



Walpole Public Schools

Safe Schools Initiative

Walpole Public Schools
2022

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Walpole Public Schools plan format parallels the draft *Behavioral Health and Public Schools Framework and the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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I. DEFINITIONS

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

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

Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by: wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including but not limited to email, instant messages, text messages, Internet postings, and facsimile communications. 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.

School 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, paraprofessionals, or other contracted personnel.

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

II. LEADERSHIP

*Leadership at all levels plays a critical role in developing and implementing the Walpole Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the Plan) in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. Leadership in the Walpole Public Schools consists of all members of the **Leadership Council** (e.g. school principals and assistant principals, Daniel Feeney Preschool director, Director of Digital Learning, Director of Special Education and Student Services, School Business Administrator, Director of DEI, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent). The Leadership Council is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of these leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the Plan.*

- A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan has been developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, municipal representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. This was achieved in the following manner:

The **Walpole Public Schools Strategic Plan**, which includes representatives from each of the groups identified above, has incorporated objectives and action steps (Goal #2) that specifically addresses the social and emotional well-being of students. The Strategic Plan Committee members will continue to review existing objectives and action steps and propose revision or continuation of the objective(s) of this goal.

The district **Wellness Committee**, which meets five times per school year and includes representatives from administration, professional school staff and support personnel, parent and community representatives, and the Health Department, reviews objectives under the Strategic Plan and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to provide feedback and suggestions for revision to the Leadership Council.

Each respective **School Council** (8 schools) shall annually review the objectives under the Strategic Plan and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to provide feedback and suggestions for revision to the Leadership Council.

The **Walpole Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan** is posted on the district web site as well as each school's website. Suggestions from parents and the greater community have been and will continue to be solicited.

- B. Assessing needs and resources. The Plan will be the schools' and district's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff, will continue to assess the adequacy of current programs; review current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This "mapping" process will assist schools and the district in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. These gaps and areas of need will be addressed by the Leadership Council and carefully analyzed during the budget development process. Based on these findings, the district will develop or revise relevant policies and procedures; sustain partnerships with community agencies, such as the Health Department, the Coalition for Alcohol Awareness, the Walpole Recreation Department, the Walpole Public Library, and Public Safety and Drug agencies; and establish priorities.

As part of our periodic needs assessments:

- 1) Each school will provide the opportunity for student, parent, and staff response in an electronic survey to assess school climate and school safety.
- 2) Surveys will include opportunities for all stakeholders to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. The district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.
- 3) Each school administrator (in conjunction with school counselors or designees) will assume responsibility for data collection and will analyze building-specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying (e.g., focusing on identifying vulnerable populations and "hot spots" in school buildings, on school grounds, or on school buses).

This information will help to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform

decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services.

C. Planning and oversight:

- 1) Each school principal/assistant principal/director will receive and immediately investigate reports of bullying;
- 2) Each school principal/assistant principal/director will collect and analyze school-wide data on bullying using *X2 Aspen* (journal entries and/or discipline records) to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes;
- 3) Using *X2 Aspen*, each school will record and track incident reports for district review and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
- 4) Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law will be the responsibility of the Walpole Public Schools Leadership Council;
- 5) The Leadership Council, the Wellness Committee, the administrators at each level (PreK – 5, 6-8, and 9-12) and respective School Councils will plan for necessary support to respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- 6) The Leadership Council, members of curriculum revision task forces, and participation from the School Committee Curriculum sub-committee will examine and ensure implementation of the curricula that each school or instructional level will use;
- 7) The Leadership Council will collaborate to develop new or revise current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designate key staff to be in charge of implementation;
- 8) All student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct will have been amended as of September 2018 and will be reviewed annually to incorporate necessary revision; the purpose is to ensure that bullying by students or school staff is clearly understood and will not be tolerated.
- 9) School administrators in collaboration with the assistant superintendent and superintendent will lead the parent or family engagement efforts and draft parent information materials which will be posted on the web sites and disseminated to all parents via email and/or in hard copy; and
- 10) The Strategic Plan Committee, The Wellness Committee, the Leadership Council, and School Councils will review and update the Plan as needed each year, or more frequently as indicated by new information or regulation.

D. Priority Statement

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

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national

origin, sex, socio-economic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school and/or district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

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

The Walpole Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, community resources, and the greater community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal/director/designee is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan within each school except when a reported bullying incident involves a principal or the assistant principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee, or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

III. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Annual training 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.
- B. Ongoing professional development. The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school wide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:
 - (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
 - (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
 - (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
 - (iv) 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;
 - (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and

(vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development 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.

