

Mendon-Upton Regional School District

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Plan

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PRIORITY STATEMENT

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District is committed to providing our students with equal educational opportunities and a safe learning environment 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.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and our 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.

This plan was made available for public comment through presentation at School Committee meeting in November 2010. The plan has been developed and reviewed by the Anti-bullying Task Force which consists of administrators, teachers, parents, and community members.

LEADERSHIP

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

The Principal or Assistant Principal of each school is responsible for:

- Receiving reports of alleged bullying and investigating
- Collecting and analyzing reports
- Developing a process for tracking aggressors and targets
- Providing supports for the needs of targets and aggressors
- Including student-specific language regarding the bullying plan in student and staff handbooks

The Director of Curriculum is responsible for:

- Planning for ongoing professional development in bullying prevention and intervention
- Reviewing and updating curricula

The Anti-Bullying Task Force is responsible for:

- Planning for and implementing parent engagement and information sessions
- Reviewing and updating the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. **Annual Staff Training on the Plan** Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.
- B. **Ongoing Professional Development** The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school wide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:
1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
 2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
 3. Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
 4. 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;
 5. Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
 6. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will 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.

Examples of Mendon-Upton Regional School District professional development offerings:

- The Safe and Drug Free Coordinator from the DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) presents to our whole staff on the importance of the bullying issue and staff responsibility in responding to and reporting bullying. She will also present to parents and community members on bullying.

- We are working with Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University to assist us with parent, student, and staff surveys and trainings to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.
- Community Impact is an independent consulting group that focuses on community health initiatives, underage substance use, bullying, evidence-based programs and trainings. Mendon-Upton Regional School District utilizes their experiences and services to educate staff on the new bullying law, how to address this issue as well as providing training on our evidence –based Second Step and Steps to Respect Curriculum. This will ensure that teachers and administrators have a clear understanding of the goals, objectives, and structure of the program. Additionally they provide an awareness program for parents and faculty on: Bullying 101: the Bully, the Bystander, and the Victim, Signs and Symptoms, and the *Second Step* and *Steps to Respect Curriculum*.
- Parent Nights will be held to explain the District’s Bullying Curricula
- MARC BULLYING (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center) We are working at MARC at Bridgewater State University to assist us with staff trainings to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.
- The District Attorney’s Office presents information to all students and staff grades 3-12 on the new Anti-Bullying Law, how to safely use technology and avoid Cyberbullying.
- A representative from the District Attorney’s office meets with parents Pre-k- 12 to discuss Anti-Bullying Law, how to safely use technology and avoid Cyberbullying.
- The high school and middle school arranged for a Rachel’s Challenge presentation to both students and parents, and as a result, a F.O.R. Club (Friends of Rachel) has been established in each school.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

C. **Written notice to staff.** The school or district provides all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties in the Faculty Handbook.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The Principal in each building maintains resources and current tools for intervening and preventing bullying. These tools may include but are not limited to: behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

The strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members of those students is specific to each school and may include the use of adjustment counselors, guidance counselors, school psychologists, behavior specialists, teachers, nurses, special educators or other school or community resources.

Each school maintains a list of outside agencies and services available for students and their families. Parents/guardians should contact the guidance counselor or adjustment counselor at their child's school to obtain assistance and/or referral to an outside agency.

As required by 603 CMR 49.00: M.G.L. 71, §37O, as added by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Bullying prevention curricula are informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Grade specific curricular are outlined below.

Second Step

The *Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum* is taught every week in Grades K-8. The *Second Step Program* is research-based. It has been shown to reduce discipline referrals, improve school climate by building feelings of inclusiveness and respect, and increase the sense of confidence and responsibility in students. *The Second Step Program* integrates academics with social and emotional learning. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 learn and practice vital social skills, such as empathy, emotion management, problem solving, and cooperation. These essential life skills help students in the classroom, on the playground, and at home. The *Second Step* middle school program is a universal, classroom-based prevention program designed to decrease aggression, bullying, and substance abuse and increase students' social skills and school success. As a program for all students, it provides a foundation for creating a safe, respectful learning environment.

Steps to Respect

The *Steps to Respect Program* is a researched – based program for grades 3-6 that addresses bullying in a whole-school effort in creating a safe and respectful learning environment. The lessons teach students to recognize bullying, to be assertive, and to report bullying, thereby helping students to feel safe in school and build stronger bonds with teachers and build friendships with students.

