



Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Updated October 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. PREAMBLE**
- II. APPLICATION OF THIS PLAN**
- III. REQUIREMENTS FOR REVIEW OF THIS PLAN**
- IV. LEADERSHIP**
- V. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
- VI. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**
- VII. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**
- VIII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION**
- IX. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**
- X. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**
- XI. DESE'S PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM**
- XII. DEFINITIONS**
- XIII. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

I. PREAMBLE

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

We also recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Accordingly, the District also strives to create a learning community driven by anti-bias, anti-racist ideals in which we are able to:

- Proactively and reactively address incidents of bias, equity, and inclusion,
- Empower and engage historically marginalized voices,
- Increase the representation and participation of historically marginalized voices,
- Disrupt dominant power structures and contribute to the dismantling of white supremacy,

- Support and ensure the physical and psychological safety of students, educators, caregivers and community members who are part of our BIPOC, AAPI, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and other oppressed groups, and
- Empower students to think critically about the message they are receiving and be influential contributors to change.

This Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan is designed with the intent to support the above-referenced goals and to comply with Massachusetts laws regarding anti-bullying in the schools pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O. This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is intended to be a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying in the Northampton Public Schools.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, this plan was also developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, the Northampton Association of School Employees (NASE), local law enforcement agencies, students, caregivers, and guardians by providing Notice and a Public Comment Period before being adopted by the School Committee. A 15-day review period will be given to all stakeholder groups to review the plan and to make comments via the district's communication platforms.

II. APPLICATION OF THIS PLAN

This plan applies to students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals.

III. REQUIREMENTS FOR REVIEW OF THIS PLAN

This policy will be reviewed annually by the School Committee beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.

At least once every four years, the District will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. The survey results will be used to assess the effectiveness of bullying prevention curricula and instruction that is required under the bullying prevention and intervention statute.

Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

IV. LEADERSHIP

District-wide bullying prevention efforts are coordinated by the District’s Executive Leadership (the Superintendent of Schools, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, the Director of Student Services, and the Family-Student Engagement and English Learner Education Coordinator), the Schools Health Teams, Student Services teams, in collaboration with Principals, Associate Principals, the Athletic Director, Technology Director and Specialist, school counselors, safety specialists and district data specialist. The following is a list of responsibilities:

- 1) Receiving reports on bullying (Principals or their designee);
- 2) Collecting and analyzing building-and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes (District Data Team consisting of Executive Leadership, Principals and Data specialist);
- 3) Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors (Superintendent, District’s Data Specialist, Director of Student Services);
- 4) Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law (Superintendent, Director of Student Services, and Principals);
- 5) Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors (Principals and Student Service Teams);
- 6) Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use (Principals, Director of Student Services, and Director of Curriculum and Instruction);
- 7) Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them (Superintendent, Technology Director);
- 8) Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated (Principals, Associate Principals, Director of Athletics);
- 9) Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials (Executive Leadership Team); and
- 10) Reviewing and updating the Plan at least biennially (Superintendent).

V. 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 schoolwide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- (i) developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
- (ii) developmentally (or age) 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;
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students; and
- engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors

C. Written notice to staff. The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

VI. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, student aggressors, families, and others are addressed. Below, this Plan describes strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs that are intended to reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and student aggressors, strategies for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for student aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

A. Identifying resources. The District works with principals, the student services department, and the Family-Student Engagement & English Learner Education Coordinator to survey and map all of the available resources. As appropriate, the District develops recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps.

B. Counseling and other services. In addition to school-based counseling services, the District maintains a list of staff and service providers, who may assist the schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors, is available to all students and their families. This list includes school-based and community-based organizations—including Community Service Agencies (CSAs) for Medicaid eligible students and, also, culturally and linguistically appropriate resources given our District’s demographic population.

The District also considers a variety of tools including, but not limited to: behavioral intervention plans, social skills programs, and individually focused curricula.

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.

D. Students with Protected Status. The District recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics.

E. Referral to outside services. The District has established a referral protocol for students and families to access outside services. Clear protocols will help students and families access appropriate and timely services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and policies. Current local referral protocols should be evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and revised as needed.

VII. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

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

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. 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.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The District staff will review the Plan with students by October 1st of each school year or as soon as the plan is implemented.

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 for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;

- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

VIII. Bullying Prevention and Intervention–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, caregivers or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written.

Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.

Reports made by students, caregivers or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make available to the school community an Incident Reporting Form in each school office, on the NPS website and ParentSquare.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and caregivers 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 caregivers or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities,

paraprofessionals, students, and caregivers or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation.

A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, and the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to caregivers or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor when they witness or become aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report as provided 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, caregivers or Guardians, and Others

The school or district expects students, caregivers or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal 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, caregivers 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, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation – Allegations of Bullying by a Student.

1. Safety

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

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

student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. (Include locally established student safety planning policies and procedures here.)

