

Students

Bullying

Safe School Climate Plan

Purpose/Priority Statement

The Amity Regional School District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our schools or in school related activities. In addition, the District will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take appropriate, effective action to end that behavior. Most important, the District will support this commitment in all aspects of its activities, including in its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent/guardian involvement. The Board of Education (Board) fully understands that it is only through a comprehensive approach with a focus on the development of a positive school climate and the support of students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies and the community that issues of violence will be prevented and a safe school climate achieved. Lastly, in consultation with these constituencies, the Board has established this District Safe School Climate Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation.

The Board of Education (Board) promotes a safe and secure school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

I. Prohibition Against Bullying

The Board of Education (Board) prohibits bullying (a) on 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 the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and (b) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, (ii) infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

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II. Definitions

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

“Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

“Mobile electronic device” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

“Electronic communication” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.

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II. Definitions (continued)

“Outside of the school setting” means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

“School employee” means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school Superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional Board of Education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional Board of Education.

“School climate” means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. *(It is based on people’s experiences of school and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)*

III. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation (Complaint Process)

A. Publication of the Prohibition against Bullying and Related Procedures

The prohibition against bullying shall be publicized by including the following statement in the student handbook of each of the district schools:

“Bullying behavior by any student in the Amity Regional School District is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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A. Publication of the Prohibition against Bullying and Related Procedures (continued)

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, gender identity, or physical mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on 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 the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school,

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation (Plan) #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians on the District and individual school websites or by request.

B. Appropriate School Personnel

All school employees are charged with the responsibility of taking reports of bullying or if witnessing acts of bullying to notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available. Reports shall be appropriately investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available.

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B. Appropriate School Personnel (continued)

District Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District's safe school climate plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying in District schools;
3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education; and
4. Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying issues in the district and make recommended changes to the District's safe school climate plan.

Safe School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying in the school; and
3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying reports in the school.

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C. Annual Notification of the Complaint Process

The process by which students may make formal, informal, and anonymous complaints as set forth below shall be publicized annually in the student handbook of each of the District schools. In addition, this Safe School Climate Plan shall be placed on the District website and the website of each school.

D. Formal Written Complaints

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file written reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school employee, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator, if the Safe School specialist is unavailable, for review and action in accordance with Section IV below.

E. Informal/Verbal Complaints by Students

Students may make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to the Safe School Climate Specialist, or to any school employee, as defined, or administrator. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school employee, or administrator or the Safe School Climate Specialist who receives an informal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the school employee, administrator, if not the Safe School Climate Specialist, shall be promptly forwarded to the Building Principal for review and action in accordance with Section IV below.

Students

Bullying (continued)

F. Anonymous Complaints

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school employee who receives the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the Safe School Climate Specialist, if not the Principal or his/her designee, shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

A. Teachers and Other School Staff

School employees who witness acts of bullying, as defined above, or who receive reports of bullying shall promptly notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. A written report must be filed not later than two school days after making such an oral report concerning the events witnessed or reported.

School employees who receive student or parent reports of suspected bullying shall promptly notify the Safe School Climate Specialist of such report(s). If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a school employee, he or she shall prepare a succinct written report of the informal complaint, which shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a school employee, this employee shall verbally report the matter to the Safe School Climate Specialist not later than the next school day.

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IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

A. Teachers and Other School Staff (continued)

In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, school employees and other are encouraged to address the issue of bullying in other interactions with students. Teachers and other professionals may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. All school employees including teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying.”

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist

1. Investigation

The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected bullying received by any school employee. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying in the school in accordance with the District’s Safe School Climate Plan. All such complaints shall be investigated promptly. The investigation must be completed promptly after the receipt by the Safe School Climate Specialist of any written report. In order to allow the District to adequately investigate all formal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied must complete a consent form that allows their District to release that student’s name to those third parties who the District contacts as part of its investigation of that complaint with regard to the investigation of informal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied must complete the above-referenced consent form so long as that student has not requested anonymity.

A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of bullying were verified, and, when acts of bullying are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

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IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

1. Investigation

The school shall notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and in the case of a divorced/split situation, to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response, measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act was directed, and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complainant. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

2. Remedial Actions

Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the Building Principal or his/her designee that is intended to address the acts of the perpetrator and the needs of the victim and to assure that the prohibition against bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such bullying behavior will end as a result.

