership Team meeting on Oct. 28, 2010, school-based and district administrators and department resource leaders (37) completed a comprehensive needs assessment to identify strengths, resource gaps and significant areas of need. The needs assessment summary was shared and input was collected from the parents and staff at the Nov. 5 Task Force meeting.

Based on the needs assessment findings, the following priorities were established and action steps were planned and completed:

1. School Committee Policy: Definitions/Prohibition of Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation
2. School Committee Policy: Internet Safety
3. Administration: Procedures to Report and Respond to Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation

At the school level, students, staff and parents will be surveyed utilizing the MARC surveys. Survey results and the collection of additional data will be used on an ongoing basis to inform decision-making and planning for school-based bullying prevention/intervention initiatives.

At least once every four years beginning with the 2015-16 school year, the district will administer a DESE-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually

report bullying incident data to the Department.

Similar tools to the student survey can be used with faculty, staff and parents/guardians to assist in determining school climate needs.

*School:* The Principal Chuck Cormier and Assistant Principal Melissa Smith respectively, will conduct a needs assessment utilizing Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) surveys for parents, teachers, and some students. The documents will be completed online with MARC aggregating the results. The resulting data will be utilized during parent, teacher student training sessions, for the development of the Plan with a particular focus on curriculum development and program assessment, for communication within the school and district, and for developing training packages. Student experiences with bullying will be addressed through surveys or class discussions.

**C. Planning and Oversight**

<p>District:</p> <p>The following district leaders and groups are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning professional development: Ellen Keane, Assistant Superintendent</li> <li>• Developing/revising curriculum: Ellen Keane; Heather Lewallen, School Counseling Director; Karen Beatty, Health Education Resource Teacher</li> <li>• Developing new/revised policies and procedures: Dorothy Galo, Superintendent; Policy Subcommittee, School Committee</li> <li>• Amending Codes of Discipline handbooks to make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated: Dorothy Galo</li> <li>• Leading district parent/family engagement/information: Dorothy Galo, Ellen Keane</li> <li>• Reviewing/updating Plan annually: Dorothy Galo, Ellen Keane</li> </ul>	<p>School:</p> <p>The leadership team of Chuck Cormier, Principal; Melissa Smith, Assistant Principal; Tina Wehner, technology specialist; A.C. Decker, school adjustment counselor; and Mary Ann Cushing, school psychologist, will manage planning and oversight.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Principal and Assistant Principal will receive reports of bullying and retaliation.</li> <li>2. School Adjustment Counselor, Technology Specialist, and School Psychologist will collect, aggregate, and assesses building data for problems and patterns.</li> <li>3. The school adjustment counselor and school psychologist will develop a system for tracking reports.</li> <li>4. The assistant principal will develop a plan for professional development.</li> <li>5. The school adjustment counselor and school psychologist will plan supports for the needs of the aggressor and target and implement with the district's curriculum in conjunction with classroom teachers.</li> <li>6. The leadership team will revise current policies under the Plan and amend student and staff handbooks to make clear that bullying by school staff or other students will not be targeted.</li> <li>7. Parent liaisons will publicize efforts and draft parent information materials to educate parents and children on bullying prevention.</li> <li>8. The leadership team and parent liaisons will review and update the plan on a yearly basis or as necessary.</li> </ol>
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**D. Priority Statements**

It is the intent of Plymouth River School to incorporate our slogan into the Plan: At Plymouth River School we strive to be the magical three: Polite, Responsible, and Safe. Two of our core values address our efforts at PRS to develop and implement the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan: (1) all members of our community will be treated with tolerance, openness, and respect. (2) Learning must occur in a supportive and non-threatening environment where the uniqueness of each person's individual talents, abilities, and learning styles is recognized. Through our school philosophy based on the tenets of Responsive Classroom and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support and our bullying prevention curriculum, we believe that PRS is and will be a safe environment for all students. In the event that bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation takes place, we will take prompt action to end the behavior and restore the target's sense of safety.