2. Obligations to Notify Others

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

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

(iii) Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if they have a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

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

C. Investigation.

The principal or designee will 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 or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, caregivers or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses 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 or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the

principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

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

D. Determinations.

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

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

The principal or designee **will promptly notify** the caregivers 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 caregivers must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations. In cases where a staff member is the alleged aggressor and personnel action is taken as a result of the determination, the District may also be similarly legally constrained in what it can report to the target's caregivers or guardian.

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.

E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills Building

Upon the building Principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the District will 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 building Principal or designee may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's anti-bullying curricula;
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with 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 caregivers 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 building Principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the building Principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the District's Code of Conduct, and may include actions such as a parent meeting and skills coaching, mediation or conflict resolution, detention or suspension.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, which will be considered in conjunction with state laws regarding student discipline.

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

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The building Principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the building Principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the building Principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the building Principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

4. Other Restorative Practices

Where appropriate, offer the target and the aggressor opportunities to engage in voluntary restorative practices with a focus on repairing the harm done to people and relationships that are consistent with the District's policies, including its anti-bias policies.

F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

When responding to a report of alleged bullying by a School Staff member, the Provisions of Section VIII, B-E of this Plan shall generally apply, with the following exceptions:

- Unless prohibited by Massachusetts or Federal law, any procedural and due process requirements set forth in any applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement or employment agreement will also be followed; and
- With respect to disciplinary action for staff who are found to have engaged in bullying conduct, any discipline will be consistent with the Plan, the law, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement or employment contract. This includes the right to appeal disciplinary action consistent with any applicable statute governing the employment of the staff member, collective bargaining agreement, or employment contract.
- When responding to a finding of bullying by a staff member, the District will consider the unique and inherent power dynamics between staff and students and other legal considerations when contemplating appropriate responses. For example, if the bullying investigation is tied to a Title IX violation, voluntary mediation and other restorative practices may not be offered.

IX. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent education and resources.

The District, in collaboration with SEPAC, ELPAC and PTOs will offer education programs for caregivers and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by each school.

B. Notification requirements.

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

X. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school

grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and

(ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

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

XI. DESE's PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws to include (g) (v): The Plan shall inform caregivers or guardians of the target about the Department's problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. This information will be made available in both hard copy and electronic formats:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking 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/prs>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Superintendent's office.

XII. DEFINITIONS

Aggressor is a student or a member of the School Staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards another member of the school community.

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

- a. Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- b. Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or of damage to their property;
- c. Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- d. Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- e. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

Deliberate acts of exclusion with the same effects as those identified above are also considered forms of bullying under the District's plan.

Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, 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, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition 9 of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyber-harassment is defined as any willful and repeated harm inflicted through, but not limited to, Web pages, social networking sites, email, instant messaging or text messaging using computers, cell phones and other electronic devices which is motivated by the target individual or individuals membership in a protected group, whether real or perceived.

Harassment is defined as unwelcome, intentional, unprovoked discriminatory behavior toward an individual or individuals, motivated by membership (real or perceived) in a protected category including: race, color, religion, ethnicity/natural origin, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and age. Harassment includes **cyber-harassment** (see definition above).

Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

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 the student's education.

Microaggression is a subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a member of a marginalized group, especially a racial minority, that is often unintentionally offensive or unconsciously reinforces a stereotype.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person (any student, staff or other individual) for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing or a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under the district's Policy, or for taking action consistent with the policy.

School Community Member is defined as any student, district or school employee, school committee member, independent contractor, school volunteer, parent or legal guardian of a student, or a visitor on school premises or at a school-related or school-sponsored function or activity.

School Grounds is property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased, or used by a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school, or collaborative school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

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 and all other staff of the Northampton Public Schools.

Target is a school community member against whom bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been perpetuated.

XIII. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER LAWS AND POLICIES

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Northampton Public Schools, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to the Northampton Public Schools or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of the Northampton Public School on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or any other class status protected by law or District policy, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or Northampton Public School 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, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L. c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, the Northampton Public School's Code of Conduct, or local school or Northampton Public School policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

Section 6: Forms



NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bullying Incident
REPORTING FORM

Northampton Public Schools takes bullying very seriously and will not be tolerated. If you wish to report an incident of alleged bullying, either contact the principal or associate principal, complete this form, and return it to the school to investigate this serious matter. In addition, we encourage caregivers/family members to work closely with school staff as they take steps to resolve problems and assure the safety of all parties. This form can be completed anonymously.

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

Name(s) of the target(s) of bullying:

____ Grade(s)/Position(s) _____ School _____
____ Grade(s)/Position(s) _____ School _____
____ Grade(s)/Position(s) _____ School _____
____ Grade(s)/Position(s) _____ School _____

Name(s) of the aggressor(s):

____ Grade(s)/Position(s) _____ School _____
____ Grade(s)/Position(s) _____ School _____
____ Grade(s)/Position(s) _____ School _____
____ Grade(s)/Position(s) _____ School _____

Date, time and location of the incident?