- C. Written notice to staff. The 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 employee handbook and the codes of conduct. This is also included in the Mandatory Employee Training required each year.

IV. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. The Plan describes the strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services should reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. The Plan includes strategies for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

- A. Identifying resources. Each year the Leadership Council, informed by school counselors, school psychologists, nurses, and teachers, will review current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services. Recommendations will be developed to fill resource and service gaps. This may include adopting new curricula, reorganizing staff, establishing safety planning teams, and identifying other agencies that can provide services. The Plan will outline the process for identifying existing and needed resources.
- B. Counseling and other services. Within the Walpole Public Schools across all levels, the following resources currently exist: school counselors, adjustment counselors, school psychologists, social workers, two behavioral specialists, and school nurses. The district also employs seven full time ESL teachers and a Director of ESL to assist students. Students are provided with differentiated tiers of support that include resources for all students, social skills groups, behavior intervention plans, individualized curricula, and group sessions directly related to bullying behavior. Parents are encouraged to review the resources provided by the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State University (<https://www.marccenter.org/>). A list of community service agencies is included in the Appendices.

- C. Students with disabilities. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. The Anti-Bullying Flow Chart is included in the Appendices.
- D. Referral to outside services. Walpole Public Schools counseling and school psychologist staff members are trained to provide referrals and maintain extensive resources to assist students and their families. This group of staff members is currently revising protocols to be specific to each level (PreK-5, 6-8, and 9-12).

V. **ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

- A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes 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 or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
 - helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, 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.

Specific to Walpole Public Schools:

The elementary school counselors have developed a curriculum that includes SEL lessons that are taught/reinforced by principals, school counselors, classroom teachers, and PE/Health teachers. School psychologists and counselors provide an additional level of instruction and intervention.

In addition, all elementary schools have adopted The Responsive Classroom Program in which students learn common language, respectful behavior and procedures for identifying incidents of bullying and reporting.

A major focus at the elementary level is the Social Thinking process as well as Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS). Each school has also developed its own core values which are reinforced throughout school activities.

Grades 6-8 curriculum is administered by full time Health teachers, assisted by the PE teachers and school counselors. This curriculum is examined and revised during curriculum meetings, early release, and PLC meetings. School psychologists and counselors provide an additional level of instruction and intervention.

Middle school Health teachers have been trained and use the Botvin Life Skills curriculum by Caron.org.

Grades 9-12 curriculum is administered by the PE/Health teachers, guidance and adjustment

counselors, and the school psychologist. At the high school there are extra-curricular clubs and activities (such as Student Council, Community Service Learning, Drama, Culture & Diversity, and GSA clubs) that provide support to the Plan.

All schools actively participate in the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center training and programs to increase awareness and learn strategies to develop improved social skills. In addition, the district has an SEL Steering Committee that supports effective SEL practices to prevent bullying and harassment and helps guide the district with training and professional development..

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including students with actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socio-economic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics
- 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;
- implementing all of the above within a Response to Intervention framework PreK – 12;
- implementing effective SEL strategies at the school and classroom level.

VI. 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/designee or to the superintendent/designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the School Committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation a 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, a voicemail box, an e-mail address, a dedicated mailing address, and an electronic reporting form on each school's and the district web sites.

The use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The 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 and will be translated as needed. The Incident Reporting Form has been developed and will continue to be reviewed by the Leadership Council.

At the beginning of each school year, the school and district will provide the school community, including educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, van drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, ESPs, mobility aides, 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/director, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on each school and district website (www.walpole.k12.ma.us), and in all 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/director or to the superintendent/designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the School Committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal/director does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

The Walpole Public Schools 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/director/designee or the superintendent/designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or the School Committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal/director/designee or to the superintendent/designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the School Committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, 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/director/designee or the superintendent/designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or the School Committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal/director/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. (See Appendices.)

2. Obligations to Notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal/director/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/director/designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal/director 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/director/designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal/director/designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the 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/director/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 student aggressor.

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

- C. Investigation. The principal/director/designee will promptly investigate 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/director/designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal/director (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal/director, other staff members as determined by the principal/director, 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/director/designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal/director 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 and completed within 14 days. If necessary, the principal/director will consult with legal counsel about the investigation. (Please refer to specific grade level reporting forms in Appendix.)