Both *Second Step* and *Steps to Respect Programs* have a parent component as well, which will greatly assist us in keeping communication and dialogue open with parents.

Rachel's Challenge

In aligning our efforts to make people more aware of the huge impact bullying can have on students, Rachel's Challenge was brought in to both the high school and the middle school. "Rachel's Challenge creates a safe learning environment for all students by re-establishing civility and delivering proactive antidotes to school violence and bullying." Mendon-Upton Regional School District is serious and committed to addressing the ongoing and rising issue of bullying and the importance of creating a safe environment for all students. We have implemented the F.O.R Club (Friends of Rachel) for grades 5-12. Parents and community members will be included on this project. Additionally we are tying the acts of kindness and compassion into the teachings of our *Second Step/ Steps to Respect Curriculum* as well as day to day teachings.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch provides students an opportunity to practice social skills, meet new people, develop friendships, and brainstorm strategies for resolving complex social situations from each student's perspective.

School Counselors

The School Counselors assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

Student Council

The Student Council fosters leadership opportunities for our students. Seventh and Eighth grade students are nominated by their teachers and elected by their peers to work together to contribute to the school and the community. They provide social settings for students to practice modeled social skills. Engage in a variety of fund raising events for charity purposes.

Student Advisory Board

The Student Advisory Board at Miscoe Hill Middle School meets with Principal once a week to communicate ideas and issues that arise within the student body. The focus is a joint effort for improvement by both the student body and the administrator.

At Nipmuc Regional High School, we offer the following extracurricular student organizations that contribute to the values of learning, respect, and tolerance that are identified in the school's mission statement and guide our bullying prevention policies.

The Impact Team

The Impact Team is a student group that focuses on recognizing the unique contributions of members of the school community and providing valuable community service. Students on the Impact Team present awards and t-shirts to their peers, teachers, or staff members who provide positive contributions to others. The team works to reinforce positive choices and decision-making by recognizing the meaningful achievements of others that sometimes goes unnoticed. In providing community service, the students work independently as well as with other organizations to help those in need.

Peer Leadership

Nipmuc's Peer Leadership group is made up of students across grade levels who work to support the emotional, academic, and social success of others. Peer leaders receive training aimed at providing the skills needed to guide others toward good decision making. As part of their work, peer leaders organize a "new student breakfast" during the first month of school. The breakfast gives students who are new to Nipmuc a chance to

make friends and learn more about the school community. Additionally, the group implements a “Bullying Prevention Week” aimed at raising bullying awareness and educating students and faculty about the hurtful results of bullying. As part of the week, students read announcements each morning that personalize serious bullying situations. As well, peer leaders conduct a school-wide bullying survey in order to collect data on the impact of bullying on the school. Our peer leaders also work with our middle school students each year planning and preparing programs directed at “anti bullying”, respect and tolerance.

S.T.A.N.D. (Students Taking Action in a New Direction)

S.T.A.N.D is one of the newest groups available at Nipmuc. Developed through the merger of Nipmuc’s Gay-Straight Alliance and Amnesty International, S.T.A.N.D. is a student-run advocacy group that works to educate students on global and domestic issues and to promote equality and positive change throughout high school and beyond. The members of S.T.A.N.D. have supported these goals by initiating student projects encouraging free speech and a broader understanding of gender identity. The group will also provide an anti-bullying project as a follow-up to the work done by peer educators. In this campaign, group members will share the stories of students whose lives were devastated by bullying. Additionally, members of S.T.A.N.D will encourage Nipmuc’s students to share their own experiences with bullying situations.

Presentations from the District Attorney’s Office

In order to provide training and a legal perspective on bullying, cyberbullying, and the new legislation on this issue, Nipmuc welcomed M. Julie Lesure, an attorney from the local district attorney’s office to meet with all of our students. Attorney Lesure provided one presentation per grade level to our students. Her emphasis throughout the presentation was on the lasting impact of bullying behavior. She provided a variety of real-life scenarios and legal cases that have taken place in Massachusetts in order to stress the local impact of bullying. She also dedicated a significant portion of her talk to defining cyberbullying and discussing how students’ behavior when using computers or electronic devices can impact others and themselves. Specifically, Attorney Lesure discussed social media sites like Facebook and Formspring as well as text messaging, instant messaging, and voice mail in teaching the students about cyberbullying.

Student Advisory Council (S.A.C.)

