

EAST BRIDGEWATER PUBLIC SCHOOLS



BULLYING PREVENTION

&

INTERVENTION PLAN

Approved by the East Bridgewater School Committee on January 12, 2017

~Table of Contents~

I.	Leadership	pg.2
	A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan	
	B. Assessing Needs and Resources	
	C. Planning and Oversight	
II.	Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation	pg.4
	A. Definitions	
	B. Bullying and Retaliation Are Prohibited and Will Lead to Discipline	
	C. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan	
	D. Reporting Obligations	
	E. Investigation	
	F. Determination	
	G. Closing the Complaint and Possible Follow-Up	
III.	Training and Professional Development	pg.11
	A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan	
	B. Ongoing Professional Development	
	C. Written Notice to Staff	
IV.	Access to Resources and Services	pg.13
	A. Identifying Resources	
	B. Counseling and Other Services	
	C. Students with Disabilities	
	D. Referral to Outside Services	
V.	Academic and Non-Academic Activities	pg.16
	A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches	
	B. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts	
VI.	Collaboration with Families	pg.19
VII.	Problem Resolution	pg.20
VIII.	Relationship to Other Laws	pg.20

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I. LEADERSHIP

Leadership at all levels will play a critical role in developing and implementing Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans (“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 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 the 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 will be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians.

A joint school council meeting of the three schools will be held on October 27, 2016 in order to develop the Plan.

Consultation will include, at a minimum, notice and a public comment period before the East Bridgewater School Committee adopts the Plan.

B. Assessing needs and resources. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff, will:

- Assess the adequacy of current programs
- Review current policies and procedures
- Review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents
- Assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services in order to assist the district in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need.

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- Review current and relevant articles and research on best methodology to prevent, intervene and address bullying and cyber-bullying;
- Research and review “field tested” and research-based anti-bullying curricula and instructional guides;
- Develop a resource bank of relevant materials for both parents and students;
- Review the Massachusetts comprehensive Health and Wellness Curriculum Frameworks to provide a working curriculum context for anti-bullying curriculum; and
- Assessments of initial and periodic needs, by surveying students, faculty, staff, parents, guardians on school climate and school safety needs.
- Administer a DESE developed student survey to assess school climate and prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. (Once every 4 years beginning with 2015/2016 school year).

C. Planning and oversight. Building Principals or designee will responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

- Receiving reports on bullying
- Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes
- Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors
- Implementing the ongoing professional development that is required by the law
- Identifying supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors
- Choosing and implementing, in partnership with central office administration, the curricula that the school or district will use
- 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
- Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials

The Director of Technology will be responsible for updating the Acceptable Use Policy. The Assistant Superintendent will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently if needed.

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

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The East Bridgewater Public Schools is committed to maintaining a school environment where students are free from bullying and cyber-bullying and the effects thereof. Acts of bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited:

1. On school grounds, 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 the school district; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school district and
2. At a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts 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 also is prohibited.

A. Definitions.

Aggressor is a student or staff member who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, s. 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or staff members 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 her/himself or of damage to his/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.

Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including intimidating an individual into taking an action against his/her will; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; stalking; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

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Cyber-bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, s. 37O is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but 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. Cyber-bullying also includes:

- I. the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- II. the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates and of the conditions enumerated above in clauses I to V, inclusive, of the definition of bullying; and
- III. 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 above in clauses I to V, inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others.

Hostile Environment, as defined in M.G.L., c.71, s. 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 person 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, or paraprofessionals.

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

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B. Reporting Obligations

Reporting by Staff: A member of school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation s/he has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or designee.

Reporting by Students, Parents/Guardians, and Others: The district expects students, parents/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the school principal or designee. An individual may make an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation, however, no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting to Parents/Guardians: The principal or designee must promptly notify the parent/guardian of the alleged target and the alleged aggressor of a report of bullying or retaliation and of the school's procedures for investigating the report. If the alleged target and alleged aggressor attend different schools, the principal receiving the report shall inform the principal of the other student's school, who shall notify the student's parents of the report and procedures.

Reporting to Local Law Enforcement: At any point after receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, or during or after an investigation, if the school principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that the incident may involve criminal conduct, the school principal or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. In addition, if an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the Superintendent of the East Bridgewater Public Schools or designee will notify local law enforcement if s/he believes that criminal charges may be pursued.

