

# **NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**



**December, 2010**

**Mary Louise Francis, ED.D.  
Superintendent**

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## ***New Bedford Public Schools***

### **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying in all New Bedford Public Schools. The district is committed to working with students, families, law enforcement agencies, and the 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. Each school principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan in his or her school, and for reporting outcomes of such implementation to central administration.

The New Bedford Public Schools takes very seriously the problem of bullying and its impact on both individual students, and on the climate for learning in each of our schools.

The research is clear: bullying behaviors that are allowed to occur without intervention can cause serious harm to students who are being targeted, and on all students in a school. These behaviors, particularly those conducted anonymously via electronic means known as ‘cyberbullying,’ can cause significant emotional trauma for targeted individuals that prevent their ability to fully participate in the learning environment, thus depriving students of their right as citizens to a free and appropriate public education.

Furthermore, in a school where students are aware of the victimization of one or more members of the student body which is perceived to go unanswered, the learning environment is compromised. The New Bedford Public Schools are committed to providing a positive school climate in every school where students feel safe, connected and nurtured in their academic and social development.

Childhood bullying is a complex societal problem impacted by multiple influences, including all of what children see and hear in their everyday experience. As such, everyone in the community has a personal role and a vested interest in educating children in social and emotional skills as well as cognitive skills.

The Plan identifies key components of the district’s approach to prevent bullying in all New Bedford Public Schools, and to intervene effectively in incidents of bullying behavior by students when incidents are brought to the attention of school leaders. All New Bedford Public School staff and volunteers will be made aware of their obligation under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, and will be provided with the tools they need to better identify bullying situations, to proactively prevent bullying wherever possible, and to protect children who are being targeted in validated cases of bullying to prevent further abuse and restore physical and emotional safety for all members of the school community.

In pursuit of a safe, supportive and successful learning environment for all students, each school in the N.B.P.S. district will use this Plan as a framework to develop the bullying prevention strategies unique to the needs of their own school community. The district will fully support these efforts through administrative guidance and support, professional development for staff, and measurement of compliance with the Plan at every level.

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## **I. LEADERSHIP**

District leadership has placed a high priority on formulating a district Plan to keep students safe and effectively comply with the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O. All school leaders have received training regarding their duties under the new statute, and have been prepared to train their own staff in each school. Opportunities for school leaders to develop the skills necessary to proactively prevent student bullying, and to properly investigate, identify and document incidents of bullying will be ongoing.

School leaders clearly understand their responsibilities to promote a positive school climate built on mutual respect and understanding for all members of their individual school community. These responsibilities involve identifying, modeling and guiding behavioral expectations for all students and staff based on a culture of civility and inclusion. In addition, school principals are responsible for providing leadership in shaping the environment, and for providing resources and opportunities for students and staff to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to meet behavioral goals.

### **Plan Development**

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, local law enforcement officers, students, parents, and guardians. The New Bedford Public Schools Bullying Prevention Task Force was convened in January 2010 to begin work on a Student Bullying Prevention Policy. Following the passage of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the group has been expanded to include a subcommittee focusing on professional development needs and curriculum adoptions.

The following methods and activities have been utilized by the district in gathering information, assessing needs, and developing the Plan:

- I. National and state resources have been reviewed in detail to identify those strategies and programs for which there is the strongest evidence in the prevention research literature that the implementation of these strategies with fidelity would be effective in the prevention of bullying behavior in a school environment.
- II. Information about M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O and district efforts to obtain the input of all community stakeholders into the development of the Plan has been disseminated to the community via multiple broadcast channels including the district's website, printed notices sent home with students, and appearances on AM Radio by the Superintendent and others to discuss the issue of bullying in schools.
- III. Public forums for parents were held on three dates in the autumn, at three regional locations districtwide. Information regarding the series of Parent Forum dates was sent home with each student and publicized on the district website to encourage parent participation. An electronic distribution list was developed comprised of parents/guardians who elected to receive communication from the district about parent resources and new information as it becomes available.

- IV. Local research has been conducted using electronic data collection methods to map the strategies and effective approaches currently utilized in every New Bedford school in order to identify best practices, and to identify each school's needs and gaps in resources. Data was also collected on the attitudes and concerns of parents on the issue of bullying and parents' perceptions of the magnitude of the problem and current approaches to the problem being employed by schools.
- a. Survey of all school leaders regarding existing schoolwide approaches to shaping a safe and supportive school environment, establishing behavioral expectations, and policies and practices in place for responding to incidents of suspected bullying. Data was also collected on familiarity of school leaders with evidence-based strategies to prevent bullying and provide students with opportunities for social-emotional learning. Twenty-three school principals completed the survey, constituting a response rate of 89%.
  - b. Districtwide survey of teachers to determine their familiarity with evidence-based bullying prevention (BP) and social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, and current levels of implementation of BP/SEL programs in Grades K—12. Teachers were also asked to identify their needs for professional development opportunities in these areas. To date, 119 teachers completed the survey, constituting a current response rate of 14%.
  - c. Districtwide student survey to measure the prevalence of bullying as experienced and witnessed by students at the elementary and secondary levels, and students' perceptions regarding the response of school staff to the problem. To date, 1,067 students have completed the survey, constituting a current response rate of 9%.
  - d. Districtwide parent survey to measure the concerns of this key stakeholders group, and their perceptions about the prevalence of the problem and the response of schools to the problem. To date, 15 parents have completed the survey, constituting a current response rate of <1%.

The information gathered from all of the sources cited above has been used to inform the district of the areas of most significant need across all schools and to drive the development of its Plan to meet the mandate of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.

The ongoing work to prevent bullying in all New Bedford Public Schools, and to successfully intervene in situations when a student is being bullied, is described in detail under each section of this Plan. This work will focus on the following key areas:

- A. **Environmental strategies** that support a positive school climate of inclusiveness and mutual respect, including but not limited to:
  - a. Student Bullying Prevention Policy adopted by the New Bedford Public Schools prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation as defined by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.