Representatives from each of the classes (grades 9-12) are elected by their peers each year to serve as the liaison between administration and students. These students meet every other week for 90 minutes with administration to bring student and school concerns to our attention in order to have resolution to issues that impact student life at Nipmuc. Additionally, there are two students who serve on the Massachusetts Regional Student Advisory Council and those students relay information on topics such as bullying, drug and alcohol use, etc. that are a concern in the Commonwealth. Information is shared with all students.

The S.A.C. also keeps tabs on the “Suggestion Boxes” throughout the school where students can anonymously place a concern or a suggestion that warrants follow through. These suggestions/concerns are handled by administration or brought to the S.A.C. meetings as needed.

Student Advisory Members serve as the liaisons to our School Committee and our School Council and annually serve on the review board for the Student-Parent Handbook.

Student Council

Representatives from each of the classes (grades 9-12) are elected by their peers each year with the purpose of developing leadership qualities and organizational skills; promoting school spirit through the interaction among students, and between students and faculty; and to promote the general welfare of the school and community through service.

As the student leaders of our school, they are active in implementing the values of Nipmuc including respect and tolerance among all. One specific program they host annually is F.A.S.T. (Faculty and Students Together) where activities of spirit, friendly competition, acts of respect and caring for the community are all represented. Their work with the community and the school reinforces the values of commitment and caring within the school.

School Council

Parents, community members, faculty and students all serve as members of our School Council which works to foster the improvement of our school by sharing their vision and their planning of a school environment which unites all members of the school community in a sense of belonging, commitment and growth. They are responsible for our School Improvement Plan which is created to support the academic, social and emotional needs of our school community. School Council will host the open forums on bullying, allowing parents and community members a chance to share their concerns about bullying as well as be informed on the bullying law of 2010.

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment for the Mendon-Upton Regional School District. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;

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

The student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan will be reviewed with students at the start of each school year.

PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. The District 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. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited. 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.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying are prohibited:

- 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
- 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 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.

COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

Each year the Mendon-Upton Regional School District will provide parents or guardians with information on the social competency and anti-bullying curricula as well as the Bullying and Intervention Plan and other related information on its website.

The school or district will offer educational programs for parents or guardians that are focused on the parent components of the anti-bullying and social competency curricular. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the School Committee, PTO, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, School Councils, MUEF, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the District Attorney's Office, Community Impact, and MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center).

Information on the bullying plan and information sessions for families will be conveyed to parents or guardians through communication by any number of the following: District Website, School Newsletters, Alert Now, Open Houses, School Committee Meetings, PTO Meetings, and/or School Council Meetings.

Upon investigation and determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the target and the aggressor of the determination and the school district or school's procedures for responding to the bullying or retaliation. The Principal or designee shall inform the target's parent of actions that school officials will take to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. Such a notification to a parent about an incident or a report of bullying or retaliation will comply with confidentiality requirements of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99, as set forth in 603 CMR 49.07

DEFINITIONS

Glossary of Terms

Aggressor means the student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined by Massachusetts General Law c. 71, §37O, means 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:

- (a) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- (b) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or damage to his or her property;
- (c) creates a hostile environment at school for the target;

- (d) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- (e) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include cyberbullying.

Bystander means others who are within the visual and/or verbal range of an act of bullying. They can encourage or discourage bullying.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include:

- (a) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or
- (b) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions in 603 CMR 49.03: Bullying(a) through (e). 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 in 603 CMR 49.03: Bullying(a) through (e).

Hostile environment, as defined in MGL, 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.

Probable cause A reasonable ground to suspect that a person has committed or is committing a crime or that a place contains specific items connected with a crime. • Under the Fourth Amendment, probable cause — which amounts to more than a bare suspicion but less than evidence that would justify a conviction — must be shown before an arrest warrant or search warrant may be issued. — Also termed reasonable cause; sufficient cause; reasonable grounds; reasonable excuse Cf. reasonable suspicion under

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.

School grounds means property on which a school building or facility is located; or property that is owned, leased or used by a school district, commonwealth charter school or non-public school for any school-sponsored activities, functions, programs, instruction or training.

