

Danvers Public Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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Updated: June, 2019

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Priority statement and Alignment with the District's Strategic Plan

The district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. 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 investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying 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.

Our district defines bullying as a person who is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself (repeated – intentional – imbalance of power), (Olweus).

B. Public involvement in the Plan:

School Committee, School Councils, PACs, Wellness and Olweus Committees will be involved through ongoing discussions at their meetings.

C. Assessing needs and resources:

The district will implement a coordinated system for collecting data related to the strategic plan which will include:

- Review of available data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying incidents (YRBS, Olweus, DESE)
- Review of current policies and procedures
- Assessments of periodic needs, by surveying students, faculty, staff, parents, guardians on school climate and school safety needs

D. Planning and oversight:

What	Who
Implement Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive Reports on Bullying• Collect and Analyze Bullying data• Record and Track Incidents• Plan Supports for Students• Annually report to DESE	Administration
Required Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New hires and annual trainings• Document Plan	Central Office
Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement, review, revise as needed	Curriculum Directors

Review Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise SC Policy as needed • Review Plan Annually 	Policy Subcommittee
Amend Handbooks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually 	Principals
Involve Parents	Administration

II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Annual Professional Development will be provided to all staff members in the following areas: Effective Implementation of Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, Evidence-based program, Review of data, Supports for students.

A. 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:

- (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 cyber-bullying; and
- (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

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.

B. Written notice to staff. The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the district employee handbook.

As part of the district's ongoing professional development, all faculty will be provided at least annual training on effective research-based bullying prevention and intervention strategies. Additionally, the implementation of effective bullying

prevention programs, including Olweus and curriculum programs, will continue with ongoing professional development.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Identifying resources:

As part of the yearly assessment of needs and the financial resources needed, each principal will assess the capacity of his/her school to provide services for targets, aggressors and their families.

B. Counseling and other services.

Each school has a team that may include principal, assistant principal, social worker, guidance counselors and other support personnel, including the school resource officer, that reviews student's needs especially at-risk students. The school social worker will take the lead in developing safety plans for students and providing social skills groups.

C. Students with disabilities. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies at the developmental level that is appropriate to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

D. Referral to outside services:

Each school's team will review their referral protocols and the social worker in consultation with the principal will take the lead in making referrals to outside agencies.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

DANVERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARTICULATED BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

Elementary, Middle, and High School

- K-5 Open Circle and Olweus
- K-12 Olweus Bullying Prevention
- K-12 Olweus and Cyber Bullying Curriculum (CyberSmart)

Middle School

- Middle School Bullying Prevention (grades 6-8) Olweus
- Grade 6: Positive Decision Making Curriculum – DARE
- Grade 6 Health: Interpersonal Communication & Bullying Unit
 - Students will learn bullying roles, verbal and nonverbal communication skills, message statements, and the types of bullying
 - Students will be able to demonstrate communication strategies to reduce and prevent bullying
 - Students will be able to analyze how these strategies can impact social and emotional health
- Grade 7 & 8 Health: Reinforces skills taught in grade 6 through units in Analyzing Influences, Decision-Making, Interpersonal Communication and Health Enhancing Behaviors

High School

- High School Olweus Bullying Prevention (Grades 9-10 Advisory)
- Grade 9 Health: Safe Dates: An Adolescent Dating Abuse Prevention Curriculum (Foshee and Langwick) Ph.D
- Grade 10 Health: Owning Up: Empowering adolescents to confront social cruelty, bullying and injustice (Wiseman)
- Grade 10 Health: Teaching Tolerance (Kilborne)
- High School Athletics: Atlas and Athena (athlete substance abuse prevention)

A. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- create a safe school and classroom environment for all students, including for students with actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including: race, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, disabilities, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics.
- set clear expectations for students and establish school and classroom routines;
- use appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- use positive behavioral supports;
- encourage adults to develop positive relationships with students; respect for all students
- modeling, teaching and rewarding pro-social, healthy and respectful behaviors;
- use positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- use the Internet safely; and
- support students' interests and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

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

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation

The Danvers Public Schools recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics including, but not limited to, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socio-economic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance or other disability, or by association with a person who is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify steps to take to create a safe and supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community and will provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

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 shall 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. 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,¹ school emails, voicemail, USPS mailing address and Tips411., and an email address.

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. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

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, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the principal or designee.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

1. Safety

¹ See Appendix A for Sample Incident Reporting Form.

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. (Include locally established student safety planning policies and procedures here.)

2. Obligations to Notify Others

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

- C. Investigation. 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.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation. Ongoing communication is essential.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation. (Align this with school or district procedures.)

- D. Determinations. The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action are necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation

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

According to Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws, the principal, or his/her designee, shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so by accessing the DESE Program Resolution System (PRS). That information may be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>. Emails may be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu. The DESE PRS phone number is 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information may be obtained in the Superintendent's office.

E. 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 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.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. Parent education and resources. The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school.

The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PAC, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, DanversCARES or similar organizations.

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

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, 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.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

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

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members 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.

Cyber-bullying 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 Social Media / Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

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 or staff member 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 or staff member against whom bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Olweus Bullying Definition – This is the research-based program that the district uses. A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself (repeated – intentional – imbalance of power).

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 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.