- b. Uniform protocols and procedures to be developed and adopted by all schools to ensure compliance with N.B.P.S. Student Bullying Prevention Policy and M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.
  - c. Professional development and training for all N.B.P.S. staff, vendors and volunteers to equip them to identify and respond to incidents of bullying when they witness or receive reports of possible bullying of a student.
  - d. Notification to parents/guardians, districtwide and schoolwide, of bullying prevention and intervention strategies, and mechanisms to report concerns to school leaders.
- B. Instructional strategies** that provide administrators, teachers, parents, and students with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent bullying and to effectively respond to bullying when it occurs. These strategies will include:
- a. Adoption and implementation of an evidence-based, universal bullying prevention curriculum in grades K—12 that teaches students the skills necessary to effectively reduce bullying behaviors.
  - b. Implementation of instruction in Internet safety and the districts' Technology Acceptable Usage Policy for all students using school computers.
  - c. Review of the needs of all students receiving special education services to determine whether their disability may increase their risk of becoming a target or perpetrator of bullying, with additional instructional strategies provided for these students as part of their Individual Education Plan to build social skills needed to avoid or cope with interpersonal conflicts and avoid bullying behaviors.
  - d. Professional development offered to N.B.P.S. staff in the areas of mandated and recommended schoolwide, classroom and instructional strategies that support a safe and supportive learning environment and build students' interpersonal skills and motivation to comply with behavioral expectations.
  - e. Professional development offered to N.B.P.S. staff in the areas of the use of building-specific data collection methods to measure the prevalence and characteristics of bullying, and investigation and reporting of incidents of bullying, harassment and/or retaliation by students.
  - f. Training for all student athletes, coaches and parents of student athletes to inform them of requirements under N.B.P.S. Student Bullying Prevention Policy and M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.
  - g. Trainings offered to parents who want to gain knowledge of the online environment and strategies to guide their children in safe use of the Internet and social networking sites to prevent bullying.

- C. **Mechanisms for monitoring compliance** with N.B.P.S. Student Bullying Prevention Policy and M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, including:
- a. Reporting by all district schools to central administration of reported incidents of bullying behavior and outcomes of the investigations of such incidents.
  - b. Annual reports by the district to stakeholders of activities undertaken by schools to comply with N.B.P.S. Student Bullying Prevention Policy and M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as well as aggregate outcome data measuring the prevalence rates for bullying behaviors reported by students and staff.
- D. **Coordination of efforts** to address bullying through collaboration and integration of services to students and families, including but not limited to:
- a. Integration of district efforts in the areas of student discipline and bullying prevention and intervention to ensure fair and consistent enforcement of district policies across all schools.
  - b. Coordination of behavioral health services for students with community-based providers of health and human services.
  - c. Development of agreements with local law enforcement agencies regarding protocols for referral of cases of bullying and harassment as warranted.

**Planning and Oversight**

The district is committed to ongoing efforts to continually develop, implement and measure outcomes of a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention and intervention in all schools in the district. The tasks which comprise this comprehensive approach at the district and school levels are outlined below, and identify the timeline for completion or ongoing review, and the individual(s) responsible for each component.

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Individual(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Projected Date of Completion</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Cycle of Review</b>
<b>Needs Assessment and Planning</b>				
Establish an initial protocol for reporting, investigating and responding to incidents of bullying (See Appendix A)	Superintendent	September 2010	September 2010	6-12 months

Establish an initial process for reporting and tracking incident reports and accessing information related to targets and aggressors	Superintendent and School Principals	September 2010	September 2010	6-12 months
Adoption of Student Bullying Prevention Policy prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation (see Appendix B)	School Committee	January 2011		Annually
Adoption of Internet Safety Policy	School Committee	N/A		Annually
Implementation of student instruction in Internet Safety and Technology Acceptable Use Policy	Technology Education Department	September 2010		Annually
Collection of data on current districtwide prevalence of bullying and approaches to prevention and intervention	Director of Support Services	December 2010	December 2010	Annually
Development of district BPI Plan to develop comprehensive approaches to prevention and intervention and report outcomes	Director of Support Services with Stakeholder Input	December 2010	December 2010	Annually
Planning for initial and ongoing professional development for administrators, staff, vendors and volunteers	Director of Professional Development and School Principals	September 2010	Initial: September 2010	Ongoing
Planning supports that respond to the needs of target and aggressors	School Principals and staff, including teachers, administrators, and counselors in consultation with parents/guardians	Initial: September 2010	Ongoing	For students receiving special education services: upon review of I.E.P.
Adoption of evidence-based bullying prevention curricula in grades K-12	School Principals	2010-2011	June 2011	Annually
Adoption of uniform evidence-based bullying prevention curricula in grades K-12 <i>districtwide</i>	Superintendent with recommendations of BP Curriculum Committee	Spring 2011	Implement in SY 2011-2012	Annually

## Implementation

Amendment of Student Code of Conduct and student handbooks to reflect Student Bullying Prevention Policy	Superintendent	September 2010	September 2010	Annually
Written notice to staff and amendment of Staff Handbooks to reflect new obligations under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O	Superintendent and School Principals	September 2010	September-November 2010	Annually
Written notice to parents of schools' obligations under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O and process for reporting bullying, in appropriate languages	Superintendent and School Principals	October 2010	November 2010	Annually
Notice to parents of schools' obligations under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O via multiple communication channels	Superintendent	November 2010	Ongoing	Ongoing
Providing parents with opportunities for input into the BPI Plan	Director of Support Services and School Principals	November 2010	Nov/Dec 2010 and Ongoing	Ongoing
Development of Memoranda of Understanding with local law enforcement agencies	Superintendent	February 2011		Annually
Coordination of behavioral health services with local and regional providers of human services	Asst. Superintendent for Student Services and School Principals	September 2010	Ongoing	Annually

## Assessment and Reporting of Outcomes

Analysis of school-based data measuring the prevalence of peer-on-peer bullying	Superintendent or Designee and School Principals	Baseline by June 2011		Annually
Report to the community of strategies implemented districtwide and outcomes	Superintendent or Designee and School Principals	June 2011		Annually

## II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The district acknowledges that effective approaches for the prevention and intervention of bullying must be comprehensive in scope. Such an approach relies on multiple environmental and instructional strategies being implemented with fidelity by every member of school community, each of whom has a significant role in producing desired outcomes for students. As such, professional development will be provided to increase the abilities of all N.B.P.S. staff in areas of specific knowledge and skills identified by the staff and school leaders as areas of need. In addition, no-cost resources will be identified and disseminated to staff to encourage self-directed learning in the following areas identified by research as important to children's resiliency and academic success:

- supports for positive youth development
- social-emotional learning and development of social competencies
- physical and mental health supports and outcomes
- students' connectedness to school as a predictor of academic success
- comprehensive elements of safe, supportive and successful school communities

Under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the foundation of professional development for all staff to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying will be provided in Phase I and will include information outlined by the statute and by regulations promulgated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as follows:

- (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- (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 be provided for teachers and support staff to address the needs of students with disabilities that affect social skills development such that members of the IEP Team can specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing as mandated by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010.

All professional staff will be provided with opportunities to identify their needs for additional professional development opportunities which can increase their knowledge and skills in those general environmental and instructional

approaches which are supported by the research literature as integral to establishing a safe and supportive school climate. These specific areas for professional development will include, but not be limited to:

- 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.