The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the principal or the assistant principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and the other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target. If the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the school committee, or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and

other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

**Essential Element II: Training and Professional Development**

- A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan
- B. Ongoing Professional Development
- C. Written Notice to Staff

**A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan**

District:

1. Introductory district trainings on the Bullying Prevention/Intervention Law including definitions, staff duties, an overview of steps taken by principal/designee(s) upon receipt of bullying/retaliation report, and overview of bullying prevention curriculum K-12 were conducted on the following dates:
  - Administration: Leadership Team meetings
  - Teachers and staff: school opening faculty meetings and early release/inservice trainings
  - Para-educators: school opening para-educator meetings and inservice training
  - Coaches:
  - Bus drivers:
  - Cafeteria, custodians/maintenance and administrative assistants:

2. Annual training shall be provided for school employees in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying, including engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors.

*School:* The assistant principal, principal, and school adjustment counselor will organize and implement the training package. Staff will be notified that those reporting bullying and retaliation will include any member of the staff but not limited to educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, and bus driver.

**B. Ongoing Professional Development**

District:

1. District representatives from all six schools attended and were certified at the MARC Train-the-Trainer session: Oct. 7, 2010
2. MARC “certified” staff conducted ongoing professional development including the required elements:

Ongoing professional development programs on social/emotional development and school climate have been conducted with staff. These programs include Responsive Classroom, Second Step/Steps to Respect and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS).

District professional development addressing ways to prevent/respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities were conducted as follows:

  - Training was provided for all districtwide special education staff on the bullying law, definitions, identification of signs of bullying, protocol to address bullying, harassment and teasing, modifications of the HPS social skills curriculum, problem solving and conflict resolution
  - Further training was provided for districtwide special education chairpersons/school psychologists

*School:* The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. The school plans to utilize the Massachusetts

Aggression Reduction Center's (MARC) Power Point presentation for training school staff, which will include teachers, para-educators, cafeteria staff, secretarial staff, and administrators. The Power Point addresses the following points: what is and is not bullying (power differential and one-sided), recognizing bullying accurately, gateway behaviors and responses, social dynamics, strategies to prevent bullying, interventions for targets and aggressors, preventing cyberbullying, the latest trends in elementary cyberbullying, motives, and frequency of cyberbullying; who participates in bullying; gender differences in bullying; and types of bullying.

Through our technology specialist, students will receive training in internet safety issues that relate to cyberbullying, including such examples as cell phone use, instant messages, the internet, and social networking sites.

Through the development process of an Individualized Education Programs (IEP) all teachers, the school adjustment counselor, and the school psychologist are aware of including interventions and services that would address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for a student with a disability who the special education team determines is vulnerable to or may participate in bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability. This will also include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Staff training in the Responsive Classroom occurs on a yearly basis for faculty who are new to the district or those who have not taken the opportunity to participate in the weeklong course. All teachers receive training in our bullying prevention curriculum, Steps to Respect and Second Step. The above areas and additional readings promoted by the school include modeling respectful language, respect for diversity and difference and empathy for others, building relationships, classroom behavior management systems including rules and consequences, positive behavior interventions, application of disciplinary practices, teaching students skills of positive communication and anger management, involving students in classroom planning and decision making, and maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students. Teachers are trained in the use of morning meeting, all school meeting, and classroom problem-solving meetings as venues for delivering the above areas to our students.

**C. Written Notice to Staff**

District:

Annual written notice of the Plan will be published in the HPS Employee Handbook and distributed to all staff at the beginning of each school year, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff.