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.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING AND RETALIATION

REPORTING

The Principal or Assistant Principal of each building is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. It is an expectation of the District that all staff members are required to report any bullying, harassment, or retaliation they see or learn about. Staff, students and parents/guardians will report incidents of suspected bullying by completing an Incident Report Form and submitting it to the Principal or the Assistant Principal. The form is available on school website. Reports are accepted orally and then will be recorded in writing. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The District will promptly and reasonably investigate all allegations of harassment, including bullying and retaliation. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, and a dedicated mailing address. No determination of bullying will be made solely on the basis of anonymous report.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website.

If an incident is determined to be bullying or retaliation, the student will be disciplined according to the school handbook. The range of disciplinary actions that may be imposed as a result of bullying or retaliation may be up to and including, but not limited to one or more of the following: verbal warnings, written warnings, reprimands, detentions, short-term or long-term suspensions, or expulsions from school as determined by the school administration.

If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, commonwealth charter school, or nonpublic school, the district or school first

informed of the bullying or retaliation shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other district or school so that both may take appropriate action.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member will be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. False reports will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action for anyone deliberately providing false information.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources and information about the Plan will be made available to parents or guardians on the school or district website,

Safety

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

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

Strategies that may be used to create a safer environment for the target(s) and/or aggressor(s) include:

- Increasing adult supervision at times and /or in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.
 - Temporarily and/or permanently changing the target(s)’s and/or aggressor(s)’s class schedule and/or seating arrangements to reduce opportunities for retaliation
 - Establishing a safe zone for the target to go to when s/he feels vulnerable
- This is not an exhaustive list. The creation of safe environments for targets, aggressors, or others impacted by the incident will be considered for each individual person and incident.

Obligations to Notify Others

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

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

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

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

Protection from Retaliation and Further Bullying

The Massachusetts bullying legislation requires that schools follow “procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim’s need for protection.” Therefore, as soon as practicable, the principal will take steps necessary to keep the aggressor and target apart during the school day and school events and assess whatever other steps might be necessary to keep the victim safe from further bullying. These steps may include, but are not limited to, requesting teachers to keep students apart during class activities or temporarily re-assigning the aggressor to another class.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. The following will take place:

1. Interview target of aggression
2. Interview any witnesses, including staff, parents or guardians
3. Interview alleged aggressor

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

ACTION STEPS

*See Flow Chart page 19

Responses to Bullying

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

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

- making a referral for evaluation.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

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

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

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

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

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

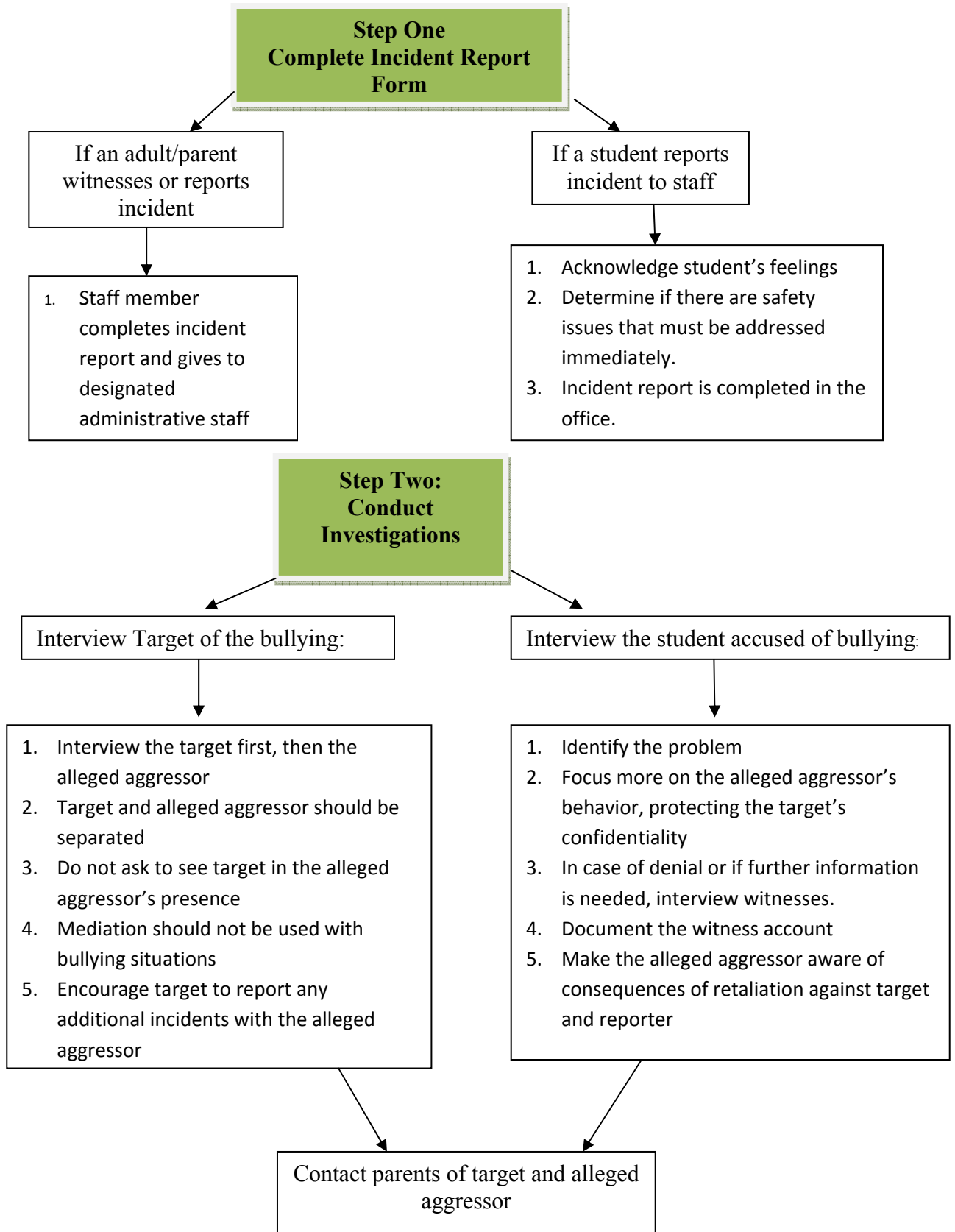
Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If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