Reporting to Administrator of Another School District or School: If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school and the East Bridgewater Public Schools is the first to be informed of the bullying or retaliation, then the Superintendent of the East Bridgewater Public Schools or designee must, consistent with state

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and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district or school so that both may take appropriate action.

Reporting to Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: The East Bridgewater Public Schools will collect and report annually the following data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: 1) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation; 2) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying and retaliation; 3) the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation, and 4) other information required by the Department. Additionally, the East Bridgewater Public Schools will administer a Department-developed student survey at least once every four years to assess "school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in schools."

C. Investigation

The school principal or designee shall investigate promptly a report of bullying or retaliation, giving consideration to all the circumstances at hand, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The following are general guidelines for responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. The guidelines will be adapted as necessary to respond appropriately to the complaint.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report.

Pre-Investigation: Even before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, school personnel will consider whether there is a need to take immediate steps to support the alleged target and/or protect the alleged target from further potential incidents of concern. In taking such action, however, the rights of both the alleged target and alleged aggressor must be considered.

Written statement of complaint: The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gathering information from the complaint, including such matters as: what specifically happened, who committed the alleged acts, who was present or may have information about the events, when the event occurred (date, time of day), and where the events occurred.

It is helpful to have these facts in writing. If age appropriate, the complainant may be asked to put the complaint in writing and to sign and date it. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to write a complaint, the investigator will record the allegations, read them to the complainant to confirm accuracy, and ask the complainant to sign the document. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to sign, the investigator may sign and date the document her/himself.

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Interviews: Once the allegations of the complainant are established, the investigator will gather other evidence, which often involves interviews of the alleged aggressor and/or other witnesses. If appropriate, the investigator should remind the alleged aggressor and witnesses that retaliation against persons whom they believe might have reported the incidents or cooperated with the investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality: The confidentiality of the complainant and the other witnesses will be maintained to the extent practicable given the school's obligation to investigate and address the matter.

D. Determination

School personnel must weigh all of the evidence objectively to determine whether the alleged events occurred and, if they did, whether the events constitute bullying or retaliation. The determination must be based upon all of the facts and circumstances and the perspective of a reasonable person. When applied to children, the "reasonable person" standard is generally "that of a reasonable person of like age, intelligence, and experience under like circumstances." See *Ellison v. Brady*, 924 F.2d 872 (9th Cir. 1991).

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.

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

E. Responses to Bullying

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for

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accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (d) (v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for evaluation.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

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

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

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

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3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

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

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

F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff.

Schools and districts need to develop policies and procedures that address how school or district administration will respond to and resolve a report of bullying of a student by school staff. The policies and procedures must address safety planning, notification to parent or guardians and others, investigation, and response – areas that are addressed when a student is alleged to have bullied another student (see Section V. B – E above). Schools and districts should consider consulting with local counsel in developing and administering these policies and procedures. They should emphasize the importance of the investigation, the need for the aggressor, target, and witnesses 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.

III. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The East Bridgewater Public Schools Bullying and Prevention and Intervention plan reflects the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 to provide ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

A. Annual staff training on the Plan:

Annual training for all East Bridgewater Public Schools Faculty and staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will

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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. 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 program within the last year.

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 year.

B. Ongoing professional development.

The Assistant Superintendent will be responsible for oversight and implementation of the training used throughout the system.

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:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment
- information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.
- Promote and model use of respectful language;

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- Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference
- Using positive behavioral support strategies
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management and empathy for others
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students
- Constructively managing classroom behaviors

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.

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.

IV. 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. The Plan District plan describes the strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the school's or district's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, services identified reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and student aggressors.

A. Identifying resources. The Plan includes the school's or district's process for identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, student aggressors, and their families. This will include a review of current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services. Once this mapping of resources is complete, the school or district can develop recommendations and action steps 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 outlines the local processes for identifying existing and needed resources.