Staff will be surveyed to identify and prioritize their needs for professional development in these areas. Survey data will inform ongoing plans for professional development opportunities offered each year, beginning in 2010-2011. The following timeline outlines the process the district will utilize in planning and implementing professional development as mandated under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O in Phase I and beyond:

<b>Professional Development Tasks</b>	<b>Individual(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Projected Date of Completion</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Cycle of Review</b>
<b>Phase I: Required PD for All Staff</b>				
School principals will be trained as trainers in the M.A.R.C. staff training model, "Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention for Educators"	Superintendent and Director of Professional Development	July 2010	July 2010	As required
School-based professional development for administrators, staff, vendors and volunteers regarding obligations under M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37O	Director of Professional Development and School Principals	Autumn 2010	Autumn 2010	Ongoing
Train members of IEP Teams to identify and meet the needs of students receiving special education services to address social skills development	Asst. Superintendent for Student Services or Designee	Autumn 2010		Ongoing

**Phase II: Ongoing Professional Development for N.B.P.S. Staff**

Survey staff regarding their professional development needs in general environmental and instructional approaches to bullying prevention

Director of Student Support

Autumn 2010

December 2010

Every 2 years

Review staff survey data and training requirements for prevention education curriculum adoptions; schedule professional development opportunities as needed

Directors of Student Support and Professional Development

Spring 2011

TBD

Annually

Provide professional development for school principals and district staff in effective investigation of reports of bullying and harassment and current protocols and procedures

Superintendent or Designee

Autumn 2011

Ongoing

Annually and As Needed

Provide professional development for school principals and/or designees in the planning, implementation and evaluation of comprehensive strategies to support positive school climate

Superintendent or Designee

Spring 2011

Ongoing

Annually and As Needed

The Curriculum Subcommittee of the New Bedford Bullying Prevention Task Force is currently reviewing three options under consideration as a staff training model in comprehensive approaches to bullying prevention. They include:

- The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
- Community Matters
- a locally developed training based on the work of the Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes, "Direct From the Field: A Guide to Bullying Prevention."

A model will be chosen by February 2011, based on integration with classroom prevention education curricula chosen for implementation at each grade level, and available training days and funding.

### **III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

**A. Identifying resources:** Each school has assigned professional staff to the School Behavior Team, which has participated in training with Dr. Sheldon Wagner of Behavioral Development and Educational Services. Counselors, nurses, administrators and teachers work on the team to assess students' behavioral health needs and ability to function appropriately in the classroom. The model uses a data-driven decision-making approach to identify gaps in social skills and behavioral competencies and to provide additional opportunities for students to build social skills as indicated.

Each school is assessing its current staff capacity and curriculum for areas of possible integration of bullying prevention education and social-emotional learning programs. Several models in use in different schools are being examined in relation to the research on evidence-based bullying prevention programs (including, but not limited to, Second Step and P.A.T.H.S.) Models currently being implemented, and additional program models, are under review at this time by the Bullying Prevention Task Force, Subcommittee on Curriculum in order to identify the best program for adoption districtwide and existing structures for delivery of the curricula at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Recommendations for program adoptions will be made to the superintendent in February 2011.

Additionally, new units of study are being developed to integrate related learning experiences in current required courses at the high school, for example a unit exploring the concept of restorative justice will be incorporated into the social sciences in Psychology and Criminal Justice coursework.

Selected program training models are under consideration to provide staff training in environmental strategies to prevent bullying. The successful model will integrate with classroom prevention education curricula and service learning projects for students, as well as bullying reporting mechanisms and systems of student behavioral supports and discipline.

**B. Counseling and other services:** Several schools involved with the federally funded Elementary and Secondary Counseling Program and the FACTS Program have engaged in evaluation activities and extensive school-community collaborations to identify counseling services and other supports available for children and families in need of indicated and extensive health and human services. These school teams have developed such school-based programs to prevent bullying as implementation of bullying prevention curriculum in targeted grades by school counselors, and group counseling services to provide additional exposure to social skills development for students targeted by bullying and students engaging in aggressive behaviors which target their peers. School teams have also developed collaborative agreements for a range of program interventions, including but not limited to mentoring services, after-school

programs offering expanded academic and social supports, home visits by school staff to connect with parents and increase parent involvement in education, literacy support programs, and extensive wraparound services when indicated.

An example of resources mapped at one of the New Bedford middle schools revealed a variety of linked services available to students and families, including the Amigo Center overseen by the Immigrants' Assistance Center to provide support to non-English speaking families in networking through the school system; S.M.I.L.E.S. Mentoring providing a school-based one-to-one mentoring program serving students with mentors from the school, business and community sectors to help them meet their personal and educational potential; and agreements for referral of students and families to several agencies providing counseling services, including the Women's Center providing free and confidential 24-hour services in counseling, education, outreach, referrals and resources; NorthStar Learning Center, providing strength-based, family-focused programs including after-school programs, early childhood development programs, drug and alcohol support, child crisis support and services to reduce gang violence in the community; and the New Bedford Family Connections Coalition Family Center, which provides family-centered and culturally sensitive services for all families to promote safety for children and enhance community-neighborhood relationships.

All schools utilize the wraparound services provided by the Community Service Agencies (CSAs) for Medicaid eligible students in need of intensive care coordination and family support and training through New Bedford Child and Family Services. The agency has a long-standing history of collaboration with the school district, having worked together to strengthen services under the federally funded Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative from 2001—2004. The agency has introduced all school counseling staff to the services of the CSA and built relationships with school teams. Other health and human service agencies in the greater New Bedford area, including but not limited to and Seven Hills Behavioral Health, Inc. provide additional resources for culturally and linguistically appropriate services which may be needed for students and families, including students served by ESI / ELL programs.

The New Bedford Public Schools departments of Central Registration and Pupil Personnel also coordinate services to families in transition under the McKinney-Vinto Act, acting as liaisons to community-based services to meet the needs of displaced families for housing, transportation, medical treatment and other necessities.

**C. Students with Disabilities:** For students with disabilities for whom social skills deficits are generally characteristic or consistent with the profile of the disability, particularly autism spectrum disorders, direct social skills training is

addressed via social-behavioral or social-pragmatic goals and methodology of teaching on the IEP. Both direct teaching and incidental teaching and coaching strategies are contained in the IEP. Accommodations describe how to engage typical peers with the students with a disabilities so as to help generalize positive social interactions for the students with disabilities. Additional information on IEPs may note students' participation in social skills groups to increase communication and interaction skills with peers and adults. It may also address the student's participation in counseling groups and classroom based social-emotional instruction. These groups are offered to help students increase the capacity to identify and deal with feelings and emotions of self and others; and, to identify unproductive and harmful as well as positive interactions.