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 37H½, 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.

Action Steps for Investigation of Reporting Bullying Incident



**Step Three:
Assign Consequences if needed**

1. Assign appropriate consequences
2. If the alleged aggressor denies the incident and there is insufficient evidence, tell the alleged aggressor that you will continue to monitor their behavior

**Step Four:
Document Incident and
Consequences**

1. Document outcome of investigation on Follow-up Form
2. Target will be notified of action taken or not taken
3. Provide update to appropriate staff member(s)
4. Monitor behavior of students involved
5. Notify teachers who have contact with target and aggressor
6. Parents of both aggressor and target will be notified of action taken or not taken

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

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Governing District Bullying Prevention

Policy A-06

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free from harassment for our staff and students. By enacting this policy, we are demonstrating this commitment to our students, staff, administrative teams and our parents through the clear communication of bully behavior, intervention and response.

As stated in the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying legislation, "Bullying means the severe or 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 another student that has the effect of: (I) causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to the other student's property; (II) placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (III) creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; (IV) infringing on the rights of the other students at school; or (V) materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school."

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District considers the character education of our students essential to the overall social and emotional development that enables students to reach their academic potential. To this end, our district will not tolerate bullying behavior that occurs or creates an unsafe environment in our schools, during any school-related activity, function or program, or while on school-related transportation. This includes bullying behavior that occurs during non school-related events or through the use of technology, which creates a hostile environment at school or disrupts the educational process.

All reports of bullying behavior will be subject to investigation, intervention, response, and reporting by the Mendon-Upton Regional schools. Disciplinary action will be implemented based on the nature, extent and circumstances of the policy violation. Parents of both the aggressor and the target will be notified by the school principal or his/her designee. Acts or retaliation against the aggressor, the victim or other individuals who have reported bullying or harassing behavior, will not be tolerated or permitted and may be subject to disciplinary action as well. False accusations of bullying behavior may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Our expectation is that all members of the school community, including parents and volunteers will work together to promote a positive learning environment for all students. A comprehensive Prevention and Intervention Plan for the district will be implemented to address each educational level in the district.

Legal References: M.G.L. 71:37H

Adopted: August 18, 2010

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sexual Harassment

Policy A-04

The Mendon-Upton Regional Schools strive to meet the intellectual, emotional, cultural, physical and social needs of the entire school community. Students are encouraged to develop their maximum potential and to acquire the skills necessary to become mature, responsible and productive citizens. Sexual harassment is a destructive behavior which interferes with the educational process and therefore will not be tolerated.

All persons associated with the Mendon-Upton School District including, but not limited to the School Committee, the administration, the staff and the students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that provides an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. When it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, steps will be taken to eliminate such conduct and disciplinary action shall be taken when appropriate.