____/____/____ _____ AM/PM _____

Name(s) of witness(es):

____ Phone # _____ Email _____
____ Phone # _____ Email _____
____ Phone # _____ Email _____

Summarize the details of this incident: (Be as specific as possible, including who was involved, what each person did and said (specifying the words used)). *(Use additional paper if necessary)*

Please place an 'X' next to a statement(s) that best describes what happened (check all that apply):

Aggression encouraged by others Cyberbullying Defacing clothing or other property Discrimination

Extortion Hurtful, demeaning remarks or actions Intimidation Maliciously excluding from group

Physical Public Humiliation Retaliation Rumors or Spreading Falsehoods Stalking Teasing

Theft Threat Violence Other: _____

Did a physical injury result? Please check one of the following:

No Yes, but it did not require medical attention Yes, and it required medical attention

Do you know of other incidents of bullying directed at this student? No Yes (please explain):

Notifications:

Superintendent? Yes No

Police? Yes No Responding Officer: _____

(If Police report is available, please attach.)

Intervened during incident Responded to school/bullying Took person into custody

Name of the person reporting the incident(s) (You may report anonymously.) _____

Relationship to Student _____ Telephone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

****Please submit this form to your school's Principal.**

For Office Use Only

Administrator Receiving Report: _____

Date: _____



NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bullying Incident

INVESTIGATION FORM

This form should be completed by the principal or school designee after completing an investigation of an allegation of bullying.

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

Name(s) of the target(s) of bullying:

_____	Age ____	Sex ____	Race ____	SE/EL _____
Grade(s)/Position(s) _____	School _____			
_____	Age ____	Sex ____	Race ____	SE/EL _____
Grade(s)/Position(s) _____	School _____			
_____	Age ____	Sex ____	Race ____	SE/EL _____
Grade(s)/Position(s) _____	School _____			
_____	Age ____	Sex ____	Race ____	SE/EL _____
Grade(s)/Position(s) _____	School _____			

Name(s) of the alleged aggressor(s):

_____	Age ____	Sex ____	Race ____	SE/EL _____
Grade(s)/Position(s) _____	School _____			
_____	Age ____	Sex ____	Race ____	SE/EL _____
Grade(s)/Position(s) _____	School _____			
_____	Age ____	Sex ____	Race ____	SE/EL _____
Grade(s)/Position(s) _____	School _____			
_____	Age ____	Sex ____	Race ____	SE/EL _____
Grade(s)/Position(s) _____	School _____			

Date, time and location of the incident(s):

____/____/____ AM/PM _____

List who was interviewed: *[Include Target(s), Alleged Aggressor(s), and any Witness(es)]*

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Description of this incident: *(Use additional paper if necessary)*

Type of Incident *(check all that apply):*

PERSONAL:

- Bullying Cross-bullying Cyberbullying/harassment Derogatory words/gestures Discrimination
- Fight Harassment (except sexual) Physical attack, assault Retaliation Sexual harassment
- Social Conflict Threat/intimidation No weapon used
- Weapon(s) used *(identify)* _____ Other: _____

PROPERTY:

- Arson Graffiti Property damage Retaliation Robbery Theft Vandalism/destruction of property
- Other: _____ No Finding

Bias Indicators related to incident *(check all that apply):*

- Perpetrator and victim are from different groups Other: _____
- Derogatory words/writings/gestures used relating to victim's group
- Victim belongs to a group that is relatively small in number in school
- Victim perceives that incident was motivated by his/her group membership
- Victim participates in an activity/club promoting his/her group
- Offender had prior incidents with members of victim's group
- Incident occurred on a holiday or date significant to victim's group

Is behavior or incident potentially motivated by the victim's *(check any that apply):*

- Age Ethnicity/National Origin Disability/SPED (actual or perceived) Gender Identity (actual or perceived)
- Race/Color Religion Sex (gender) Sexual Orientation (actual or perceived)

No Finding (skip corrective action) **Findings** (complete below):

This incident constituted bullying because the following criteria have been met: There has been the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target.

One or more of the following outcomes apply to this situation: *(check all that apply)*

- Caused physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to his or her property
- Placed the target in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property
- Created a hostile environment at school for the target
- Infringed on the rights of the target at school
- Materially and substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Corrective Action *(include programs or alternative actions employed):*

- In-school suspension Out-of-school suspension Exclusion or expulsion
 Removed to alternative setting (for SE students)

Caregiver notification regarding outcomes as it pertains to their student, including actions(s) taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation: (date and time)

Administrator Investigating Incident(s):

Name: _____ Title: _____

Acknowledgements

DESE's Updated Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan