

Boston Renaissance Charter Public School
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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I. LEADERSHIP

- A. Public Involvement in developing the Plan. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed in consultation with members of the school community. Principals and Directors began the process by creating a task force to complete the plan. The Student Support Specialists designed the plan based on needs within the school community, policies on bullying the school had previously adopted, and the values of the school community. The plan was submitted for public comment on December 3, 2010, and the amendments made to plan based on public comment were finalized on December 20, 2010.

B. Assessing needs and resources

The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School (BRCPS) will monitor and assess the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan according to the following steps. Principals, Directors, and Student Support Specialists (SSS) are the members of the leadership team that designed and facilitated the plan; however, it is the responsibility of members of the school community to play an active role in creating a positive school culture by preventing bullying and intervening when bullying is observed.

- 1) The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School is committed to creating a stimulating and supportive environment where students are safe to develop academically, socially, and emotionally. BRCPS responds to all reported incidents of bullying seriously, and the school is continually assessing the needs of the school community. Principals and Student Support Specialists work together throughout the school to ensure that all students feel safe. In order to assess and quantify the school climate a volunteer survey will be given to students, parents, teachers, and staff twice a year. The survey will collect information about bullying at the school, and the results will be used to provide targeted intervention and/or professional development in order to maintain a stimulating and supportive school environment.
- 2) Student Support Specialists will compile the data submitted by the Boston Renaissance Charter Public School Stakeholders. Bullying Prevention Survey will include scaled responses to school climate, school safety, administrative responses to incidents of unsafe behavior, resources for preventing and intervening with bullying, and school awareness of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The survey will also include areas for qualitative responses. Stakeholders will be able to provide information about where the bullying hotspots are (classroom, bathroom, cafeteria, bus, other) when (times of the school day or at home with cyberbullying), and how targets are identified. The Principals and Students Support Specialist of each house will use the data collected to provide specific support to the areas of need; the responses could include but are not limited to providing more professional development for specific staff members, or more personnel in targeted areas of the school grounds.
- 3) The Bullying Prevention Survey will be used by the Boston Renaissance Charter Public School to assess the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention and

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Intervention Plan. The survey will be given twice a year, and it is the goal of the school to show improvement in the targeted areas. If the improvement is not significant the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be readdressed to better meet the needs of the school community.

- C. Planning and oversight. Plans should identify the school or district 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, or more frequently.

The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School always takes seriously incidents of bullying, harassment, or any behavior that could make a student feel unsafe at school. Principals and Student Support Specialists are a part of the Leadership Team responsible for enforcing the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. They take preventative steps to avoid bullying, enhance the overall school community, respond to reported incidents of bullying, discipline students who have bullied classmates, and provide training or professional development to teachers and staff to limit future instances of bullying.

- 1) All staff member are required to document observed or reported incidents of bullying in the iPass system. The Student Support Specialists respond to individual cases of bullying. The Student Support Specialist is responsible to investigate each reported incident.
- 2) Student Support Specialists will use the data collected in the iPass system and the Bullying Prevention Survey to assess the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. iPass will serve as the reporting and recording system for any behavior incidents. The reports submitted through iPass will be monitored and tracked by the Student Support Specialists.
- 3) The school lawyer will address all staff members annually to inform them about the legal and ethical expectations of staff members.
- 4) The Child Study Team (CST) is responsible for providing appropriate support to students who are in need. Students who are observed to be aggressors or targets would be referred by teachers to CST. CST would then determine what supports would be helpful for the students involved (counseling, group sessions, anger management, social skills group, etc).
- 5) The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School uses the Open Circle

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Curriculum. The Director of Unified Student Services is the liaison between Open Circle and BRCPS Staff and schedules employees for training in the program. Open Circle is a comprehensive, grade-differentiated social and emotional learning program for children, their teachers, administrators, other school staff, parents and other caregivers.

- 6) The Principals, Directors, and Student Support Specialists are responsible for amending, updating, or revising the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in order to address any areas or new concerns. The plan will be reviewed by the team at the end of the school year to make necessary changes in policy for the following year.
- 7) The Principals, Directors, and Student Support Specialists will submit the codes of conduct to be included in the staff and student handbook. This information is provided to staff and families each year.
- 8) The Parent Liaison will work in conjunction with the Principals and Directors to lead Parent workshops on Bullying Prevention and Intervention and distribute relevant information to BRCPS families.

D. Priority Statements.

The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School is an urban K-6 school committed to providing a vibrant educational experience for Boston children. We strive to nurture and develop children academically, socially and emotionally, in a stimulating supportive environment. BRCPS expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. BRCPS 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.

II. 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

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schoolwide and districtwide 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 cyberbullying; and*
- (vi) *Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.*

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.

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 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 school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. The BRCPS Plan consists strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs

- A. Identifying resources. The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School has many resources to offer students who are in need. All staff members are expected to work to prevent and intervene with Bullying. The related service providers are trained to

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provide specific interventions to aide or counsel aggressors and targets. Unified Student Services and all houses combined consist of the following resources for students and families:

- One Director of Unified Student Services
- Two School Nurses
- One school Social Worker
- Two School Psychologists
- One Evaluation Team Facilitator
- One ELE Coordinators
- Three Speech and Language Pathologists
- Two Occupational Therapists
- Three Student Support Specialists

- B. Counseling and other services. Access to Counseling and other resources are available to targets, aggressors, and any student in need through the Boston Renaissance Charter Public School referral process. The Child Study Team (CST) meets regularly to discuss students who were referred by teachers or other members of the school community. The concerns are discussed, and then the team decides what resources must be allocated for th student. Counseling, a behavior improvement plan, social group or other appropriate services are provided for the student. The Child Study Team will review the progress of the student who were assigned services or interventions at a designated meeting during the school year. The Team will then evaluate if the services are meeting the needs of the student.
- 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 to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- D. Referral to outside services. The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School has related services available to students within the school building. There are instances when the resources within the building are not sufficient in meeting the complex and diverse needs of the students. In these cases students will be referred to outside agencies that have the expertise to fully service students. The process for referring students to outside agencies starts with the Child Study Team. The team makes decisions to service students within the school building, and then the team will reconvene to evaluate if the services are meeting the needs of the student. In these cases the school mental health professional, under the supervision of the Director of Unified Student Services, will provide recommendations to the family in need for outside services within the community. Home for Little Wanderers is one of the partners of Boston Renaissance Charter Public School, and they are an outside service that provides counseling in-house for students in need. The steps to be referred to receive counseling services from the Home for Little Wanderers are the same as those stated above.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be 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 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.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan should include specific information about how and when the school or district will review the Plan with students.

B. 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:

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

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

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will prohibit bullying based on sexual orientation, along with other characteristics, such as race, religion, sex and physical appearance. According to BRCPS, bullying is defined as the following:

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behavior based on sexual orientation, along with other characteristics, such as race, religion, sex and physical appearance, which is unprovoked, repeated over a period of time.

Bullying in any form, by anyone, will not be tolerated at BRCPS. We do not accept any form of behavior which hurts, threatens or frightens any member of the school community. Everyone has the right to feel safe and happy in school and on the playground. We believe in eradicating bullying without victimizing the aggressor. Support will be given to targets and action will be taken against aggressors.

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. 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 staff member shall be recorded in Student Data Base (iPass) by staff member and/or Student Support Specialist. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee (Student Support Specialist) 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 report form, a voicemail box, and an email address.

Use of an incident reporting form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school district will: 1) include a copy of the incident reporting form in the beginning of the year with information that is sent home for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, Student Support Specialist office, the counseling (school psychologist, social worker and other mental health offices), 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) or origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of the 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 (Student Support Specialist), will be incorporated in the student and staff handbooks, on the school website, and in information about the Anti-Bullying Policy that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

Staff members who witness bullying behaviors or retaliation, will immediately respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline. Staff members will also be required to report incidents to Principal and/or Student Support Specialist. Staff member will also be required to document incidents in the student database (iPass).

