

BULLYING PREVENTION / INTERVENTION PLAN

Approved by School
Committee: 12/7/2010

2010-2011

RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY & SAFETY: CREATING SCHOOLS THAT ARE SAFE, COLLABORATIVE & INCLUSIVE

The Ralph C. Mahar Public School District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

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

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

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying and the district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies 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.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

I. Leadership
II. Training and Professional Development
III. Access to Resources and Services
IV. Academic and Non-academic Activities
V. Policies/Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation
VI. Collaboration with Families
VII. Prohibition Against Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation
VIII. Definitions
IX. Relationship to Other Laws

Essential Element I: Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Public Involvement in Plan B. Needs Assessment C. Planning and Oversight D. Priority Statement

A. Public Involvement in Plan

Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District Bullying Prevention/Intervention Plan was developed in collaboration with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents/guardians 2. Notice and a public comment period prior to adoption of the Plan 3. School Committee Approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ralph C. Mahar School Council members comprising of representatives from the school community held meetings in: March, April, May, September, October and November 2010 2. Parent & Community Education Workshop 4/14/10 3. Public comment period ran from 4/14/10 to 12/7/10 4. School Committee approval 12/7/10

B. Needs Assessment

Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District/School leaders, with input from families/staff assessed adequacy of current programs; reviewed current policies and procedures; reviewed available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and accessed available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services to identify various needs and set priorities 2. Established partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities 3. Determine Strengths and Needs/Priorities to inform decision-making for prevention strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental data will be collected and analyzed by the following groups to determine patterns of behaviors, areas of concern, "hot spots" in school buildings, on school grounds, on buses. Groups will include, but not limited to: Leadership Team School Council Faculty and Staff School and Community Agencies 2. Principal or designee will initiate a needs assessment survey in the spring 3. M.O.U. signed with local law enforcement agencies

C. Planning and Oversight	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<p>1. The Plan identified district and school leaders responsible for the following tasks under the Plan: 1) Receiving reports on bullying; 2) Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes; 3) Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; 4) Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; 5) Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 6) Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use; 7) Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them; 8) Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct; 9) Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and 10) Reviewing and updating the Plan each year</p>	<p>1. The Principal/Designee(s) are responsible for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving reports on bullying; • Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes; • Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; • Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; • Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; • Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use; • Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them; • Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct; • Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; • Reviewing and updating the Plan each year
D. Priority Statements	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<p>1. See Page 1 of this plan</p> <p>2. District/School leaders with input from School Council Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Students, Staff and Families, developed Vision and Mission Statements</p> <p>3. Core Values and Beliefs Statements were identified using results from student, staff and community surveys</p> <p>4. Student Handbooks</p> <p>5. Staff Handbook</p>	<p>1. The Principal/Designee(s) are responsible for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Mission and Vision Statements • Presenting Core Values and Belief Statements to NEAS&C self-study committees 10/29/10 • Compiling Student Handbooks • Compiling Staff Handbook

Essential Element II: Training and Professional Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan B. Ongoing Professional Development C. Written Notice to Staff 	

A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan	
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Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a process for the development of a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan as required under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O 2. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District administrators initiated a reporting and tracking system for bullying and harassment in March 2010. Training faculty and staff in the use of incident report form at a faculty meeting in April 2010 2. District administrators attended MSSAA Conference Workshops on Bullying Prevention/Intervention, Legal Aspects of Bullying Law: July 2010 3. Principal and Designees conducted training on the policies and procedures for reporting and responding to bullying and retaliation for all staff on the following date(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Faculty and Staff meeting: 8/24/10 • School-based training update: Jan/Feb 2011

B. Ongoing Professional Development	
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Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<p>A. The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and district-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying; (ii) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; 	<p>A. District Administrators Training with School Attorney: 8/23/10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District administrators attended MSSAA Roundtable: Policies and Practices for Addressing Harassment and Bullying: 9/29/10 • Principal and Designees conducted training for all staff on the following date(s): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. District Attorney Office Training on Cyberbullying; Faculty and Staff meeting: 8/24/10 ii. Faculty Meeting Discussion on Best Practice: 11/1/10 iii. Bus Drivers trained: 9/29/10 iv. Coaches training: 8/24/10, 11/9/10 v. School-based training update: Jan/Feb 2011

<p>(iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and</p> <p>(vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.</p> <p>Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development</p> <p>Additional areas identified by the district or school for professional development include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. promoting and modeling the use of respectful language; ii. fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference; iii. building relationships and communicating with families; iv. constructively managing classroom behaviors; v. using positive behavioral intervention strategies; vi. applying constructive disciplinary practices; vii. teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others; viii. engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; ix. maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students. 	
<p>C. Written Notice to Staff</p>	
<p>Plan Action Steps:</p>	<p>Responsibility Timeframe:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual written notice of the Plan will be published in the R.C. Mahar Staff Handbook and distributed to all staff 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal and/or Designee prior to annual Faculty/Staff Meeting in August 2. Director of Technology will post links to handbooks on the school website

Essential Element III: Access to Resources and Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Identifying Resources B. Counseling and Other Services C. Students with Disabilities D. Referral to Outside Services 	

A. Identifying Resources	
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Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process to review/map district counseling and other services 2. Identify district existing and needed resources 3. Recommendations/action steps to fill resource and service gaps 4. Review curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal or Designees will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review/map school counseling and other services ii. Identify schools existing and needed resources iii. Recommend action steps to fill resource and service gaps