A district designee will be responsible for creating and posting a bibliography of anti-bullying resources including, but not limited to:

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- The EBPS Anti-Bullying Policy
- The EBPS Anti-Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
- Instructional guides and materials
- Research articles and materials on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying
- Relevant and useful websites
- Community resources and related services

B. Counseling and other services. Counseling and administrative staff are available, as well as, a number of related services, in each school. Counseling staff at school, including school counselors, school psychologists and others will assist 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 to students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Tools may include, but are not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups and individually focused curricula. The counseling staff, along with other district officials will work with the district ELL teacher to identify culturally and linguistically appropriate resources. If resources needed to respond to instances of bullying are not readily available within the district, linkages with community based organizations will be established to support the district as needed. Some of these resources may include the YMCA, Brockton Area Multi Services, Bridgewater State University and other local organizations.

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.

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 Special Education department recognizes that it is imperative that specific steps need to be taken to create a safe, supportive environment for students who may be more vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing. To address this need, all IEP team evaluations will

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include discussion regarding whether or not a student's disability affects social skills development or when the student's disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing. If this is determined to be the case, the IEP will include interventions that will address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, the IEP team will document interventions to be taken to specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bully, harassment, or teasing. Special education teachers and guidance staff will utilize the districts identified prevention 11 curriculum as well as be provided additional skill development resources to assist students identified with social skill deficiency. Referral to outside services.

If a student with a disability (504/individualized education program) is a victim of bullying or is an aggressor, the School District will consider whether to convene a Team meeting to determine if as result of the bullying the plan is appropriate and meets the individual student's needs.

“unless it is clear from the school's investigation into the bullying conduct that there was no effect on the student with a disability's receipt of FAPE, the school should, as a best practice, promptly convene the IEP team or the Section 504 team to determine whether, and to what extent: (1) the student's educational needs have changed; (2) the bullying impacted the student's receipt of IDEA FAPE services or Section 504 FAPE services; and (3) additional or different services, if any, are needed, and to ensure any needed changes are made promptly. By doing so, the school will be in the best position to ensure the student's ongoing receipt of FAPE.” (OSEP, Dear Colleague Letter 2014).

D. Referral to outside services. The East Bridgewater Public Schools has a referral protocol for referring students and families to appropriate outside services. Referrals comply with relevant laws and policies. Current local referral protocols are evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and revised as needed.

V. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The East Bridgewater Public Schools will provide 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

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development. Other resources are currently available on the Department's website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/bullying/> including social and emotional learning guidelines.

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

Every building has its own school psychologist to provide support to students and educators. Behavior support staff work in each building to provide a therapeutic approach to the issues of the students of the day.

Safety Care training for all staff members to teach de-escalation and coping strategies

Weekly Student Support meetings at each building

Bullying resource center for students and materials for parents.

Teacher resources

Counseling services for social and emotional learning provided by school adjustment counselors for staff and students

Central School:

Bully Guard

Second Step

Social Thinking Curriculum

Spirit Events

Raksters

Buddy Bench

Middle School:

Rachel's Challenge

Kindness & Compassion Club

Spirit Events

High School:

Rachel's Challenge

Spirit Events

LGBTQ Club

S.A.D.D. Club

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Advisory

District-wide prevention 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 (Developing a bully hotline/drop box in all schools)
- emphasizing cybersafety, 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 Plan will be reviewed with students annually.

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:

Every building has its own school psychologist to provide support to students and educators. Behavior specialists work in each building to provide a therapeutic approach to the issues of the students of the day.

- Safety Care training for all staff members for de-escalation strategies
- Weekly Student Support meetings at each building
- Bullying resource center for students and materials for parents.
Teacher resources
- Counseling services for social and emotional learning provided by school adjustment counselors for staff and students

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;

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- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students (An Educator’s Guide to Bullying for teachers);
- 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(Create tool boxes for students);
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students’ interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Resources:

Cyber bullying institute - cyberbullying.org

Connectsafely.org

Fosi.org

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

In order to increase our capacity to prevent and respond to bullying, the East Bridgewater Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students’ families. As part of the EBPS commitment to communicating the district’s bullying Plan to include provisions for informing parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district or school including:

- how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan
- the dynamics of bullying
- online safety and cyberbullying
- Parents and guardians must also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. School- or district-specific approaches to

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collaboration should take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and the parents.

Identify in local Plans the parent resource and information networks that the school or district will collaborate with in working with parents and guardians.

A. Parent education and resources. The district offers 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 parental, professional, advisory and/or similar organizations.

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

VII. PROBLEM RESOLUTION

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/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's Office.

VIII. 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, 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 by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of

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these characteristics. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L.c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

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