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying" as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in-school suspension; suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Building Principal (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee.) The following sets forth possible interventions for building principals to enforce the Board's prohibition against bullying. No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.

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IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

2. Remedial Actions

The following sets forth permissible interventions for building principals (or other responsible program administrators) to enforce the Board's prohibition against bullying.

a. Non-disciplinary Interventions

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

In any instance in which bullying is verified, the building Principal (or other responsible program administrator) shall invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, and the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying. In the discretion of the building Principal or other responsible program administrator, the meeting(s) described in this section may be held jointly or separately.

(The SDE recommends such meetings to be separate.)

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IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

2. Remedial Actions

b. Disciplinary Interventions

When acts of bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with Board policy. This consequence shall be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior.

c. Interventions for Bullied Students

The Safe School Climate Specialist/Building Principal (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student may include the following:

- Counseling;
- Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations;
- Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;
- Peer mediation where appropriate.

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IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

3. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other District actions may ameliorate any potential problem with bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. A focus will be placed on district and school efforts to improve school climate based upon the National School Climate Standards.

While no specific action is required and school needs for such interventions may vary from time to time, the following list of potential intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional staff members in each school:

- a. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;
- b. A safe school climate assessment on or after July 1, 2012 and biennially thereafter to determine the prevalence of bullying. Such assessments may include, in addition to those approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education, in collaboration with CAS, the National School climate Standards Self-Assessment Tool' and the Connecticut State Department of Education's "Improving School climate Team Rubric;"
- c. Establishment by the school Principal of a Safe School Climate Committee in each District school or the designation of an existing committee that is responsible for fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in the school.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying;
2. Identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school;
3. Review and amend school policies relating to bullying;

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IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

3. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies (continued)

4. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
5. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying;
6. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and
7. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying for the school.

Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #2 above and from any other committee activities that may compromise student confidentiality.

- d. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur;
- e. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in grades 7-12;
- f. Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student, parents and school employees;
- g. School-wide training related to safe school climate;
- h. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
- i. Respectful responses to bullying concerns raised by students, parents or staff;
- j. Planned professional development programs addressing bully/victim problems;
- k. Student peer training, education and support. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;

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IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

3. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies (continued)

- l. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping (e.g., males need to be strong and tough);
- m. Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of staff and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;
- n. Modeling by all school employees of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
- o. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
- p. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.

V. Reporting Obligations

A. Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Perpetrator

If after investigation, acts of bullying by a specific student are verified, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation, the Building Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator in writing of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification. In addition, the school shall invite the parent/guardian of a student who commits any verified act of bullying (after the completion of the investigation) to a meeting to communicate to the parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety and measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying. Records will be maintained by the School Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of the bullying reports, subsequent investigations and parental/guardian meetings.

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V. Reporting Obligations (continued)

B. Reports to the Targeted Student and his/her Parent or Guardian

If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the Building Principal/Safe Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, as reflected in the student's educational records, shall not be disclosed to the parents or guardian of the victim, except as provided by law (e.g., court order/subpoena). In addition, the school shall invite the parent/guardian of the student against whom the verified act of bullying was directed, after the completion of the investigation, to a meeting to communicate to the parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety and measures being taken by the school to ensure the targeted student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying. Records will be maintained by the School Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of the bullying reports, subsequent investigations and parental/guardian meetings.

Notices shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and the other parent/guardian if requested. This mailing requirement shall be in effect for as long as the student attends the school in which the original request is made.

C. List of Verified Acts of Bullying

The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of each school shall establish a procedure to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school, and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. The list shall be reported annually to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Given that any determination of bullying involves repeated acts over time, each report prepared in accordance with Section III (1) above that includes verified acts of bullying shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of the report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of such verified acts of bullying in the school, and it shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

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VI. Prohibition against Discrimination and Retaliation

A. Safety

Discrimination and/or retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of an act of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

The continuation and perpetuation of bullying of a student through the dissemination of hurtful or demeaning material by any other student is prohibited.

The District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school related activities. All reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination and retaliation will be investigated promptly and prompt action will be taken to end that behavior and restore the student's against whom such bullying was directed (target's) sense of safety. This commitment is to be supported in all aspects of the school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent/guardian involvement.

Before formally investigating the allegations of bullying, discrimination or retaliation, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged student against whom such bullying was directed (target) and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but are not limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the alleged victim (target) and/or the alleged perpetrator in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the alleged student against whom such bullying was directed (target); and altering the alleged perpetrator's schedule and access to the alleged target. The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist 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.

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Bullying (continued)

VI. Prohibition against Discrimination and Retaliation (continued)

A. Safety (continued)

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal/Safe School climate Specialist or designee will contact the victim to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If determined necessary, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

B. Law Enforcement Notification

The School Principal or his/her designee shall notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal or the Principal's designee believes any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.

VII. Training Requirements for School Staff

- A. Certified staff of the District shall be provided in-service training on the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide. *(The Board, subject to the approval of the State Department of Education, is not required to offer an in-service program regarding bullying or youth suicide prevention and intervention if it instead implements an evidence-based model approach to this issue.)*
- B. Beginning teachers shall satisfactorily complete instructional modules as required by C.G.S. 10-145a which shall include a module in classroom management and climate, which shall include training regarding the prevention, identification, and response to school bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide.
- C. Non-certified staff of the District will participate in annual training to be provided, within available appropriations, by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The training may be presented in person by mentors, offered in state-wide workshops, or through on-line courses. Such training may include, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying among students in school and outside the school setting,

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VII. Training Requirements for School Staff (continued)

2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate and effective interventions to stop bullying,
3. Information regarding the interaction and relationship between students committing acts of bullying, students against whom such acts of bullying are directed and witnesses of such acts of bullying,
4. Research findings on bullying, such as information about the types of students who have been shown to be at-risk for bullying in the school setting,
5. Information about the incidence and nature of cyberbullying as defined in C.G.S. 10-222d, or
6. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

VIII. Notification Requirements

- A. A copy of this District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in written or electronic format to all District employees annually at the beginning of each school year.
- B. The District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be made available on the Board's website and on the website of each individual school with the District. Such posting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the approval of such plan by the Board.
- C. The District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

IX. School Climate Assessments

- A. On or after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, the Board requires each school within the District to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education.
- B. Completed assessments shall be shared with the Board and then submitted by the Board to the State Department of Education.

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X. Bullying Through the Use of Technology (Cyberbullying)

An emerging form of bullying is the use of technology to threaten, intimidate, ridicule, humiliate, insult, or harass. Technology enables aggressive expression toward others and does not rely on physical strength or physical contact. By using a cell phone or the Internet, a student can quickly and aggressively spread rumors, threats, hate mail, or embarrassing photos through text messages, e-mails, or instant messages.

There are a number of social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) available to our students that can be misused and/or abused for bullying purposes. Any alleged misuse or abuse must be reported to any staff member or the Safe School Climate Specialist.

The District's discipline policy states that misuse, on or off campus, of electronic devices, for threatening/bullying/hazing or harassment is a violation and can be the basis for discipline on or off campus. When information is received that a student or students are involved in bullying through the use of technology either as the actor or a member of a group, or the victim, the following will be considered:

- If it takes place on campus or at a school sponsored event, disciplinary action will be taken.
- If it takes place off campus a school may take disciplinary action if the incident poses a likelihood of substantial disruption to the educational process or the orderly day to day operations of the school.

XI. Relationship to Other Laws

- A. Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the district and school rules, 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 gender, 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 district policies.
- B. In addition, nothing in the "Plan" is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action under applicable laws, or local school or District policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the "Plan" covers the behavior.

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Bullying (continued)

XII. Immunity for Board of Education, School Employees, Others

Members of the Board of Education and school employees are protected by statute against damage claims in the implementation of a safe school climate plan and, in accordance with a school district safe school climate plan, report, investigate, or respond to bullying. PA 11-232 also extends this immunity to reports of bullying incidents by parents, students, and others to a school employee according to a safe school climate plan.

To be immune, these parties must act in good faith and, in the case of a school employee or Board of Education, within the scope of their duties. The immunity does not cover gross, wanton, reckless, or willful misconduct.

