

WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

***BULLYING PREVENTION AND
INTERVENTION PLAN***

A GUIDE FOR STAFF, PARENTS AND STUDENTS

**WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN**

INTRODUCTION AND PRIORITY STATEMENT

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying. The Westfield Public School District is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to address these issues. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan in his/her building.

The district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and 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. While activities described in the Plan are intended to address the specific requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the District has chosen to use this legislation as an opportunity to strengthen and expand its longstanding focus on school safety.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) created a Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan required under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, in consultation with state agencies, school personnel, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties. The Model Plan was used by the Westfield Public Schools as a framework for developing this local Plan.

Please note that in this plan we use the word "target" instead of "victim" and "aggressor" instead of "perpetrator".

If you need assistance understanding this information, please contact your building principal to arrange translation services.

Если Вы нуждаетесь в переводе, пожалуйста, сообщите директору школы, и школа обеспечит вас переводчиком. (Russian)

Якщо Вам необхідний переклад даної інформації, будь ласка, повідомте директору школи, і школа забезпечить вас перекладачем. (Ukrainian)

Si Ud. necesita ayuda para entender esta información, favor de comunicarse con el Principal para los servicios de traducción. (Spanish)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION.....4

II. DEFINITIONS.....4

III. LEADERSHIP.....5

IV. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....6

V. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES.....8

VI. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES.....9

VII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION.....11

VIII. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES.....14

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.....15

APPENDIX A: REFERRAL TO OUTSIDE AGENCIES

APPENDIX B: BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORMS are under review and will be added in January, 2011

I. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND 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 at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

II. DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

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

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

III. LEADERSHIP

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, the Plan has been developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Consultation has included team input sessions, notice to parents and other interested members of the community and a public comment period before the Plan is adopted by the School Committee. Each of the various constituencies will also be involved in future plan review and refinement.

Activity	Date
School Committee Legislation Overview	Spring, 2010
Administrative Student Handbook Review	Spring, 2010
Parent Community Forum	Spring, 2010
School Committee Policy Review	Spring, Summer 2010
Staff Information and Initial Training	Fall, 2010
Meetings with Administrative Team	Fall-December, 2010
Invitation for Comment from Safety Officials	December, 2010
Invitation Letters for Comment	December, 2010
Broadcast Announcement for Parent Comment	December, 2010
Parent Groups, School Councils, Student Councils	December, 2010
Public Comment Period on Website	December 9, 2010 to December 17, 2010
School Committee subcommittee	December 13, 2010
Public Hearing and Final Approval	December 20, 2010

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

Title	Responsibility
Superintendent, Principals and Administrator of Student Support Services	Receiving reports on bullying
Superintendent, Principals and Administrator of Student Support Services, Unified Life Education Supervisor	Collecting and analyzing building and school wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and measure improved outcomes
Superintendent, Principals and Administrator of Student Support Services	Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports and accessing information related to targets and aggressors
Superintendent, Chief Officer of Operations/HR, Director of Curriculum, Principals, Unified Life Education Supervisor	Planning for the ongoing professional development required by the law
Superintendent, Principals and Administrator of Student Support Services	Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors
Superintendent, Principals and Director of Curriculum, Unified Life Education Supervisor	Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use
School Committee, Superintendent, Principals, Administrative Team	Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them
School Committee, Superintendent, Principals, Administrative Team	Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct
Superintendent, Principals and Administrator of Student Support Services	Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials

IV. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Annual training on the plan for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years. The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

This plan includes ongoing professional development for all staff; including administrators, teachers, counselors, nurses, paraprofessionals, athletic coaches, club advisors, cafeteria workers, bus drivers and custodians. Training will build the skills of the staff to prevent, identify and respond to bullying.

The school based and district-wide professional development will be based on the needs and concerns identified in the district through data collection, analysis and research. The topics to be included in professional development will be as follows as based on the legislation:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying; and
- ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism and students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development may include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

Professional Development Initiatives

Activity	Audience	Implementation Strategies	Outcomes/Timeline
Cyberbullying, Cyber Safety and Parenting Today	Parents/Community	Public Forum presented by Elizabeth Englander, MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center)	November 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Awareness Program addressing research findings on bullying in the school environment as well as on the internet
Preventing Bullying	Parents/ Community	Public Forum presented by WPS (Westfield Public Schools) staff	March 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation, policy review and public comment session in the district and community to address the issue of bullying