B. Counseling and Other Services	
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Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify district staff/service providers to develop safety plans, provide social skills programs, etc. (i.e. behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups and individual curriculum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal or Designees will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify school staff/service providers to develop safety plans, provide social skills programs, etc. (i.e. behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups and individually focused curricula)

C. Students with Disabilities	
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Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, the IEP Team will identify students with a disability that affects social skills development and are vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability. The Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director of Pupil Personnel Services will implement this action step - IEP teams determine students who have disabilities that affect social skills development or may participate in or are vulnerable to bullying/harassment/teasing because of disabilities 2. IEP teams include services to develop student's skills/proficiencies to avoid/respond to bullying/harassment/teasing

D. Referral to Outside Services	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
1. Evaluate district referral protocols and revise as needed 2. District establishes referral protocol for referring students/families to outside services	1. Principal or Designees: i. Evaluates school referral protocols and revises as needed ii. Implements referral protocol for referring students/families to outside services: 12/2010

Essential Element IV: Academic and Non-Academic Activities
A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches B. Review Plan with Students C. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts

A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
1. Implement a District 7-12 evidence-based bullying prevention curriculum. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using scripts and role plays to develop skills; • empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance; • helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance; • emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies; • enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and • engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference 	1. Principal or Designees will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Implement an evidence-based bullying prevention curriculum: Sept 2011 ii. Review Health Curriculum iii. Review Coordinated Counseling Seminars iv. Review Training Active Bystanders (T.A.B.), Peer Mediation, Conflict Resolution Programs

B. Review Plan with Students	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
1. District coordination of student review of Plan	1. Principal and Designees will determine how and when the Plan will be reviewed with students Grade level meetings in Spring semester
C. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<p>1. District coordination, training and support for school-wide behavior management program affecting school climate. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines; • creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including but not limited to: students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students; • using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline; • using positive behavioral supports; • encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students; • modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors; • using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development; • using the Internet safely; and • supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength 	<p>1. Principal and/or Designees will coordinate the training and support for a school-wide behavior management program that will positively affect our school climate, (as laid out in the action steps)</p> <p>2. Review/reiterate T.A.B. Peer Mediation, Conflict Resolution and All Stars programming</p>

Essential Element V: Policies / Procedures for Reporting / Responding to Bullying and Retaliation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Reporting Bullying / Retaliation B. Responding to Bullying / Retaliation Report C. Investigation D. Determinations E. Responses to Bullying 	

A. Reporting Bullying / Retaliation	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District training/support for reporting procedures (incident report form, voicemail box, dedicated mailing address, email address) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal or Designees will investigate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Report of bullying incident made by staff ii. Report of bullying incident made by student/parent/other/anonymous 2. Director of Technology will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Dedicate email address or voicemail for reporting purposes ii. Link downloadable form on website for anonymous submission
B. Responding to Bullying / Retaliation Report	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District student safety policy procedures 2. District reporting procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal and/or Designees will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Implement student safety planning procedures 2. Principal and/or Designees have an obligation to notify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Parents ii. Another district/school

	iii. Law enforcement
C. Investigation	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
1. District investigation procedures	1. Principal or Designees will investigate all reports of bullying in accordance with the established/published investigation procedures
D. Determinations	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
1. District determination procedures	1. Principal or Designees will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Determine procedures: (remedial action, responsive action and/or disciplinary action) ii. Notify parent/guardian of all involved parties of the outcome of investigation iii. Comply with state/federal privacy laws/regulations
E. Responses to Bullying	
Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
1. District response procedures	1. Principal or Designees will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Determine protocols for teaching appropriate behavior through skill – building sessions ii. Determine disciplinary action iii. Promote safety for target and others

Essential Element VI: Collaboration with Families	
A. Parent Education and Resources B. Notification Requirements	

A. Parent Education and Resources

Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
1. District parent education programs in collaboration with parent groups	1. Principal and Designees will implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. School parent education program in collaboration with parent groups ii. Rachel’s Challenge—assembly for students and parent evening 10/07/10 iii. Education programs offered in collaboration with School Council, PTO and Special Education PAC iv. Book discussionwith Barbara Coloroso author of <u>The Bully, The Bullied and The Bystander</u> v. Collaboration with Quabbin Mediation Group

B. Notification Requirements

Plan Action Steps:	Responsibility Timeframe:
1. Informing parent/guardians about district bullying prevention/intervention curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How to reinforce at home b. Dynamics of bullying c. Online safety/cyberbullying 2. District written notice on student-related sections of the Plan and District Internet Safety Policy (hard copy, electronic, website)	1. Principal or Designees will inform parent/guardians annually about bullying prevention/intervention curriculum with emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How to reinforce at home b. Dynamics of bullying c. Online safety/cyberbullying 2. School will provide written notice on student-related sections of the Plan and District Internet Safety Policy (hard copy, electronic, website)

Essential Element VII: Prohibition Against Bullying Prevention / Retaliation

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school district / 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 of 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, § 370, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions or program

Essential Element VIII: Definitions

Aggressor is a person who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is the repeated use by one or more persons 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 posting. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying

Hostile environment as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education

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

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 person against whom bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been perpetrated

Essential Element IX: Relationship to Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school and 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 37H1/2, 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