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians and Others

BRCPS expects students, parents, or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation to report it to the students' Homebase Teacher, Student Support Specialist, Principal or other staff member. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of a report. Student Support Specialist will fully investigate all reported incident(s) of bullying before rendering disciplinary action, consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical safe and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with Principal or Student Support Specialist.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal or student Support Specialist 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 potential further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not to 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 Student Support Specialist will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Principal or Student Support Specialist will implement appropriate strategies for protecting all students from bullying or retaliation. This includes but is not limited to 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.

BRCPS investigates allegations of bullying in a manner that protects all individuals involved. The Student Support Specialist keeps all statements and comments recorded during an investigation confidential. All questioning of

students are done in private, and the Student Support Specialist attempts to keep all students separate during an investigation. Aggressors are notified that any retaliation will result in consequences according to the Anti-Bullying policy of BRCPS.

Obligation to Notify Others

- a. **Notice to parents or guardians.** Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or Student Support Specialist will promptly notify the parents or guardian of the target and the aggressor of this, and the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or Student Support Specialist 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 District.** If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, a charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or Student Support Specialist first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or Student Support Specialist 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 of Law Enforcement.** At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal or Student Support Specialist 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 Student Support Specialist 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 our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and with applicable school policies and procedures, consult with the school (resource officer), if any and other individuals the Principal or Student Support Specialist deems appropriate.

- d. **Investigation.** The Principal or Student Support Specialist 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), pattern of behavior(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the Principal or Student Support Specialist will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Principal or Student Support Specialist, 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.

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Interviews may be conducted by the Student Support Specialist, other staff members as determined by the Principal or Student Support Specialist, and in consultation with the school's counselor (Mental Health Department and Unified Student Services), as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his /her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal or Student Support Specialist will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or Student Support Specialist will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or Student Support Specialist will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or Student Support Specialist will maintain a written record of the investigation.

BRCPS Procedure –

The Anti-Bullying policy will prohibit bullying based on sexual orientation, along with other characteristics, such as race, religion, sex and physical appearance. Incidents of bullying may, in addition to being a violation of this policy, constitute a violation of civil rights laws including but not limited to Title II, Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. Please see the anti-discrimination/harassment policies of the Boston Renaissance Charter School for further information.

Student(s) identified for bullying will receive

Incidents of bullying will be documented in detail in iPass.

Student will be escorted to Student Support Office

1st Offense will result in Detention for students in third through sixth grade. K1 through second grade students will receive a suspension warning.

2nd Offense will result in 3 day Suspension followed by a meeting with parent upon return to school

3rd Offense will result in 5 day Suspension

4th Offense will result in Out of School Expulsion Hearing with School Administration

D. **Determinations**. The Principal or Student Support Specialist will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after the investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal or Student Support Specialist 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 Student Support Specialist will: 1) *determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.*

Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal or Student Support Specialist 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 behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The Principal or Student Support Specialist 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, **consequences will be rendered (i.e. verbal warning, out of school suspension(s), parent conference with administration or expulsion)**. 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 SSS 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.

Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching appropriate behavior through skills-building

Upon the Principal or Student Support Specialist determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, 370(d)(v).

- 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 (**i.e. anger management workshops facilitated by Student Support Specialist and/or mental health department**).
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals (**Open Circle**).
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home (monthly parent meetings).
- 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 determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

If the Principal or Student Support Specialist decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Principal or Student Support Specialist, including the nature of the conduct, the

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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 code of conduct.

The goal of this policy is to promote the well being of all students based on trust between all members of the school community. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent bullying from occurring. To offer an environment free of verbal and physical abuse and to provide an education free from humiliation and oppression where everyone has the chance to partake in the social and educational opportunities offered by the school.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. Parent education and resources. The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and Open Circle. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the parent meetings and information regarding our policies and procedures will be disseminated at the Parent Advisory Board meetings.
- 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 cyberbullying 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 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 Boston Renaissance Charter Public School will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND 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 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.

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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

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below. Schools or districts may add specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but may not alter their meaning or scope. Plans may also include additional definitions that are aligned with local policies and procedures.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on

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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.