**Essential Element III: Access to Resources and Services**

- A. Identifying Resources
- B. Counseling and Other Services
- C. Students with Disabilities
- D. Referral to Outside Services

**A. Identifying Resources**

District:

1. The Director of School Counseling completed a process to review/map district counseling and other services by reviewing school counseling staff levels and student to counselor ratios. Counseling responsibilities and capacity to provide services offered as well as available community services will continue to be reviewed annually. (completed Oct. 15, 2010)
2. The following district existing and needed resources were identified:  
Strengths: Existing Second Step and Steps to Respect curriculum in grades K-8  
Responsive Classroom and PBIS at elementary level  
Health class curriculum and counseling seminars in grades 9 and 10  
Programming offered to grades 9-12 – Rachel’s Challenge (Sept. 9, 2010)  
Suicide Prevention Peer Leader programming for grade 9 (completed Fall 2010)  
Collaboration with outside community resources such as South Shore Mental Health, Youth Health Connection, and South Shore Coalition of Independent Therapists  
Needs: Cyberbullying lessons for K-5  
Bullying prevention/intervention curriculum integrated in grade 9/10 health classes/counseling seminars  
Bullying and cyberbullying prevention for grades 11 and 12
3. Recommendations/action steps to fill resource and service gaps:
  - Explore supplemental curriculum and programming to address bullying and cyberbullying in grades K-5
  - Adapt and integrate bullying and cyberbullying prevention curriculum more fully in grades 9 and 10 (Winter/Spring of 2011)
  - Develop bullying and cyberbullying prevention curriculum and programming in conjunction with health department in grades 11 and 12 (Spring 2011)

School:

1. The school will review annually and provide ongoing monitoring of student/counselor ratio and responsibilities in order to determine the capacity for providing counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families.
2. This will include a review of current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on preventative training, early interventions and intensive services.
3. The school will develop recommendations and action steps to address resource and service gaps.
4. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support committee (PBIS) will identify behavioral problems areas in the school and develop language to describe appropriate student behavior in those areas that aligns with the school's slogan: Polite, Responsible and Safe. This committee will develop and implement school-wide procedures and interventions to change student and faculty behavior, leading to a more positive school culture.

**B. Counseling and Other Services**

District:

District staff/service providers and counseling and other services have been identified:

- Second Step and Steps to Respect curriculum provided by school adjustment counselors, school psychologists, and classroom teachers in grades K-5
- Second Step curriculum provided by school counselors in grades 6-8
- Social skills intervention provided by school adjustment counselors in grades K-8, and grades 9-12 as needed
- Behavioral intervention plans completed by school adjustment counselors and school psychologists K-12
- Threat Assessment Protocol developed by School Adjustment Counselors and School Counselors in place K-12

School:

1. The adjustment counselors will identify availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the school and district.
2. As needed, the adjustment counselors will identify possible linkages with community based organizations, including Community Service Agencies (CSAs) for Medicaid eligible students.
3. The adjustment counselors will develop safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation. Plans may also be developed for students who have been identified as exhibiting bullying behavior.

**C. Students with Disabilities**

District:

1. In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71B Sec. 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, (Bullying Law), the special education team will take under consideration the requirements whether or not 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 their disability. Such concerns will be addressed in the student's IEP.
2. Special Education Chairperson/School Psychologists will share instruction responsibilities in Second Step and Steps to Respect with school adjustment counselors at the elementary level.
3. Special Education Chairperson/School Psychologists will use Functional Behavioral Assessments, Behavioral Intervention Plans and ongoing collaboration with staff, students and parents to address concerns related to bullying.

School:

1. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
2. If the IEP Team makes the determination that as a function of the student's disability, he/she may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing and/or may have deficiencies in social skill development, accommodations will be indicated in the IEP.
3. If appropriate, the IEP Team will develop goals and objectives relating to social skill development and indicate services on the Service Delivery page of the IEP.
4. The student will have access to the district's social skills training programs, which include Second Step and Steps to Respect.
5. The student will have access to the school counselor.

