

# *Haverhill Public Schools*



## *Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan 2018-2019*

**Haverhill Public Schools**  
**Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

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## VI. MISSION STATEMENT

### HAVERHILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Haverhill Public Schools strives to create a safe and respectful learning atmosphere for not only its students but also the faculty and community. Therefore, we, in accord with The Massachusetts Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law, will not tolerate unlawful, disruptive behavior or any form of bullying. HPS believes that the target's sense of safety and security is necessary for learning and productivity, and therefore all reports and complaints will be addressed with prompt action. We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

## VII. LEADERSHIP

### Advisory Committee

A committee comprised of representatives from teachers, staff, local law enforcement agencies, students and community members will review and revise the plan. The committee will also make recommendations regarding policy to the School Committee as necessary and provide oversight to the implementation of the plan.

District Leadership – Chief Academic Officers (Elementary and Secondary) are responsible for:

- Planning ongoing professional development in bullying prevention and intervention
- Review appropriate curricula
- Review annual district data on bullying incidences

### School Leadership

The principal or assistant principal(s) of each school is responsible for:

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

## VIII. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Annual training for all school staff including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals, will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or assistant principal 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.

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, § 370, 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 the ways to prevent and respond to bullying for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). This plan will include a particular focus on the needs of students whose disability affects social skills development.

#### IX. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Haverhill Public Schools provides supports for targets of bullying, the aggressor and affected families. The principal in each building maintains resources and tools for the intervention and prevention of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. These tools may include but are not limited to: behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, social contracts, and individually focused curricula.

Counseling or the 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. The guidance counselor or adjustment counselor at the schools will maintain a list of appropriate outside agencies and will assist with the referral to the outside agency.

As required by M.G.L. c.71B§ 3, the IEP team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid bullying, harassment, or teasing. The team will recommend appropriate resources to address any identified deficits.

#### V. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Haverhill Public Schools provides age appropriate curricula and activities including Steps to Respect, and Second Step that promote the prevention and awareness of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. Appropriate behavior, development of positive relationships, and respect for one another will help build social skills. Through the schools' academic and extracurricular activities, students not only learn but are also provided tools on how to engage in a safe environment that is respectful of diversity and culture.

Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research utilizing 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 or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, 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.

In each school, the following strategies and procedures will help establish a positive school culture by:

- 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
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Haverhill Public Schools' will support opportunities for its students to be part of extracurricular activities that deter bullying and support positive school behavior.

**Violence Intervention Program (VIP)** This is a program that is implemented at Haverhill High School and in the four middle schools. It is designed to provide students with the opportunities to process behavioral choices and promote a strong, safe, diverse community. Their goal is to increase student dialogue about violence and peace in hopes to encourage discussion and acceptance. The ongoing work of the VIP Team is an important part of the HPS comprehensive bullying prevention plan in striving to create and sustain a change in school culture. The Haverhill Public Schools offers all middle and high school students the opportunity to join the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) teams. The VIP team is an after-school program that meets throughout the school year and focuses on activities to help prevent and reduce violence in the schools and the community while promoting peace, tolerance and respect. Members of the VIP team participate in numerous trainings throughout the year to gain leadership skills that help them educate their peers in a variety of violence prevention topics. They are involved in both creating and sponsoring violence prevention activities. The VIP teams at both the high school and middle schools participate in bullying awareness trainings, and receive skill training to empower them to be active bystanders in the reporting of incidents of bullying. VIP leaders conduct activities in their respective schools and community to promote anti bullying messages. This is done through developing public service announcements (PSAs) for local cable access, sharing insights re: their understanding and ideas for bullying prevention; assisting in the planning of prevention efforts and networking with youth and adults to raise awareness and model pro-social skills.

**Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)** The Haverhill High School Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) is a student organization whose objective is to provide a safe and supportive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth and their allies (LGBTQ). The alliance also works to make the Haverhill High School community safe and welcoming to all students regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The

HHS GSA consists of approximately 25 students in all grade levels who meet weekly to discuss ideas, plan events and support one another. They participate in campaigns of awareness such as the Day of Silence, which works to put an end to the bullying and harassment of LGBTQ students and sends the message that hate will not be tolerated.

