

**NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
POLICY TO ADDRESS WORKPLACE BULLYING**

**Purpose:**

The New Bedford Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, friendly and productive environment for all employees, volunteers and patrons.

The purpose of this policy is to provide relief for employees, volunteers and patrons of the New Bedford Public Schools who have been harmed, psychologically, physically, or economically, by being deliberately subjected to abusive work environments as a result of bullying.

Bullying and retaliation will not be tolerated. The purpose of this policy is to delineate our procedures and protocol for dealing with incidents of bullying that may occur within our school district.

**Scope:** This procedure outlines the bullying policy, procedures and protocol by which bullying is prohibited and addressed. This policy applies to administrators, teachers, and other professional staff, non-teaching personnel, volunteers, vendors and parents.

**Responsibility:**

District Level – Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee

School Level – Principal or his/her designee

Departments – Appropriate Supervisors

**Objectives of this Policy:**

- All administrators, professional and non-teaching staff, and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All administrators, professional and non-teaching staff, and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow the policy when bullying is reported.
- As a district, we take bullying seriously. All parties should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying and retaliation will not be tolerated.

**Definitions:**

“Bullying” is defined as any written or verbal expression, or physical acts or gestures, directed at another person(s) to intimidate, frighten, ridicule, humiliate, or cause harm to the other person, where the conduct is not related to an individual’s actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected status). Bullying may include, but is not limited to, repeated taunting, threats of harm, verbal or physical intimidation, cyber-bullying through emails, instant messages, or websites, pushing, kicking, hitting, spitting, or taking or damaging another’s personal property.

“Retaliation” is defined as any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by an individual directed against another individual for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under the district’s Workplace Bullying Policy, or for taking action consistent with the policy.

**Policy:**

The New Bedford Public Schools fully recognizes the negative effect that bullying has on an individual and on everyone in the work environment. Bullying creates an environment which can lower an individual’s self-esteem and create a feeling of isolation. In order to minimize and eliminate bullying, it is the responsibility of everyone to be aware of the policy, the implementation of the protocol and the consequences for those individuals who commit an act of bullying.

Bullying as defined by this policy by any member of the New Bedford Public Schools community is prohibited. Retaliation against individuals who report bullying is also prohibited.

**Procedures:**

**Informal & Formal Complaints:**

**Informal Complaint Process:** Anyone may use informal procedures to report and resolve complaints of bullying or retaliation. At the building level, programs may be established for receiving anonymous complaints. Such complaints must be appropriately investigated and handled consistent with due process requirements. Informal reports may be made to any staff member, although staff shall always inform complainants of their right to, and the process for, filing a formal complaint. Staff shall also direct potential complainants to an appropriate staff member who can explain the informal and formal complaint process and what a complainant can expect. Staff shall also inform an appropriate supervisor or designated staff person when they receive complaints of bullying, especially when the complaint is beyond their training to resolve or alleges serious misconduct. Complaints not resolved at the building level may be referred to the district level.

**Formal Complaint Process:** Anyone may initiate a formal complaint of bullying or retaliation, even if the informal complaint process is being utilized. Complainant(s) should not be promised confidentiality at the onset of an investigation. It cannot be predicted what will be discovered or what kind of hearing may result. Efforts should be made to increase the confidence and trust of the person making the complaint. The district will fully implement the anti-retaliation provisions of this policy to protect complainant(s) and witness(es). Student witnesses may have a parent or trusted adult with them, if requested, during any district initiated investigatory activities. The superintendent or designated compliance officer (hereinafter referred to as the compliance officer) may conclude that the district needs to conduct an investigation

based on information in their possession regardless of the complainant's interest in filing a formal complaint.

Disciplinary, Sanctions, and Corrective Action may include:

- 1) Written reprimand.
- 2) Limiting or denying person access to a part or area of a school or school facility.
- 3) Exclusion from participation in school sponsored functions, or activities.
- 4) Awareness training (i.e., Employee Assistance Program)
- 5) Participation in empathy development, cultural diversity, anti-bullying or intergroup relations programs.
- 6) Mandatory counseling.
- 7) Any other authorized by and consistent with employee contracts and/or municipal policies, and local, state and federal laws and regulations.

Policy Details:

An explanation of the policy will be presented to every employee at the beginning of the school year. There will be ongoing professional development that will keep administrators, teachers, and other professional staff, non-teaching personnel, volunteers, vendors and parents aware of the policy and procedures.

Monitoring:

This policy will be continuously monitored and completely reviewed on an annual basis. Proposed revisions to the policy will be forwarded for legal opinions and recommended changes will be forwarded to the School Committee.

Adopted: 3/12/12