**D. Referral to Outside Services**

District:

1. District referral protocols have been evaluated/revised as needed:
  - Creation and implementation of Bullying Prevention/Intervention Incident Report Form K-12 (Dec., 2010)
  - Instructional Student Intervention Team (ISIT) process and procedures in place K-12
  - District Threat Assessment protocol in place grades K-12
2. District established referral protocol for referring students/families to outside services
  - Formalization of written protocol (Winter/Spring 2011)

School:

1. The adjustment counselors will maintain updated lists of licensed mental health practitioners or service providers that will be available to families.
2. The adjustment counselors will be available to help families access appropriate and timely outside services.
3. The referral process will be reviewed annually.

**Essential Element IV: Academic and Non-academic Activities**

- A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches
- B. Review Plan with Students
- C. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts

**A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches**

District:

- Hingham Public Schools utilize the Second Step/Steps to Respect evidence-based curriculum programs (Committee for Children) in K-8. In grades K-3, designated Second Step lessons are taught by classroom teachers, school adjustment counselors and/or school psychologists. In grades 3-5, adjustment counselors also teach bullying prevention/intervention lessons using Steps to Respect. Developmentally appropriate cyberbullying lessons will be added in grades K-5. The Second Step middle school curriculum has been revised to include bullying/cyberbullying instruction.
- In grades 9-12, evidence-based bullying prevention/intervention curriculum will be integrated into the grades 9/10 health education and school counseling services utilizing lessons from the “Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders” unit of the Teenage Health Modules curriculum.
- In grades 11 and 12, administrators and staff will develop a plan to implement bullying prevention approaches.

Bullying prevention curricula is selected based on evidenced based research. Plymouth River School will at a minimum implement the School Counseling Department’s recommendations for elementary social health curriculum.

**B. Review Plan with Students**

District:

Through the use of PBIS and Responsive Classroom, clear expectations for students are set in each classroom and for the school as a whole. A matrix was developed by the PBIS Committee that sets expectations for student behavior in each area of the school outside of the classroom. At the weekly All School Meeting, student expectations are reinforced. Two examples of currently used positive behavioral supports include: (1) the recognition of two classrooms each week that are observed to be quiet in the hall and have the lockers neat and closed during the day, and (2) the recognition of a bus line that is observed to be quiet and well-mannered while waiting for their bus to be dismissed. The programs that are currently in use including PBIS, Responsive Classroom, Second Step and Steps to Respect, all use modeling, teaching and practicing. Effective problem solving strategies are taught as part of the Second Step curriculum, are reinforced in classroom and used when a student requires discipline. The internet safety policy is stated in the student handbook. The Voyagers afterschool program which is run by the PTO offers students the opportunity to pursue areas of interest and success in reading is fostered through Mad about Science and the 1000 Book Club. Notices about community programs are sent home to parents in the Weekly Wizard newsletter. There are also unique opportunities that come up during the year such as thee all school Community Service and the Fifth Community Service. These clubs were established to encourage service learning. Fifth graders are provided with opportunities to interact with seniors at the senior center by serving lunch and breakfasts or visiting nursing homes. The entire school supports and participates in activities that help raise money, food, and clothing for the less fortunate. Big Friends Little Friends establishes connections between classrooms between younger and older students. The program fosters a tutor-tutee relationship between students allowing older students to feel empowered while gaining in self-esteem and younger students receiving the benefits of positive modeling by their older friends. PBIS also established a passport system as a way to introduce new students to key adults in the building.

<b>C. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts</b>
District:
Schoolwide climate and behavior management programs have been implemented K-12 at all schools. At the elementary level, K-6 staff have been trained in the Responsive Classroom approach and this approach has been implemented at all four schools. In addition, all four elementary schools have implemented school-based Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) programs. At the secondary level, the middle school and high school have ongoing climate committees and a variety of student leadership and support initiatives have been implemented.