Staff Training

Activity	Audience	Implementation Strategies	Outcomes/Timeline
Bullying and Culture Change- Presented by WSU (Westfield State University) Center for Teacher Education and Research	Administrators/Teachers/Nurses/Extracurricular Advisors/Counselors	Staff Professional Development- Overview of the Issues- Baseline training	November 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All professional staff was presented the research, definitions, best practices, reporting obligations and new MA law information
Support Staff Training- Update on Bullying and the New Legislation	Paraprofessionals Cafeteria Worker Custodians Athletic Coaches Bus Drivers	Staff Professional Development- Overview of the Issues	Fall 2010- Then Annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continual update on prevention and intervention strategies to address the interaction and power differential among students
Train the Trainers	Identified School Reps	MARC- In depth look at strategies to implement staff development within each school building.	November 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ten district administrators obtained this training and are prepared to disseminate information to build the skill levels related to bullying prevention and intervention of their staff
Policy and Plan Update	Building Based Staff	Review plan and procedures for reporting and responding to bullying and retaliation	Annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator facilitation
Special Education Training	Special Education Staff	Training to address ways to prevent and respond to bullying an retaliation for students with disabilities	Annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff development
Bullying Prevention Tutorial (anticipated)	Initially all staff, new staff each year	Web Based Anti Bullying Tutorial	2011, then annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of required topics for all staff and as an update new staff
Peer Leadership Training (anticipated)	School Student Teams and Advisors	WSU Center for Teacher Education and Research program for Students presented in conjunction with MARC	Spring 2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of bully free schools as the cultural norm within the school environment
Schools as Bully Proof Zones: Policies, Procedures and Protocols	Secondary School Teams	WSU Center for Teacher Education and Research program	Winter 2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation Strategies for Schools
Second Step/Steps to Respect	Building Based Staff (Participating Schools)	Presentation of evidence-based social competency curricula to staff	Initial/ then as needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of curriculum for teachers presenting the curriculum

Responsive Classroom	Building Based Staff (K-5 in participating schools)	Presentation of evidence-based behavioral management practices	Annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update for new staff
Written Notice	All staff/parents/students	Sharing of updated policy information, code of conduct	Annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update in student /staff handbooks

V. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The Westfield Public Schools provides Administrator(s) and an Adjustment Counselor in each of our schools. In addition to School Adjustment Counselors the Middle Schools and High Schools also provides Guidance Counselor who are available to meet with students individually. The District also employs School Psychologists, who in addition to their other duties participate on the Crisis Team in each of the schools. Each building also provides a full time nurse who is available to meet with students and to provide individual support for students. It should also be noted that all support staff members have been trained in recognizing, reporting and protecting students against bullying.

Support Services Available in each building

School	Guidance Counselor	Adjustment Counselor	School Nurse	Additional Supports
Fort Meadow Early Childhood Center	None	1 FTE	1 FTE	Staff
Abner Gibbs K-5	None	.5 FTE	.9 FTE	Health Teacher
Franklin Ave K-3	None	1 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher
Juniper Park K-3	None	.5 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher
Highland K-5	None	1 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher
Munger Hill K-5	None	1 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher
Paper Mill K-5	None	1 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher
Southampton Rd. K-5	None	1 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher
North Middle School 6-8	2 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher .5 FTE Substance Abuse Prevention Counselor
South Middle School 6-8	2 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher .5 FTE Substance Abuse Prevention Counselor
Westfield High School 9-12	7 FTE	2 FTE	2 FTE	Health Teachers Substance Abuse Prevention Counselor
WVTH 9-12	2 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE	Health Teacher

Students with Disabilities

When a student has been determined to have a disability through the special education evaluation process, it is the responsibility of the Team to consider social emotional issues. 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 disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP regarding this issue.

Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students/English Language Learners

When a staff member believes that a culturally diverse student is a target of bullying due to lack of language proficiency or cultural differences, pertinent staff members will gather to address concerns and put a plan of action into place to protect the targeted students and to deter bullying behaviors.

VI. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Westfield Public Schools will provide instruction on bullying prevention throughout the K-12 curricula. Curricula will be evidence-based in addition to locally generated programming. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development. Students will also be taught about the Bully Prevention and Intervention Plan and their role in fostering a safe school environment. The age appropriate curricula offerings will emphasize the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Other school wide approaches to insure a safe school environment and support bullying prevention efforts will include:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, non-native speaking students and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Academic Approaches

Programming	Strategy	Implementation Focus	Responsibility
Responsive Classroom	Positive Class Management and Instruction	K-5	Classroom Teachers
Second Step	Evidence-based Curriculum	PK-5; under current consideration 6-8	Health Teacher
Steps to Respect	Evidence-based Curriculum	3-5	Health Teacher
Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders	Evidence-based Curriculum	7-8	Health Teacher
All Stars*	Evidence-based Curriculum	6-7	Health Teacher
Michigan Model*	Evidence-based Curriculum	K-5	Health Teacher
Reconnecting Youth*	Evidence-based Curriculum	9-11	Teacher
Netsmartz/MARC	Internet Safety Curriculum	3-8	Technology/Health teacher
Bullying Legislation Education	Curriculum	9-12	Classroom teacher/SRO (School Resource Officer)

*Although the main focus of these curricula is not solely bullying/aggression several lessons do address anti-social behaviors and school community connectedness.