**Excel (Community Service)** Haverhill High School's Excel program features not only community service but also outreach to create a safe, diverse community. Through projects and teamwork, the Excel club strives to promote a positive environment within Haverhill High School as well as the community.

## VI. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

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 a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, 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, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, 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, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, 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.

### 1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report as provided 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, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor.

<sup>1</sup>\_\_\_\_\_  
See Appendix A for Sample Incident Reporting Form.

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, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor.

#### Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation- Allegations of Bullying by a Student.

##### I. 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. (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 student 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 student 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.

A. 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 will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation 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.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations.

B. 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 is 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 student 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. 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.

The principal or 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.

#### Responses to Bullying.

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, § 370 (d) (v). Skill- building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

##### 1) Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

- 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 school's or district's code of conduct.

If it has been determined that bullying has occurred, the Haverhill Public Schools will take action that is appropriate under the circumstances as described in the student handbook. Action may be but is not limited to:

- Parent conferences/training
- Classroom/school transfer
- Exclusion from some school activities
- Increased adult supervision
- Work with school personnel on improving behavior
- Counseling
- Support Services or other therapeutic interventions
- Detention/Suspension/Expulsion
- Court Involvement

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 (hallways, cafeteria, locker rooms, etc.).

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.

## Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

In the event of a report of bullying by a staff member the same investigative procedure will take place conducted by the Director of Human Resources or designee as assigned by the Superintendent of Schools.

## VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

***Furthermore, Haverhill Public Schools will act against all forms of retaliation, which 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.***

Every student, parent, and employee of the school district must recognize the acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. Any student who believes that he has been a target of such should report it immediately to a teacher, principal, or member of the school community whom he/she trusts. Likewise, students and members of the school staff who witness or become knowledgeable about bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation should immediately report it as well.

## VIII. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM

Any parent who wishes to file a complaint or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so by contacting the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System Web: [Program Quality Assurance Services](#)

## IX. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

Each year Haverhill Public Schools will provide parents and 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 anti-bullying and social competency curricula. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the School Committee, PTO, Parent Advisory Council, Student Councils, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the District Attorney's Office.

Upon investigation and determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or assistant principal(s) shall promptly notify the parents of the target and the aggressor of the determination. and they will follow the school district or school's procedures for responding to the bullying or retaliation. They will also notify the target's parent of the actions that the school officials will take to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation.

## X. STATE LAW DEFINITIONS

A safe learning environment is one in which every student develops emotionally, academically, and physically in a caring and supportive atmosphere free of intimidation and abuse. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Haverhill Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying. The Haverhill School Committee and all of the Haverhill Public Schools shall not tolerate bullying (see Exhibit A).

### ***State Law Definitions:***

"Bullying", the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates

a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

"Cyber-bullying", bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall 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. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying 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 enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

"Hostile environment", 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 the student's education.

"Perpetrator", a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.

"School grounds", property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school, or collaborative school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

Where the term "bullying" is used in this document, it is intended to encompass both "bullying" and "cyber-bullying" as defined above.

## **XI. 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, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. 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 37H 1/2, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L. c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

## Appendix A

Repeated use by one or more students or a member of the school staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (must include at least of the following)

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage his/her property
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or 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.
- involves an imbalance of perceived or real physical or social power between target and aggressor(s)
- Provide brief description of the nature of the bullying (if any):
- Provide a final determination:
  - Incidents did not meet the standard of bullying
  - Bullying has occurred and will be dealt with in- house
  - Criminal bullying has occurred and police should be notified of possible criminal charges

Response Plan (if any)

Disciplinary Actions:

Notification and Documentation

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of the target
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of aggressor
- School information system
- Counselor of target
- Counselor of aggressor
- Other schools, coaches, staff members (as appropriate) for implementing the disciplinary and student safety plan

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Administrator/Investigator Signature

Date