Regulation approved: November 14, 2011

BULLYING INVESTIGATION REPORT

1. Name of target: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____

School _____ Reg. Ed Spec. Ed. 504

2. Name of complainant/relationship to target: _____

3. Names(s) of alleged offender(s):	Is he/she a student in the school district?	Grade/ Age	School	Status
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg. Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Spec. Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> 504

_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg. Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Spec. Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> 504
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_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg. Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Spec. Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> 504
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4. On what date(s) did the incident(s) happen?
____/____/____ ____/____/____ ____/____/____
Month Day Year Month Day Year Month Day Year

5. Where did the incident happen (choose all that apply)?

On school property At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property

On a school bus On the way to/from school/at school bus stop

Off school grounds Via electronic communication

Other (specify) _____

6. Summarize the complaint:

(Attach separate sheet if necessary along with a copy of any written complaint)

7. State name(s) of any witnesses to the incident(s):

Name/position/school (i.e. student, teacher, parent, community member, etc.)

Contact information (if known)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

8. Date the target was interviewed? By whom? When? Where? _____

Did he/she provide a statement? Y N If yes, Oral Written (Attach written statement)

Was he/she asked to provide the name of any witnesses? Y N

State the names of witnesses provided: _____

9. Date the offender interviewed? By whom? When? Where? _____

Did he/she provide a statement? Y N If yes, Oral Written (Attach written statement)

Was he/she asked to provide the name of any witnesses? Y N

State the names of witnesses provided: _____

10. List all individuals who were interviewed:

Names(s) of individuals/witnesses interviewed:

Written Statement
Provided

Relationship to target/or
title/position

_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____

_____ Y N _____

_____ Y N _____

_____ Y N _____

(Attach all written statements)

11. List and describe all documentation considered as part of the investigation (i.e. bus referral/report, student records, student attendance records, medical records, nurse referral, disciplinary referral, police report, photographs, surveillance tapes, emails, text messages, postings, other physical evidence(attach copies whenever possible): _____

12. Summarize your investigation (include who was spoken to, where and when/dates as well as who conducted such interviews, include the substance of any oral/written statements given, indicate credibility as appropriate, specify what documentation or other information was considered and the weight given to it and why, state any conclusions reached regarding the incident, individuals, or the veracity or reliability of individuals/ information and note where information was or failed to be corroborated).

(Attach Separate Sheet as Needed)

13. The definition of bullying as defined by state law is “the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district that either causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property, places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property and for off school ground incidents, creates a hostile environment at school for such student, or infringes on the rights of such student at school, or substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school”.

Bullying" shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical

appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics”.

Check all of the following that apply with respect to this investigation:

- Target and offender(s) are students in the same school or school district
- Target and offender(s) are not students in the same school district
- Involves repeated activity by one student against the target
- Involves repeated activity by more than one student against the target
- Involves a written, oral or electronic communication

- Involves a physical act

Describe the act and/or injury: _____

- Involves emotional harm to target

Describe the nature of the harm/effect: _____

- Involves damage to target’s property

Describe the damage/cost of repair: _____

- Target has reasonable fear of harm to self or property

Explain: _____

- Offender’s actions have created a hostile environment at school for the target

(“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate)

Explain: _____

- Target’s rights at school have been infringed

Explain: _____

- Offender’s actions have substantially disrupted the educational process or orderly operation of a school

Explain: _____

14. Based upon the completed investigation, was it concluded that a verified act of bullying occurred against the target? Y N Explain the basis for your conclusion:

15. Date of written notice of the conclusion of the investigation provided to the following?

_____ Parent of the target

_____ Parent of the offender(s)

_____ District Safe School Climate Coordinator

16. Do you believe there is a basis for further investigation based upon: (check all that apply)

race color ancestry national origin gender sexual orientation gender identity

gender expression socioeconomic status academic status physical appearance mental, physical,

developmental or sensory disability by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of any of the above characteristics (list characteristic) _____

Was a referral to a district civil rights coordinator made Y N

To whom? Date of referral? _____

17. If bullying was verified, describe the responsive action:

As to the target: _____

(Responsive action must include a plan of support for the target, and if the target is a special education student, a PPT must be convened to consider whether bullying has impacted the provision of FAPE and if the IEP remains appropriate)

Components of Target's Support Plan _____

As to the offender(s): (list separately if more than one offender):