**D. Referral to Outside Services:** As noted above, each School Behavior Team assesses students' needs for social skills development, then develops and implements an individual plan for classroom interventions and individual and/or group services to meet the needs of the student. When extensive needs of a student and/or family are identified, the School Behavior Team will refer to a community-based agency to meet these needs as noted in Section B.

#### **IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

Over the past two decades, the New Bedford Public Schools has developed and implemented comprehensive prevention programs with the goal of supporting students' personal development in a safe learning environment. The Principles of Effectiveness promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education in 1999 have formed the basis for academic and non-academic prevention strategies which continue to be implemented in support of this goal. These Principles call for program development to be based on measurement of needs, followed by the choice of evidence based strategies which, when implemented with fidelity, can be expected to produce the desired outcomes. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of program efforts will provide evidence of program strengths and weaknesses to be addressed as efforts are reviewed on an annual basis districtwide and in each school building.

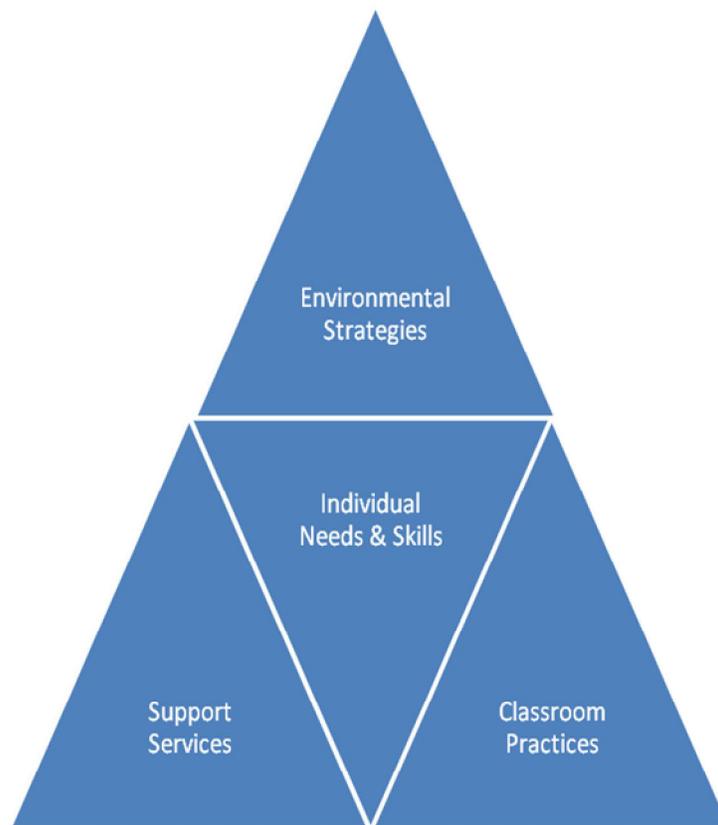
Historically, the prevention of bullying behavior among students has been a primary focus of violence prevention efforts under the district's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. These efforts have included implementation of environmental strategies and the adoption of curricula which support students' social-emotional learning. Individual schools have elected to implement different prevention strategies according to their identified needs and available resources. The Bullying Prevention Task Force is in the process of reviewing the approaches being used in schools districtwide and making recommendations for the adoption of specific evidence-based bullying

prevention and social-emotional learning programs at each grade level in all schools.

Research in the field of prevention demonstrates that the most effective approach to prevention of bullying behaviors is a comprehensive plan that incorporates both environmental strategies and skill-building. Bullying prevention efforts in all New Bedford Public Schools will use this comprehensive approach, supported by appropriate and ongoing professional development for all staff.

**Environmental strategies** will include policy, practices and procedures that prohibit bullying in all forms and support a safe and supportive school community built on civility and respect for self and others. These strategies may include, but not be limited to:

- behavioral expectations set forth in a student code of conduct and discipline policy that is fairly and consistently enforced and reflects a culture of high expectations and student support.
- increased adult supervision in areas where bullying behaviors are known to occur, and at times of transition during the school day



- recognition of the contributions of individual students and staff
- initiatives that provide students with opportunities to contribute to their school community in positive ways, specifically in addressing bullying

as an issue, e.g., shared responsibility for creating classroom and schoolwide rules based on core values developed by students and staff; student-led efforts to measure prevalence and develop social marketing tools to discourage bullying and encourage prosocial behaviors via community service projects

**Classroom practices** are critical in building supportive relationships between students and staff that support attachment of students to school and increase their motivation to learn. Classroom practices that will be supported through professional development for teachers and other staff include, but are not limited to

- Classroom and time management skills that provide the foundation for an orderly atmosphere where students are aware of expectations and supported in meeting these expectations.
- Use of interactive, prosocial teaching pedagogy including cooperative learning strategies in group work, differentiated learning, classroom discussions on topics of concern to students, and modeling and practice of skills by students, including communication skills, conflict resolution skills and problem solving.
- Staff training in the use of communication skills, including conflict resolution and de-escalation teacher-student communications
- Integration of literature across the curriculum which addresses the concerns of adolescents, including works wherein bullying is a central theme.
- Student-led projects to address bullying integrated across the curriculum.

**Support services** will be in place in all schools to assist students experiencing barriers to regular school attendance due to personal or family difficulties or transitions, or school adjustment problems, or the need for additional opportunities that support the development of social skills and positive behaviors. Support services may include, but not be limited to:

- connection with academic support services during the school day or before/after school hours
- peer support programs
- connection to mentoring programs
- Access to resources and services through the identification, coordination, and creation of school and community behavioral health services that improve the school-wide environment and utilize resources that are clinically, linguistically and culturally appropriate for students and their families.
- referral as needed to health and human service agencies for services related to physical wellness needs, or assistance in meeting needs in the area of housing and temporary financial assistance.

Each school will utilize a team approach in the development of behavioral health

services and programs that address a continuum of student needs, including prevention and promotion for all students, early intervention for at-risk students, intensive intervention for students with serious needs, and crisis intervention for students with acute needs. Services will be focused on providing students with instruction in areas such as social problem solving, life skills, social-emotional development, interpersonal communication, self-regulation, and violence prevention.

Needs assessment data has been collected districtwide to determine the current program strategies in use to fulfill student needs for these universal and indicated instructional opportunities. The Curriculum Subcommittee of the New Bedford Bullying Prevention Task Force is currently reviewing the data and drafting recommendations for specific curriculum adoptions at each grade level in all schools as a universal approach to bullying prevention education and social-emotional learning. Recommendations will be made to the superintendent and the school committee by February 2011 (see appendix \_\_\_ for programs under consideration.)