**Essential Element V: Policies / Procedures for Reporting / Responding to Bullying and Retaliation**

- A. Reporting Bullying / Retaliation
- B. Responding to Bullying / Retaliation Report – Allegations of Bullying by a Student
- C. Investigation
- D. Determinations
- E. Responses to Bullying
- F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

**A. Reporting Bullying / Retaliation**

District:

1. Reports of bullying or retaliation should be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports can go directly to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. Plymouth River School will make available a variety of reporting resources, including (1) an Incident Reporting Form (2) a voice mailbox, (3) a dedicated mailing address, (4) an email address. (5) online anonymous reporting form.

2. The use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. Plymouth River School will (1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the opening year packet for students and parents or guardians. (2) The Incident Reporting Form will be available in the main office, the counseling office, and the nurse's office. (3) It will also be posted on the Plymouth River School website.

3. At the beginning of each school year, Plymouth River School will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in the student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

4. Reporting by staff - A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

5. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others - The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

## **B. Responding to Bullying / Retaliation – Allegations of Bullying by a Student**

District:

### **1. Safety**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

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

### **2. Obligations to notify others**

#### **a. Notice to parents or guardians**

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

#### **b. Notice to another school or district**

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

#### **c. Notice to law enforcement**

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the Hingham Police Department. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and established agreements with the Hingham 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 the school, the principal or designee shall contact the Hingham Police Department if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

### C. Investigation

District:

The investigation steps are as follows:

1. Bullying/retaliation report is made to principal/designee.
2. Incident Report Form completed by staff, student, parent/guardian or others and forwarded to principal/designee.
3. Upon receipt of a viable report, the principal or designee will promptly contact the parents/guardians of the alleged target and alleged student aggressor.
4. The principal or designee will interview the target(s) and alleged student aggressor(s), students, staff, witnesses, parents/guardians and others as necessary.
5. The principal or designee will remind the target(s), alleged student aggressor(s), and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
6. To the extent practicable, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigation process.

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parent or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged **student** aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

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

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

### D. Determinations

District:

District determination procedures are as follows:

1. The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances.
2. If bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will determine what remedial, responsive or disciplinary action is necessary.
3. The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target(s) and student aggressor(s) about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what actions are in place to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation and the procedures for responding to bullying.
4. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.
5. If the bullying or retaliation involves students from other schools, the principal or designee will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other schools so that appropriate action may be taken, in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations.
6. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after the investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor(s), the principal or designee will

notify the local law enforcement agency, consistent with requirements and locally established agreements.

7. The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the DESE problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or 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.

## **E. Responses to Bullying**

District:

### 1. Teaching appropriate behavior through skill-building

Upon principal or designee determination 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, 370(9)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula (Second Step, Steps to Respect, Responsive Classroom).
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with adjustment counselors, school psychologists and other appropriate personnel.
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports (PBIS) to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals.
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home.
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills.
- Making a referral for evaluation.

### 2. Taking disciplinary action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the Plymouth River School or Hingham Public School's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

(IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

### 3. Promoting safety for the target and others

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others, as well. 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 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**

District:

1. Reporting: Staff members, students, parents or guardians or others who witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation involving a student by a staff member will report it to the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor.
2. Responding: Before and during the investigation of the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents, as well as, for students who report, witness, or provide information about the report of bullying by a staff member.
3. Investigation: Upon receipt of a viable report, the principal or designee will contact the parents or guardians of the alleged target. The principal or designee will promptly investigate by interviewing students, staff, witnesses, parent or guardians and others as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
4. Determination: The principal or designee will determine if bullying or retaliation of a student by a staff member is substantiated and will determine what remedial action, responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target if bullying or retaliation is found and what action is being taken to prevent further acts. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after 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 Hingham Police Department.