(Remember to check the status of each offender to determine whether he/she is a regular, special education or 504 student. For those students not identified as Special Education or 504 students, consider whether a referral is warranted by the student's conduct /student history and for those perpetrators who are already identified as special education students, a PPT should be convened to determine if their IEP remains appropriate)

System Wide Interventions (i.e. changes to curriculum, assembly program, etc.) (if applicable):

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Staff member completing this report)

PERSON COMPLETING REPORT: Name: _____

Position: _____ School _____

DATE COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY SCHOOL/DISTRICT: _____

ORAL COMPLAINT WRITTEN COMPLAINT ANONYMOUS

DATES OF INVESTIGATION: _____

DATE OF FIRST DAY OF INVESTIGATION: _____

DATE INVESTIGATION WAS COMPLETED: _____

(If bullying is verified, parents of both the target and the offenders must be notified within 48 hrs. of the completion of investigation and must be invited to separate parent meetings with school personnel; the meeting invitation may be combined with notification of a verified act of bullying)

DATE OF AND METHOD OF NOTIFICATION OF ACT OF VERIFIED BULLYING:

TO PARENT(S) OF TARGET _____

TO PARENT(S) OF OFFENDER(S) _____

DATE OF INVITATION TO PARENT MEETING

TO PARENT(S) OF TARGET _____

TO PARENT(S) OF OFFENDER(S) _____

DATE OF PARENT MEETING AND NAMES OF THOSE ATTENDING:

TARGET _____

OFFENDER(S) _____

NAME OF INVESTIGATOR(S) TITLE/POSITION/SCHOOL (if different than person completing this report):

(If applicable) DATE OF REFERRAL (made as result of the bullying investigation/incident(s)):