All schools have established School Behavior Teams that have been trained in Positive Behavioral Instructional Supports by Dr. Sheldon H. Wagner of Behavioral Development and Educational Services. School Behavior Teams will utilize the process and protocols developed by B.D.E.S. in conducting functional assessments of student behavior when indicated, and developing environmental supports for use by classroom teachers. The School Behavior Team will use this decision making framework to guide selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.

## **V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

Working over the past year, the New Bedford Public Schools Bullying Prevention Task Force has drafted a Student Bullying Prevention Policy that prohibits student bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation as defined by M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370. The policy was drafted with the input of multiple stakeholders who began identifying concerns and conducting a review of published school policies in January 2010. The research and deliberation of this group continued upon passage of M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370, culminating in the presentation of a draft policy to the New Bedford School Committee's Subcommittee on Policy, which has voted to forward the proposed policy (see Appendix A) to the school committee for a vote at their next meeting.

In July, New Bedford school leaders received training by the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center in their new responsibilities mandated under M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370. The following practices and protocols were put into place at the start of the current school year and are continually refined to meet the statutory

requirements.

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation:

Reports may be made by students, staff, parents or guardians, or others and may be oral or written. It is the responsibility of each school principal or his/her designee to determine the individual(s) responsible in each school to receive reports of bullying.

- a. Each school will be required to develop a mechanism for anonymous reporting in order to encourage reporting of incidents involving bullying or retaliation.
- b. At least annually, and as needed for students entering during the school year, school principals will inform staff, students and parents/guardians in the appropriate language(s), of the protocol and mechanisms to make an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation in the school, either orally or in writing.
- c. The district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community, including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents/guardians that will be posted on the district website, and will be made available at several locations in each school, including but not limited to the school nurses' office, the counseling office(s), the school's main office, and other areas determined by the principal and/or his designee.
- d. School principals will include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents / guardians.
- e. Information regarding the Student Bullying Prevention Policy and consequences for violating the policy will be published in the Student Handbook at each school. Parents will be required to sign and return documentation that they have received, read, and understood the information in the Student Handbook at the beginning of each school year for each student.
- f. Completion of the Incident Reporting Form will not be required to make a report of bullying or retaliation, which may be made orally and/or anonymously. The staff member who receives an oral report will complete the Incident Reporting Form in documenting the report.

- g. Reports may also be made to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Family Involvement.
- h. The district will provide resources to guide school principals and will promulgate minimum mandatory protocols for use by all schools in documenting reports of bullying brought forth by all reporters, according to the Student Bullying Prevention Policy.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation:

- a. Safety: The first concern of the school principal in responding to a report of bullying or retaliation will be the immediate and ongoing safety of the targeted student, throughout the course of the investigation. The school principal or his/her designee will identify the safety needs of the student in school, and/or on the way to and from school, and will make any appropriate arrangements to protect the alleged target from possible future incidents. Additional steps will be taken to identify the individual responsible to follow through with the alleged target daily to determine if the bullying has ceased. The safety plan will be developed on an individual basis and documented on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Response Form as required for each reported incident. Components of the safety plan may include, but not be limited to:
  - i. Providing a safe adult who will check in with the student at least daily
  - ii. Additional supervision and individual supports during times of transitions between classes, during lunch, or other times as needed
  - iii. Pre-arranged seating with supportive peers during lunchtime or on the bus
  - iv. Changes in release time and/or transportation by parent before and after the school day
  - v. Changes in class schedule for the student aggressor in validated incidents of bullying when needed
- b. Obligations to Notify Others:
  - i. Notice to Parents or Guardians. The school principal will be required to notify parents or guardians of both the target and the aggressor when he or she determines that bullying has occurred. Such notice will include the details of how the situation is being addressed, and the steps the school is taking to redirect the behavior of the aggressor and provide both the target and the aggressor with opportunities to build positive social skills. The school principal may contact the parent / guardians prior to the investigation if circumstances

warrant it. Notice to parents will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

- ii. Notice to Another School or District. The school principal will promptly notify the principal or designee of another school(s) of any incident involving students from the identified school(s), in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, including 603 CMR 49.00.
- iii. Notice to Law Enforcement. The New Bedford Public Schools, in consultation with local law enforcement and other legal advisors, will establish guidelines for school principals to determine whether it is reasonable to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against a reported aggressor. When such a determination is made in consultation with the School Resource Officer and the Superintendent, the school principal will promptly notify the New Bedford Police Department, consistent with the Plan, local policies and state and federal regulations, including 603 CMR 49.00, and locally established agreements.

- C. Investigation: The principal or designee will promptly investigate all incidents of reported bullying or retaliation, taking into consideration the ages of the children involved and circumstances of the incident. S/he will interview witnesses, including students, parents or guardians and others as needed.
- a. The investigator will conduct a thorough investigation utilizing the knowledge and skills obtained in training provided by the district.
  - b. The investigator will remind the alleged aggressor, target and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
  - c. Every effort will be made on the part of the investigator to maintain confidentiality during and following the investigation.
  - d. The principal or other designated investigator will maintain a written record of the investigation.
- D. Determinations. The principal or designee will consider all the facts gathered during the course of the investigation and follow the policies and procedures set forth by the district in investigating reports of student misconduct.
- a. The parents of the aggressor and the target will be notified promptly of the results of the investigation, in compliance with local policies, the Plan, M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370, and regulations at 603 CMR 49.00 governing notice and confidentiality of student records.

- b. In addressing the bullying incident, the school principal will consult with the School Behavior Team of teachers, counselors and administrators, and with the parents / guardians of both the aggressor and the target, as warranted, to determine if there are possible underlying needs of each child that may have contributed to the bullying behavior. The response of the principal will be to meet student needs for safety and opportunities for additional social skills development and support of students and appropriate family members, including children who are related to the student involved in bullying behavior. The Team will provide suggestions for home-based learning activities that build on the student(s)' school-based learning, as well as referral to individual and family counseling services, as needed.

E. Responses to Bullying: The response of the school principal to a validated case of bullying will take into account the age of the child aggressor, the severity of the behavior, whether the student had engaged in past bullying behavior, and the assessment of the School Behavior Team in consultation with parents. The goal of the school principal in validated cases of bullying will be to take corrective action that may reasonably be expected to stop the bullying behavior, prevent its reoccurrence and remedy the effects of the bullying on the target and on the school community. At no time will the target of the bullying be restricted in participating in school activities or be deprived of the benefits of his/her educational opportunities.