This policy sets forth the goals that promote a workplace and school environment that is free of sexual harassment. The policy is not designed or intended to limit the District's authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which is otherwise subject to corrective action regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

In Massachusetts, the legal definition for sexual harassment is:

“sexual harassment” means sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (a) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or educational performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive environment;
- (b) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment or educational development; or,
- (c) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or educational progress or as a basis for employment or as a basis for employment decisions.

Under these definitions direct or implied requests by a supervisor for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating or humiliating may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:\

- Unwelcome sexual advances - whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures or cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperation in an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Process

A. Complaints of Sexual Harassment

Complaints may be filed by a student, employee, administrator and/or applicant who believes that his/her rights as outlined in the harassment policy have been violated.

Complaints may be filed with the Building Principal or an employee's immediate supervisor (which may be the principal), the Title IX/Chapter 622 Coordinator of the district, or with the Superintendent of Schools.

An informal oral complaint may be filed with the individuals noted above and should be filed within ten (10) days of the event. A formal written statement of the complaint should be filed, if the applicant intends to do so, with the above noted individuals within a reasonable time after the event - not to exceed 45 days.

B. Investigation of Sexual Harassment

The Title IX/Chapter 622 Coordinator shall conduct an investigation which shall be reported to the Superintendent of Schools. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

Such an investigation may consist of, but not be limited to the following actions:

1. Interview(s) with the individual filing complaint.
2. Interview(s) with the subject of the complaint.
3. Interview(s) with other employees/students or witnesses.
4. Interview(s) with other individual at the discretion of the Title IX/Chapter 622 Coordinator.
5. Review of pertinent records.

Within a reasonable time after the receipt of the complaint, the Coordinator shall inform both parties of the disposition of the investigation.

If the Coordinator determines that the allegations are not credible, the matter shall be closed. The Coordinator shall keep the documents, notes and other material from the investigation as a record. If the Coordinator determines that the allegations, or any part of the allegations, are credible, this fact will be reported to the Superintendent of Schools for appropriate action.

If either party is not satisfied with the response, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent of Schools. The appeal should contain the specific reason for the dissatisfaction with the response. The nature of the complaint, the parties involved, and the relief sought should also be delineated in the appeal. The Superintendent will consider the appeal and respond to the complaint after receipt of the complaint.

The Superintendent of the Regional School District will act as the Title IX/Chapter 622 Coordinator.

Office of Superintendent
150 North Ave.,

Disciplinary Action

Any employee or student found to have engaged in any form of harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Steps will be taken to end the harassment and ensure that it is not repeated. Steps the District may take include, among others, counseling, warnings, transfers, suspension, probation, and discharge.

State and Federal Remedies

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC - 180 days; MCAD - 6 months).

1. The United States Equal Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”)

10 Congress St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 565-3200

2. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”)

Boston Office:
One Ashburton Place-Room 601
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 727-3990
Springfield Office:
424 Dwight Street, Room 220
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 739-2145

Legal References:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; 20 USC 1681, et seq. 34 CFR Part 106
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 42 USC 2000e-2, M.G.L. 76:5, 603 CMR
26.00, M.G.L. 151B:1 and 3A; M.G.L. 151C:1

Adopted: March 10, 1997

Revised: January 8, 2007

Revised: April 14, 2008

Revised: August 18, 2010

**Mendon Upton Regional School District
Bullying Prevention & Intervention
Incident Reporting Form**

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:

Grade: _____ **Homeroom:** _____

(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. 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):

5. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

Name: _____ Student Staff Other

Name: _____ Student Staff Other

Name: _____ Student Staff Other

6. 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.

**Mendon-Upton Regional School District
Target Interview**

Student Name: _____
Grade: _____ Homeroom: _____ Date: _____
Parent/Guardian: _____ Contact Information: _____

Witness' Interview Date: _____

Relationship between witness/target/aggressor:

Description of Incident:

How frequently do incidents occur? (Times and places):

**Mendon-Upton Regional School District
Conclusions of 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: _____
 Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

- Loss of Privileges Detention Suspension Letter of Warning Guidance Intervention
 Police Referral Behavioral Assessment Parent Conference Community Service
 Exclusion from extracurricular Activities Referral to Family Counseling Conduct Plan
 Education Other _____

4. Describe Safety Planning:

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 _____
(If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: _____ **Date:** _____