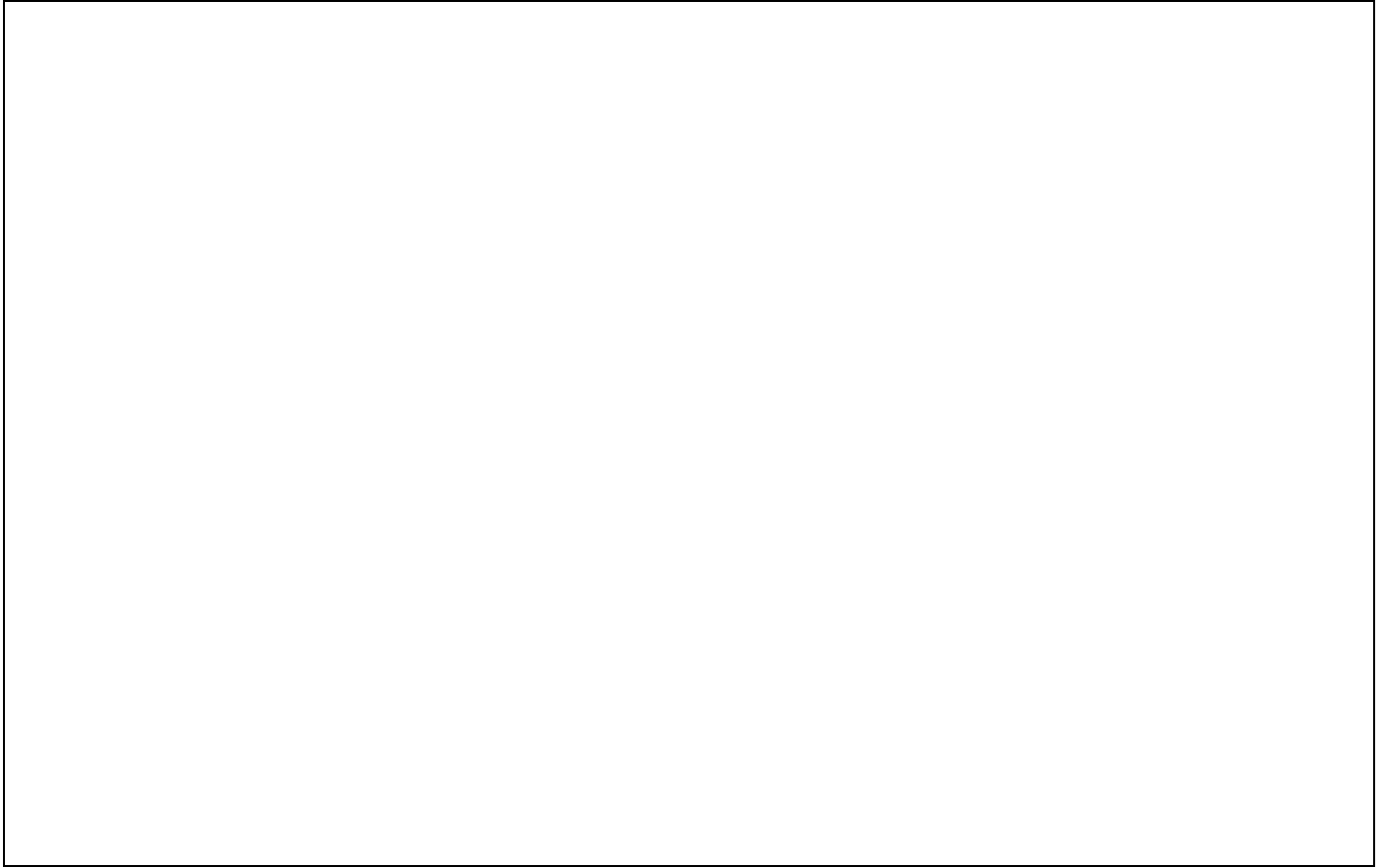
TO LAW ENFORCEMENT _____ DISTRICT CIVIL RIGHTS COORDINATOR _____

TARGET TO:

PPT _____ 504 Meeting _____ SAT _____ OTHER (SPECIFY) _____

PERPETRATOR TO:

PPT _____ 504 Meeting _____ SAT _____ OTHER (SPECIFY) _____



**BULLYING REPORTING FORM
FOR USE BY STUDENTS, PARENTS, SCHOOL EMPLOYEES
AND OTHER COMPLAINANTS**

Today's Date: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

School: _____

PERSON REPORTING INCIDENT: Name: _____

Telephone Day: _____
Evening: _____
Cell: _____ Email: _____

Place an X in the appropriate box: Student Parent/Guardian Close Adult Relative Employee
 Other (explain) _____

1. Name of target: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____
(Please print)

2. Names(s) of alleged offender(s) (if known): (Please print)	Is he/she a student in this district?	Grade/ Age	School
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	_____	_____

3. On what date(s) did the incident(s) happen?
 ____/____/____ ____/____/____ ____/____/____
 Month Day Year Month Day Year Month Day Year

4. Where did the incident(s) happen (choose all that apply)?

On school property At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property

On a school bus On the way to/from school/school bus stop

Off school grounds Via electronic communication

Other (specify) _____

5. Describe the nature of the complaint (be as specific as possible) and state how you became aware of the incident:

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

6. What do you believe was the reason for the conduct by the offender(s)? Do you believe it was based upon disability, race, national origin, religion, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or marital status of the target? Explain.

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

7. Did a physical injury result from this incident(s)? No Yes

Nature of injury _____

8. Was the target absent from school as a result of the incident? No Yes

If yes, how many days was the target absent from school as a result of the incident? _____

Dates of absenteeism: _____

9. Did an emotional injury result from this incident(s)?:

No

Yes, but psychological services have not been sought

Yes, and psychological services have been sought

Dates/location where services were sought _____

10. Did any damage occur to the target's property? No Yes

Nature of damage _____

11. State name(s) of any witnesses to the incident(s):

Name/position/school (i.e. student, teacher,
parent, community member, etc.)

Contact information (if known)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

12. Are you aware of any similar types of activities by the alleged offender(s) or by others against the target? If so, please describe the activity and when it occurred? Was a report made of these activities? If so, to whom and when?

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

13. Is there any additional information you would like to provide?

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary, and attach any relevant documentation (i.e. medical documents, photos, posts, video, emails, text messages, former reports, etc.)

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Complainant)

Name/Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Staff member receiving/ reviewing Complaint)

(If this complaint suggests that the alleged incident(s) was/were based upon the membership of the target in a protected class (such as race, sex, religion, disability or sexual orientation), this complaint shall be shared with the appropriate district civil rights coordinator for possible additional investigation)

(If applicable) Referred to (name of coordinator): _____
Date of referral: _____