Strategies employed by school staff in response to a finding of bullying will focus on the need for corrective discipline and opportunities to remediate behavioral skill deficits. A positive approach may include, but not be limited to:

- individualized skill-building sessions based on the district's anti-bullying curriculum.
- individual or group counseling services
- academic and behavioral supports to help the student aggressor to understand better ways to achieve social goals within the cultural prosocial norms of the school
- adoption of a behavioral plan developed by the School Behavior Team focusing on the developing specific social skills
- collaboration with the parents of the offending student to engage their support in reinforcement of the anti-bullying curricula and positive behavioral supports at home
- referral for evaluation of the need for additional behavioral health services for involved students and/or appropriate family members.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation will be in accordance with district disciplinary policies and will balance the need for individual accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.

Disciplinary actions taken by the school principal may include:

- suspension of student privileges to engage in extra-curricular activities
- requirement that the offending student make an apology to the target and /or to the school community for the behavior
- restitution through community service
- in-school suspension
- school suspension.

Disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities will be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and with M.G.L. Ch71B, as amended by Ch 370.

Students who are found upon investigation to have made false statements alleging a bullying incident will be subject to disciplinary action.

When disciplinary action is taken with a student violator of the Student Bullying Prevention Policy by the school principal in response to a validated case of bullying, school staff will be proactive in meeting the continuing safety needs of the target. Daily check-ins with the target will be conducted to determine if the prohibited conduct has recurred, or additional supportive measures are needed to ensure the safety of the target.

## **VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

The district recognizes that communication with families and enlistment of their support is essential in prevention and successful intervention in bullying among children and adolescents. Parents have been notified of the responsibilities of the school and the district M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370, and have been involved in the development of the Plan.

Public forums for parents were held on three dates in the autumn, at three regional locations districtwide. Information regarding the series of Parent Forum dates was sent home with each student and publicized on the district website to encourage parent participation. An electronic distribution list was developed comprised of parents/guardians who elected to receive communication from the district about parent resources and new information as it becomes available.

Additionally, a survey of parents was conducted electronically to gather information about their concerns and recommendations on the issue of bullying by students. The superintendent and support staff have discussed the new mandates on local talk radio inviting and encouraging the input of parents.

Parents have been notified in writing, in English, Portuguese and Spanish, of the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370 and the mechanism used to report alleged bullying involving a student. Notification has also been posted on the district website.

Each school is required to notify parents of the bullying prevention education program being implemented with students and to inform parents of ways that they can reinforce the practice of student skills at home. Parents are encouraged to discuss the issue of bullying at home to open lines of communication and let children know that it is safe to report incidents of bullying to adults.

At the request of parents who participated in the discussion at the Parent Forums, parent trainings will be offered to increase their ability to understand the electronic environment and monitor their child's safe use of electronic media.

Upon submission and approval of the Plan, parents will be notified in writing of the student-related sections of the Plan in English, Portuguese and Spanish. Notification will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. Parents will receive information annually in hard copy and electronically pertaining to the Plan.

Information about the bullying prevention curriculum implemented with students will be provided to parents and guardians during meetings of the PTO, School Councils, the Special Education Advisory Council and other venues, including Open House at each school.

## **VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

Pursuant to requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370, the following statement prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation has been published in student and staff handbooks at the start of the 2010-2011 school year, and incorporated into the Student Bullying Prevention Policy:

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.

Student and staff handbooks, and written notification to parents of all students, will be repeated annually in September.

## VIII. DEFINITIONS

Definitions of terms used in the Plan, and in the Student Bullying Prevention Policy, have been taken directly from M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37O and are repeated here for clarity and convenience.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **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 37H $\frac{1}{2}$ , other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

APPENDIX A:

BULLYING PREVENTION AND  
INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORT  
FORM



## BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

**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. Are there immediate safety or transportation needs for the target?  Yes  No

If yes, specify need(s) and action taken:

10. Signature of Person Filing this Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

11: 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

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: \_\_\_\_\_
- District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Law Enforcement Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Action Taken for Aggressor:**

- Loss of Privileges  Education  Detention  Suspension
- Community Service  Referred for Counseling  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Were safety or transportation needs identified for the target?**  Yes  No

If yes, specify need(s) and action taken:

**5. Describe Safety Planning:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- Staff Notified  Teacher(s)  Counselor(s)  Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 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)

**IV. Statistical Summary**

**Specific Details of Incident Include (check all that apply):**

- Careless hurtful remarks  Exclusion  Verbal/Written teasing (Electronic? Y N)
- Physical harassment  Physical threats  Verbal/Written taunts/threats (Electronic? Y N)
- Physical attack  Aggression encouraged by others  Damage to property  Stolen property
- Fear of retaliation  Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Bullying  Cyberbullying

Signature and Title of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B:  
STUDENT BULLYING PREVENTION  
DRAFT POLICY

**Draft Policy:**

*File: JICFB*

**Policy Title: New Bedford Public Schools  
Student Bullying Prevention Policy**

The New Bedford Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidations, bullying, or cyberbullying.

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates 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.

“Hostile environment” shall mean 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 students’ education.

“Cyberbullying” means 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 optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyberbullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyberbullying 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 the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyberbullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyberbullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyberbullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds;
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- at school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- at functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- at school bus stops;
- on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the New Bedford public schools.

Bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited 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 New Bedford public school district if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

### Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are

strongly encouraged to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target is strongly encouraged to inform school staff and/or parents to assist in stopping the cycle of bullying, however, the target shall not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents, or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

#### Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, or students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school principal or designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within ten school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall

be taken. At a minimum, the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

### Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or individuals who have reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

### Target Assistance

The New Bedford Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

### Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidenced-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

### Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the New Bedford Public Schools website.

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Educations' Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended  
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
603 CMR 26.00  
603 CMR 49.00  
MGL 71:370  
MGL 265:43, 43A  
MGL 268:13B  
MGL 269:14A

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination  
ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment  
JFCC, Student Conduct on School Buses  
JFCR, Student Conduct  
JFCF, Prohibition of Hazing  
JGD/JGE, Student Suspension/Expulsion

APPENDIX C:  
NOTIFICATIONS TO PARENTS AND  
STAFF

## BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

On May 3, 2010 Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This new law prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents. Parts of the law (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) that are important for students and parents or guardians to know are described below.

These requirements will be included in the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan"), which must be finalized no later than December 31, 2010. The Plan will include the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including parents and guardians.

### Definitions

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

*Bullying* is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself 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 includes cyberbullying.

*Cyberbullying* is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

*Hostile environment* 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.

*Target* is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

*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.

### Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds,
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place 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,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a school computer or over the Internet using a school computer),
- at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic devices, if the bullying creates 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 is prohibited.

### Reporting Bullying

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the principal or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously.

School staff members must report immediately to the principal or his/her designee if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals.