- D. Determinations. The principal/director will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal/director 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/director will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal/director/designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or student 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/director/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/director cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.**

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

- E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal/director 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/director 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 prosocial 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.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

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

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

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

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal/director/ designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal/director/ 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/director/ 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/director/ designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

Walpole Public Schools will follow the same procedures as noted above when responding and resolving a report of bullying by school staff. Walpole Public Schools will consult with school counsel to ensure that the policies, procedures, and determination are consistent with the Plan and all relevant laws. Consistent with investigations of student bullying, all participants (aggressor, target, and witnesses) are reminded of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

VII. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. Parent education and resources. The school or district will continue to offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Parent Advisory Committees (PAC), School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), and through school and district-wide presentations. All informational materials and links to resources will be posted on the district web site.
- 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 district

will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and/or electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians or translated as needed. The Walpole Public Schools posts the Plan and related information on the district website and on individual schools' websites.

VIII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L.c.71, §370(b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying.

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.

This information will be included in Codes of Conduct and Student and Staff Handbooks.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

IX. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seek assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are available at the schools and the superintendent's office.

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.

APPENDICES

Bullying Intervention Procedures

This process applies only to situations in which bullying is alleged. Disciplinary incidents will be reported using the school disciplinary action process. Each school shall develop and advise its students and staff of the procedure to report incidents anonymously.

Step One: Complete Incident Report Form

If a staff member or other adult witnesses or reports incident:

- Staff member should report alleged bullying in writing or orally to building principal/director/designee
- Staff member completes incident report and gives to principal/director/designee

2. If a student reports incident to staff member:

- Acknowledge student's feelings
- Determine if there are safety issues that must be addressed immediately
- Staff member completes incident report and gives to principal/director/designee

Step Two: Conduct Investigation

Interview Target of bullying:

- Interview the target first, then the alleged aggressor
- Target and alleged aggressor should be separated
- Do not ask to see target in the alleged aggressor's presence
- Mediation should not be used with bullying situations
- Encourage target to report any additional incidents with the alleged aggressor

Interview the student accused of bullying:

- Identify the problem
- Focus more on the alleged aggressor's behavior, protecting the target's confidentiality
- In case of denial or if further information is needed, interview witnesses.
- Document the witness account
- Make the alleged aggressor aware of consequences of retaliation against target and reporter