<b>Essential Element VI: Collaboration with Families</b>
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- |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|
| A. Parent Education and Resources |
| B. Notification Requirements      |

<b>A. Parent Education and Resources</b>
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District:

1. The school will inform parents and guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum that will be taught. The information will be shared at each grade level during curriculum night. The comprehensive curriculum plan for the school will be available on the web site and a copy will be made upon request.
2. All of the take-home handouts used for the bullying prevention lessons will be available on the web site. Copies of the take-home handouts will be sent home (different for each grade level) after the connected lesson is taught. Parents are encouraged to discuss the information taught in the classroom, as well as the review provided on the take-home handout.
3. In collaboration with the PTO and/or the School Council, the parent community will be educated about the bullying plan. This will include a parent program that focuses on the parental components of the anti-bullying curriculum, along with other social competency curricula used by the school.

<b>B. Notification Requirements</b>
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District:

Each year in the Parent/Student Handbook, the school will inform parents or guardians about anti-bullying curricula being used. The school will provide written notice about the student related sections of the plan and the school districts internet policy. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety.

**Essential Element VII: Prohibition Against Bullying / Retaliation**

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) At a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights of 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 program.

**Essential Element VIII: Problem Resolution System**

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

## Essential Element IX: Definitions

Aggressor is a student **or** a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying 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 a school staff** of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- (i) Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- (ii) Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- (iii) Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- (iv) Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- (v) Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet posting. 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.

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

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

**Essential Element X: Relationship to Other Laws**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school and district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study at such public school on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identify 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 or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H1/2, M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 41 and 42 other applicable laws, or local school or district policies or collective bargaining agents in response to violent, harmful or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

**BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**  
**Part I – Information**

1. **Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:**  
 (Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)
2. **Check whether you are the:**      **Target of the behavior**       **Reporter (not the Target)**
3. **Check whether you are a:**     **Student**       **Staff member (specify role)**  
     **Parent**       **Administrator**       **Other (specify)**
- Your contact information/telephone number:**
4. **If student, state your school:**      **Grade:**
5. **If staff member, state your school or work site:**

6. **Information about the incident:**  
**Name of Target (of behavior):**  
**Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in behavior):**  
**Date(s) of Incident(s):**  
**Time When Incident(s) Occurred:**  
**Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible):**

7. **Witnesses** (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):
- Name:**       Parent       Staff       Other
- Name:**       Parent       Staff       Other
- Name:**       Parent       Staff       Other

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

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

9. **Signature of Person Filing this Report:**      **Date:**  
 (Note: Reports may be made anonymously.)
10. **Form Given to:**      **Position:**      **Date:**
- Signature:**      **Date Received:**

**Part II – Investigation**

1. **Investigator(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position(s):** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Interviews:**
- |  |              |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed aggressor | <b>Name:</b> | <b>Date:</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed target    | <b>Name:</b> | <b>Date:</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed witnesses | <b>Name:</b> | <b>Date:</b> |
|  | <b>Name:</b> | <b>Date:</b> |
3. **Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor?**  Yes  No
4. **If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously?**  Yes  No
5. **Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION?**  Yes  No

**Summary of Investigation:**

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

<b>Part III – Conclusions from the Investigation</b>
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1. **Finding of bullying or retaliation:**
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> (please check one below) | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> (please check one below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Bullying</b>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Incident documented as</b>      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Retaliation</b>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Discipline referral only</b>    |
2. **Contacts:**
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Target's parent/guardian</b> <b>Date:</b>          | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Aggressor's parent/guardian</b> <b>Date:</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>District Equity Coordinator (DEC)</b> <b>Date:</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Law Enforcement</b> <b>Date:</b>             |
3. **Action Taken:**
- |  |   |   |                                       |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Loss of Privileges</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Detention</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Suspension</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Community Service</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Referral</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Saturday School</b> |                                       |

4. **Describe Safety Planning:**

<b>Follow-up with Target:</b> scheduled for _____	<b>Initial and date when completed:</b> _____
<b>Follow-up with Aggressor:</b> scheduled for _____	<b>Initial and date when completed:</b> _____
<b>Date Report forwarded to Principal:</b> _____	<b>Date Report forwarded to Superintendent:</b> _____
<b>Signature and Title:</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> _____

12/6/10