When the school principal or his/her designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

### Professional Development for School and District Staff

Schools and districts must provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (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.

Additional information about the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be made available when it is finalized.

## PREVENÇÃO E INTERVENÇÃO DE AGRESSÃO/"BULLYING"

No dia 3 de Maio de 2010 o Governador Patrick assinou um Acto Relativo à Agressão/"Bullying" nas Escolas. Esta lei recente proíbe a agressão e retaliação em todas as escolas públicas e privadas, e requer que os distritos escolares tomem certos passos para dirigir os incidentes de agressão. As partes da lei (M.G.L. c.71 §370) que são importantes para os estudantes, os pais e os encarregados conhecerem estão descritas na parte inferior.

Estes requerimentos serão incluídos no Plano de Intervenção e Prevenção da Agressão/"Bullying" nas escolas ou distritos ("o Plano") o qual deve estar finalizado até ao dia 31 de Dezembro, 2010. O Plano incluirá os requerimentos da lei recente, e também incluirá a informação sobre as apólices e processos que as escolas ou os distritos escolares seguirão para evitar a agressão e a retaliação ou para responderem quando esta ocorre. No desenvolvimento do Plano, as escolas e os distritos devem consultar membros da escola e da comunidade local, incluindo os pais e os encarregados.

### Definições

O *agressor* é o estudante que participa na agressão/"bullying", ciber bullying ou retaliação.

"Bullying", o uso repetido por um ou mais estudantes de expressões escritas, verbais ou electrónicas ou um acto ou gesto físico de qualquer das combinações disto, dirigidas a uma vítima as quais: (i) causam danos físicos ou emocionais à vítima ou danificam a propriedade da vítima (ii) coloquem a vítima na posição de ter medo próprio ou de lhe danificarem a sua propriedade; (iii) cria um ambiente hostil na escola para a vítima; (iv) infringe com os direitos da vítima na escola; ou (v) interrompe materialmente e substancialmente o processo da educação ou da operação ordenada da escola. "Bullying" inclui "ciber bullying" (agressão por meios electrónicos).

*Ciber-Bullying* é agressão através do uso de tecnologia ou qualquer comunicação electrónica, tal como telefones, telemóveis, computadores, e a Internet. O qual inclui, mas não está limitado a correio electrónico (e-mail) mensagens instantâneas, mensagens de texto e mensagens na internet (blogues).

*Ambiente hostil* é qualquer situação na qual a agressão ou "bullying" causa um ambiente escolar impregnado com intimidação, tormento, ou insulto o qual é suficientemente severo ou penetrante para alterar as condições da educação do estudante.

O *público-alvo* é o estudante contra o qual a agressão/"bullying", ciber-bullying, ou retaliação é dirigida.

A *retaliação* é qualquer forma de intimidação, retaliação ou perseguição dirigida contra um estudante que denuncia, relata um acto de "bullying", proporciona informação

durante uma investigação de agressão, ou é testemunha ou tem informação fiável sobre um acto de agressão.

### Proibição Contra Agressão/"Bullying"

A Agressão/"Bullying" é proibido:

- no terreno escolar
- na propriedade imediatamente adjacente ao terreno escolar
- nas actividades patrocinadas pela escola ou relacionadas à escola, funções ou programas, sejam estas em terreno escolar ou noutro lugar.
- na paragem do autocarro escolar, no autocarro escolar, ou noutro veículo o qual é alugado, usado ou faz parte da propriedade do distrito escolar ou da escola,
- através do uso de tecnologia ou qualquer comunicação electrónica, a qual está alugada, usada ou faz parte da propriedade do distrito escolar ou da escola (exemplo, num computador escolar ou através da internet usando um computador escolar),
- em qualquer programa ou local o qual não é relacionado à escola, ou através do uso de tecnologia pessoal ou aparelhos electrónicos, se a agressão cria um ambiente hostil na escola para o público-alvo (inocente), infringe os direitos do público alvo na escola, ou interrompe materialmente e substancialmente o processo da educação ou da operação ordenada da escola.

A retaliação contra a pessoa que relatou/denunciou a agressão, proporciona informação durante uma investigação de agressão, ou é testemunha, ou tem informação fiável sobre o acto de agressão/"bullying" é proibida.

### Denunciar/Relatar a Agressão/"Bullying"

Qualquer pessoa, incluindo os pais ou encarregados, estudante, ou pessoal escolar, pode denunciar um acto de agressão ou retaliação. As denúncias/os relatórios podem ser feitos por escrito ou oralmente ao director escolar ou a qualquer outro membro do pessoal, os relatórios também podem ser anónimos.

O pessoal escolar deve relatar/denunciar imediatamente ao director ou à pessoa designada por este, se eles foram testemunhas ou tiveram conhecimento de um acto de agressão ou retaliação. O pessoal escolar inclui, mas não está limitado aos professores, administradores, conselheiros enfermeiras escolares, trabalhadores do refeitório, pessoal de limpeza, choferes de autocarros, treinadores atléticos, conselheiros de actividades extracurriculares, ou auxiliares de professores.

Quando o director escolar ou a pessoa designada por este recebe uma denúncia, um relatório, ele ou ela organizará imediatamente uma investigação. Se o director escolar ou a pessoa designada por este determina que um acto de agressão ou retaliação ocorreu, ele ou ela (i) notificará os pais ou encarregados do público-alvo (inocente) e consistente com o alcance da lei estadual e federal, os notificará sobre a acção levada para prevenir quaisquer outros actos de agressão ou retaliação; (ii) notificará os pais ou encarregados

do agressor; (iii) tomará as acções disciplinárias apropriadas; e (iv) notificará as agencias de cumprimento de leis locais, se o director escolar ou a pessoa designada por este, acredita que acusações criminosas podem ser prosseguidas contra o agressor.

#### Desenvolvimento Profissional para o Pessoal Escolar e do Distrito

As escolas e os distritos devem proporcionar desenvolvimento profissional contínuo para aumentar as destrezas de todos os membros do pessoal a prevenir, identificar e responder a actos de agressão/"bullying".

O conteúdo de tal desenvolvimento profissional inclui, mas não está limitado a: (i) estratégias de desenvolvimento apropriadas a prevenir incidentes de agressão; (ii) estratégias de desenvolvimento apropriadas para intervenções efectivas e imediatas para parar incidentes de agressão; (iii) informação sobre a interacção complexa e o poder diferencial que pode tomar lugar entre o agressor, o público-alvo (inocente) e o testemunha da agressão; (iv) resultados de investigações sobre actos de agressão/"bullying", incluindo informação sobre categorias específicas de estudantes os quais demonstraram estar particularmente a risco de agressão no ambiente escolar; (v) informação sobre incidentes e a natureza de "ciber-bullying"; e (vi) assuntos de segurança da Internet relacionados a "ciber-bullying".