Contact parent/guardian of target and alleged aggressor

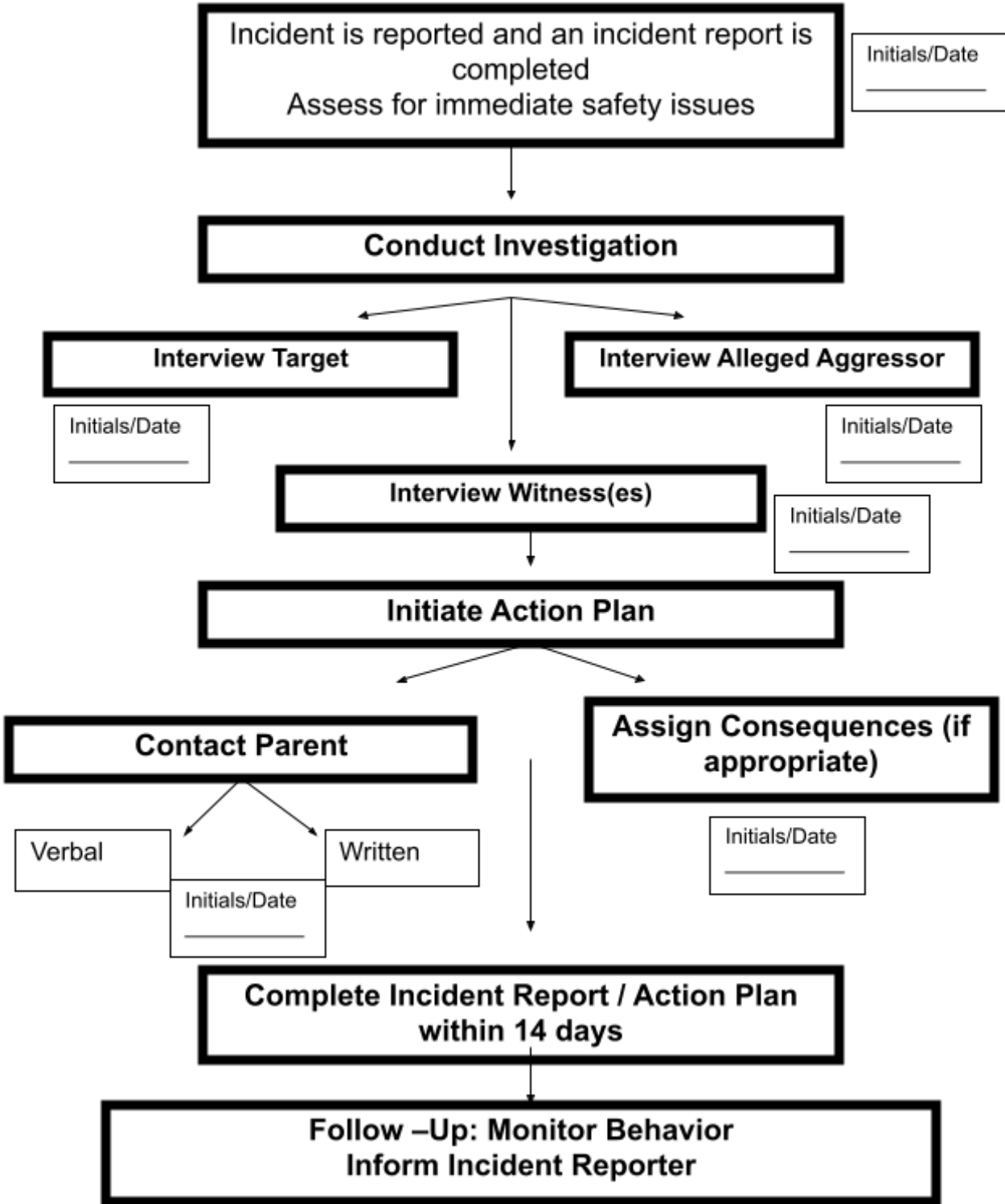
Step Three: Assign Consequences if needed

- Assign appropriate consequence
- If the alleged aggressor denies the incident and there is insufficient evidence, tell the alleged aggressor that you hope s/he is right and that nothing happened, but you will continue to monitor behavior
- Monitor safety of target

Step Four: Document Incident and Consequences / Follow-up

- Document outcome of investigation on the Incident Report Form / Action Plan Form
- Follow up: provide update to appropriate staff member(s)
- Monitor students' behavior
- Notify teachers who have contact with target and aggressor
- Notify parent/guardian of determination

Process for Responding to a Report of Bullying
Flow Chart



Elementary Incident Report Form

Bullying is defined as a verbal, physical, written, or electronic action, or incident or other direct or indirect behavior that is cruel and repetitive. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological or emotional power.

Person Completing Form	
Date and Time of Incident	
Who Reported Incident	
Child / Children Involved	

Details of Incident	
---------------------	--

To your knowledge, has this occurred before? Yes No	Are there immediate safety or transportation concerns? Yes _____ No _____
---	--

If needed, describe incident or concerns in more detail. Identify steps needed to ensure student safety.

Action Plan

To be completed by principal /director/designee

Date	
Interviewed Target	
Interviewed Child Accused of Aggression	
Interviewed Witness	
Summary of Findings	
Action Taken	
Parent Notified ___ By phone ___ Written notice	
Signature of Principal / Director	
Estimate Time Spent (.5 hour increments)	

Parent Communication Form

Date:

Dear

Your student was involved in an incident in school today. We believe it is important to share this information with you.

What was reported:

The incident has been investigated and will be monitored. Due to reasons of confidentiality, students' names and disciplinary actions can not be revealed.

Please sign and return this letter to school in an envelope addressed to me as soon as possible. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you

Principal/Director

Date

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

MIDDLE SCHOOL - INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Bullying is defined as a verbal, physical, written, or electronic action, or incident or other direct or indirect behavior that is cruel and repetitive. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological or emotional power.

1. **Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:** _____
(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. **Check whether you are a:** ___ Staff member (specify role _____)
___ Parent ___ Administrator ___ Other (specify) _____
Your contact information: e-mail / telephone number: _____

3. **If staff member, state your school or work site:** _____

4. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior): _____

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

Date(s) of Incident(s): _____

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: _____

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____

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

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

6. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.

7. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ **Date:** _____

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

8: Form Given to: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date Received: _____

II. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____ Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the aggressor? Yes No

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

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION Yes No

4. Any other prior documented incidents toward the target? Yes No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION Yes No

Summary of Investigation:

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

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

YES NO

Bullying Incident documented as _____

Retaliation Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

Target's parent/guardian Date: _____ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____

Written notification Telephone contact Written notification Telephone contact

Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

Loss of Privileges Detention Suspension

Community Service Education Other _____

4. **Describe Safety Planning:** _____

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ **Initial and date when completed:** _____

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____ **Initial and date when completed:** _____

Report forwarded to Principal: Date _____ **Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date** _____

(If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: _____ **Date:** _____

Estimate Time Spent on Investigation (.5 hour increments):

WALPOLE HIGH SCHOOL
INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Bullying is defined as a verbal, physical, written, or electronic action, or incident or other direct or indirect behavior that is cruel and repetitive. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological or emotional power.

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the: Target of the behavior Reporter (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a: Student Staff member (specify role) _____
 Parent Administrator Other (specify) _____

Your contact information/telephone number: _____

4. If student, state your school: _____ **Grade:** _____

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

6. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior): _____

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

Date(s) of Incident(s): _____

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: _____

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____

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

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

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

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ **Date:** _____

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

10: Form Given to: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date Received: _____

II. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____

Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the aggressor? Yes No

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

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION Yes No

4. Any other prior documented incidents toward the target? Yes No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION Yes No

Summary of Investigation:

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

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

YES NO

Bullying Incident documented as _____

Retaliation Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

Target's parent/guardian Date: _____ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____

Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

Loss of Privileges Detention Suspension

Community Service Education Other _____

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Report forwarded to Principal: Date _____ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date _____

(If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: _____

Date: _____

Estimate Time Spent on Investigation (.5 hour increments):

Anonymous Bullying Report

Date of incident:

Location of incident:
(Specify school name and room/area if possible)

Names of those involved:

Description of incident:

This form may be delivered or mailed to:
Bullying Report
Walpole Public Schools
135 School Street
Walpole, MA 02081

Counseling and Support Resources for Children and Families*

* This list is for information purposes only and does not indicate endorsement by the Walpole Public Schools

Arbour Counseling Services, Franklin	508-528-6037
Academy of Physical and Social Development, Newton	617-969-2202
Adult and Child Counseling Associates, Stoughton	781-341-0923
Alliance for the Mentally Ill, East Walpole, MA	508-668-2941
Associates for Psychotherapy and Consultation, Norwood, MA	781-762-0880
ATR Counseling, Canton	781-828-3717
Bay State Community Services	508-668-3223
Bay State Counseling, Medway	508-533-6145
Bellingham Counseling Associates, Bellingham	508-966-4002
Bridgewater Psychological Associates, Bridgewater, MA	508-697-9722
Cambridge & Needham Counseling, Needham, MA	781-449-7721
Norwood Hospital, psychiatric unit/crisis team	800-331-2900
Center for Community Counseling and Education, Walpole	508-668-3223
Child and Family Psychological Services, Norwood	781-551-0999
Counseling for Today's Issues, Norwood	781-440-6644
Dana Group of Norwood and Needham	781-449-1143
Delta Associates, Attleboro and Providence	401-421-1405
Dept. of Child and Family Services (DCF), Arlington office	781-641-8501
Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education	781-338-3700
Family Counseling Services, Franklin	508-520-8515
Family Loss Project, Framingham	508-877-3660
Family Service of Norfolk County, Dedham	508-326-0400

Resources, Continued

May Counseling Center, Walpole	508-668-4592
Medway Counseling Service, Medway	508-533-3700
Neponset Valley Counseling Center, Foxboro	508-543-8888
Norfolk Counseling Service, Foxboro	508-543-3411
Northfield Counseling Service, Medfield	508-359-6631
Riverside Crisis Team, <i>24 hour Crisis Intervention</i>	800-529-5077
South Bay Mental Health Center, Attleboro	508-222-7525
The Psychological Counseling Center, Norwood	781-762-8807
Versacare Child and Family Services, Attleboro	508-222-7572
Vorpahl Psychology Associates, Medfield	508-242-9666
West Central Family Counseling, Franklin	508-528-2340

(24 hour evaluation, triage, admission)

Websites for further information:

www.networktherapy.com

www.psychotherapist.com

www.aacap.org (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)

Pediatricians, family physicians, employee assistance plans, and insurance companies may also provide referrals.