Non Academic Approaches

Programming	Strategy/Location	Implementation Focus	Responsibility
Gay Straight Alliance	Westfield High School- Non Academic- Peer Support	9-12	Teacher Advisors
Best Buddies	Westfield High School- Non Academic- Peer Support	9-12	Teacher Advisors
Bridges-Peer Leadership	Westfield High School- Non Academic- Peer Support	9-12	Teacher Advisors
You Lead	Westfield Vocational Technical High School Leadership Program	9-12	Teacher Advisor
Anti Bullying Pledge Initiative-	Westfield Vocational Technical High School- Whole School Initiative	9-12	Student Council
Renaissance Program	Westfield High School and Westfield Vocational Technical High School: Leadership and academic motivation and recognition	9-12	Teacher Advisor

Programming	Strategy/Location	Implementation Focus	Responsibility
Adult Student Mentors	Westfield Vocational Technical High School- adult support for social skill building, dropout prevention and motivation	9 (anticipate expansion 9-12)	Assistant Principal/ Teacher Advisor
Freshman Teaming	Westfield Vocational Technical High School- Whole School Initiative- increase bonding	9	Teachers
Aspirations Initiative	North and South Middle Schools- School Bonding and Enrichment	6-8	Teachers
Peer Ambassador Program	North and South Middle Schools- School Bonding	6-8	Students/Teacher Advisor
Elementary School Based Recognition Programs	Various- Recognize and reinforce positive behaviors	K-5	Principals/Teachers

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

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be 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 alleged bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form,¹ a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address. If the person making the report has concerns regarding reporting to the Principal or designee, the report may be made to the Superintendent or Administrator of Student Support Services directly for further action.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

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

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit

¹ See Appendix B for Incident Reporting Forms

the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

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

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

1. Safety

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

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, 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 local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

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

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

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

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

Procedures for investigating reports of 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. The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary, and 3) provide written notice to the Superintendent of Schools.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

- E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

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

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;

- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for evaluation.

3. 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 district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be implemented in conjunction 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.

4. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider adjustments, needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

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

VIII. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. Parent education and resources. The school or district will 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 district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Building Based Parent School Organizations, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, Coordinated School Health Advisory Council, WHIPS (Westfield Helps Its Public Schools), Title I Parent Outreach or similar organizations. Efforts will be made to have parent resources available to parents in the home language of the family to assist culturally diverse families in understanding policies and procedures and practices related to bullying. The school/district will provide the family members of targets or aggressors referrals to appropriate community based counseling agencies for services as needed.

- B. Notification requirements. Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district posts the Plan and related information on its website.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

APPENDIX A: REFERRAL TO OUTSIDE AGENCIES

The following is a list of possible referrals for support outside of the school environment. The following is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Donna Suckau, Domestic Violence Advocate, Westfield Police Department 562-5411 press option 5, 642-9377 or 478-9955

YWCA ARCH Program 733-7100 (24-hours) Shelter, counseling and information for battered women and their children, sexual assault services

New Beginnings 562-5739 counseling and information

Safe Link 24-hours 800-796-8711

Psychiatric Services

Westfield Crisis Program 568-6386 24- hour service for psychiatric crisis and suicidal behavior

Individual, group and family counseling for youth and families:

Carson Center for Children and Youth, Westfield 568-1421

James Levine and Assoc., Westfield 572-9900

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Holyoke and Springfield 734-4978

Child and Family Services, West Springfield 737-4718

Agawam Counseling Center 786-6410

Substance Abuse Services

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information Helpline 800-327-5050 (information and referral for inpatient and outpatient services in Massachusetts)

Providence Hospital, Holyoke

- Clinical Assessment Center for outpatient services: 539-2973
- Clinical Assessment Center for inpatient services: 539-2981

Baystate Medical Center Central Intake for inpatient and outpatient services: 794-5555

Alcoholics Anonymous meeting schedule: www.westernmassaa.org or listed in your local paper

AI-Anon and Alateen 782-3406/ 888-327-5050 (self help organization for those living with a substance abuser)

Hotlines and Other Support Services

United Way 737-2712 MA 211 Information: dial 211

AIDS information and support 800-235-2331

Missing Children 800-843-5678

National Runaway Switchboard (24 hours) 800-RUNAWAY

Department of Children and Families Holyoke Office 493-2600, 24 hour line: 800-792-5200

Parents Helping Parents and Parental Stress Line 800-632-8188

Western Mass Legal Services (Legal Aid) 781-7814