Dispomos-lhe informação adicional sobre o Plano de Prevenção e Intervenção da Agressão/"Bullying", da escola ou do distrito quando este esteja finalizado.

Resumen para padres y encargados y Manual de estudiantes

## PREVENCIÓN E INTERVENCIÓN DE ACOSO ESCOLAR

El 3 de mayo de 2010 el gobernador Patrick firmó un *Acta en relación al acoso escolar*. Esta nueva ley prohíbe el acoso y represalias en todas las escuelas públicas y privadas y requiere que las escuelas y los distritos escolares que tomen ciertos pasos para atender incidentes de acoso. Partes de la ley (M.G.L. c.71, § 370) que son importantes para que los estudiantes, los padres o los encargados sepan están descritas a continuación.

Estos requisitos serán incluidos en el plan de prevención e intervención del distrito y de las escuelas, el cual deberá de estar completado a no más tardar del 31 de diciembre de 2010. El plan incluirá los requisitos de la nueva ley y también información acerca de las pólizas y procedimientos que las escuelas y el distrito escolar seguirán para prevenir el acoso escolar y las represalias o el responder cuando ocurre. En desarrollar un plan, las escuelas y los distritos deberán de consultar a los miembros escolares y miembros de la comunidad local, incluyendo padres y encargados.

### Definiciones

*Agresor* es un estudiante que se involucra en acoso escolar, acoso cibernético o represalias.

*Acoso escolar*, el uso repetido por uno o más estudiantes de una expresión escrita, verbal o electrónica o un acto físico o gesto o cualquier combinación de los antes mencionados, dirigidos a una víctima que(i) cause daño físico o emocional a la víctima o le haga daño a su propiedad;(ii) pone a la víctima en una situación de miedo o peligro por daño a la persona o a su propiedad;(iii) crea un ambiente hostil en la escuela para la víctima;(iv) infringe en los derechos que tiene la víctima en la escuela; o(v) materialmente y sustancialmente interrumpe el proceso educativo o el modo de operación de la escuela. El acoso escolar incluye el acoso cibernético.

*Acoso cibernético*, acoso a través del uso de tecnología o cualquier otro objeto electrónico tales como teléfonos, teléfonos celulares, computadoras y el internet. Incluyendo pero no limitado a, correo electrónico, mensajes instantáneos, mensajes de texto y postear mensajes en el internet.

*Ambiente hostiles* una situación en la cual el acoso causa que el ambiente escolar este permeado con intimidación, ridiculizaciones o insultos lo suficiente severos o dominantes que alteren las condiciones de la educación del estudiante.

*Acosado, blanco u objetivo* es un estudiante al cual el acoso escolar, acoso cibernético y represalias son dirigidos.

*Represalias* es cualquier forma de intimidación, represalia o hostigamiento es dirigida en contra de un estudiante el cual ha informado un acoso escolar, ha provisto de información durante una investigación de acoso, o ha sido testigo o tiene información creíble acerca del acoso.

#### Prohibición en contra del acoso escolar

El acoso es prohibido:

- en terrenos escolares
- en propiedades inmediatamente adyacentes a los terrenos escolares
- en una actividad auspiciada por la escuelas o relacionada a la escuela, función, o programa ya sea que tome lugar en o fuera de los terrenos escolares,
- en la parada de autobuses escolares o en los autobuses escolares o en un vehículo perteneciente, arrendado o usado por el distrito o la escuela,
- a través del uso de tecnología o algún objeto electrónico que sea poseído, arrendado o usado por el distrito escolar o escuela (por ejemplo, en una computadora escolar o por internet usando una computadora escolar),
- en cualquier programa o locación que no es relacionada con la escuela, o a través del uso personal de tecnología u objeto electrónico, si el acoso crea un ambiente hostil en la escuela para el objetivo, infringe en los derechos del objetivo en la escuela, o materialmente y sustancialmente interrumpe el proceso educativo o la operación ordenada de la escuela.

Es prohibido represalias en contra de una persona la cual informa acerca de acoso escolar, provee información durante una investigación de acoso o fue testigo o tiene información creíble acerca de acoso escolar

#### Informando un caso de acoso

Cualquiera, incluyendo padres o encargados, estudiantes o miembros del personal de la escuela puede informar de acoso o represalias. Informes pueden ser hechos por escrito u oralmente al principal o a cualquier otro miembro del personal o informes pueden ser hechos anónimamente.

Miembros del personal escolar deberán de informar inmediatamente al principal o su designado si en sido testigos o tienen conocimiento de acoso o represalias. Miembros del personal incluyendo pero no limitado a educadores, administradores, consejeros, enfermeras, trabajadores en la cafetería, empleados de limpieza, choferes de autobuses, entrenador de deportes, consejeros de actividades extracurriculares o para profesionales.

Cuando el principal o su designado reciben un informe de un incidente de acoso, inmediatamente deberá de llevar a cabo una investigación. Si el principal o la persona

designada determinan que el acoso o la represalia ha ocurrido, él o ella deberá (i) notificar a los padres o encargados del acosado, y hasta el exento consistente en cuanto a la ley federal y estatal, notificarlos de las acciones tomadas para prevenir actos futuros de acoso o represalias;(ii) notificar a los padres o encargados del agresor;(iii)tomar las acciones disciplinarias apropiadas; y (iv) notificar a las agencias policíacas locales si el principal o designado cree que cargos criminales deben de ser presentados en contra del agresor.

#### Desarrollo profesional para el personal escolar y del distrito

Las escuelas y distritos deberán de proveer desarrollo profesional continuo para incrementar las destrezas de todos los miembros para prevenir, identificar y responder a un acoso escolar.

El contenido de dicho desarrollo profesional deberá de incluir pero no estar limitado a: (i)desarrollo apropiado de estrategias para prevenir incidentes de acoso(ii)desarrollar estrategias apropiadas para intervenciones inmediatas y efectivas para así parar los incidentes de acoso(iii)información en cuanto a la interacción compleja y de poder diferencial que puede tomar lugar entre el agresor, el acosado y los testigos del acoso;(iv)resultados de trabajo investigativo en cuanto al acoso escolar incluyendo información de categorías específicas de estudiantes que han demostrado estar particularmente en riesgo de acoso en el ambiente escolar;(v)información en los incidentes y naturaleza del acoso cibernético; y(vi)asuntos de seguridad en el uso del internet al relacionarse con el acoso cibernético.

Información adicional acerca del plan de intervención y prevención del distrito escolar y las escuelas estarán disponibles cuando hayan sido finalizadas.