

Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

I. Introduction

A. Massachusetts General Law

In 2010, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts approved new legislation, *An Act Relative to Bullying* (c. 92, Acts of 2010). Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37O, require schools to take active steps to prevent and respond to bullying. The Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District's (STGRSD) Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (hereinafter, *the Plan*) has been updated to reflect M.G.L. c. 71, §37O, as amended by Sections 72-74 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of 2013 and Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014.

The first Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (December 2010) was developed in consultation with district stakeholders, including parents/guardians, teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, and students. The superintendent and her/his designee is charged with reviewing and updating the Plan biennially. Consultation will include, at a minimum, posting a proposed updated Plan on the STGRSD website, and a public comment period prior to adoption of an updated Plan.

At the beginning of each school year, the superintendent or her/his designee provides the school community, including staff, students, and parents/guardians with written notice of its policies for reporting bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the building-level administrators (principals and assistant principals), is incorporated in student and staff handbooks and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents/guardians. The Plan can also be located on the district website (www.stgrsd.org).

B. Definitions Used in the STGRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

In order to work as collaboratively and as efficaciously as possible to prevent and intervene on all acts of bullying, it is essential for school personnel, students, parents or guardians, law enforcement agencies, and other interested parties to use common language.

Aggressor is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.

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

School 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.

C. Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37O (b) the STGRSD prohibits acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying:

- i. on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the 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 the 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.

D. Purposes of the Plan

The STGRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is intended to function as a guide in implementing a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The STGRSD is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of bullying and retaliation. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. Each STGRSD principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at her/his respective school with support from the superintendent and central office administration. If there is a reported bullying incident that involves the principal or assistant principal as the alleged aggressor, the superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. If the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the school committee or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. The policies and procedures for investigating such allegations of bullying and retaliation are detailed in Section IV: Processes and Procedures.

E. Priority Statement

The STGRSD expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

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

We 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 on or more of these characteristics. The district or school will identify specific steps it will take to 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. Specifically, in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Technical Assistance Advisory Special Education 2011-2012 Bullying Prevention and Intervention, each TEAM considers Sections 7 and 8 of the law and incorporates the necessary steps into the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The STGRSD will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation in our schools, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore a 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.

F. Problem Resolution System

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the DESE Program Resolution System. That information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu.pqa>. Emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available in the superintendent's office.

II. Training and Professional Development

The STGRSD, in accordance with the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, §37O, is committed to providing ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

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 schoolwide 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 cyberbullying;
- vi. Internet safety issues as they related 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' 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 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 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;
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students; and
- engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors

designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors.

C. Written Notice to Staff

The STGRSD will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, in the school or district employee code of conduct.

III. Collaboration with Families

The STGRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of each of our schools as well as the district to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration. As with all communications, the district will be sensitive to and respectful of age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of student and their families.

A. Parent Education and Resources

STGRSD 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. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and similar organizations.

B. Notification Requirements

Each year STGRSD will provide 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 or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians 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.

IV. Access to Resources

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, student aggressors, families, and others are addressed.

STGRSD's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs.

A. Identifying Resources

Building principals, in collaboration with social workers and school counselors, will identify resources that are available in every school to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. Principals will also identify a team of people who are available as an intervention team. These teams will conduct an annual review of staffing and programs that support the creation of a positive school environments, focusing on early interventions and intensive services, and develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. This may include adopting new evidence-based curricula, reorganizing staff, establishing safety planning teams, and identifying other agencies that can provide services.

B. Counseling and Other Supportive Services

School counselors, adjustment counselors, board certified behavior analysts (BCBAs), nurses, school psychologists, speech pathologists, special educators, and student assistance team (SAT) members will help to identify a variety of therapeutic and skill-based services to students within the educational setting that include emotional support, risk assessment, crisis intervention, and help with community-based counseling referrals when appropriate. They can also provide parents and teachers with resources and support to address students' academic, emotional, and behavioral concerns. Examples of interventions to help address students' needs include individually focused curricula, social skills groups, and behavioral intervention plans. Additionally, they work collaboratively to educate and support parents and apprise parents of outside resources to enhance parenting skills and provide for the needs of children.

Adjustment counselors will maintain current information on community-based mental health referrals as well as Community Service Agencies (CSAs) within the local area, providing services to Medicaid eligible students.

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 her/his 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

STGRSD school adjustment counselors and have an established practice of providing parents and students with referral information and assistance with accessing needed therapeutic resources in the larger community. In cases where parents elect to augment in-school intervention and support with community-based therapeutic services, STGRSD school staff will, on request, provide information on mental health resources in the community.

V. 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 or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including 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.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the STGRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan through school assemblies, grade level assemblies, and/or small group meetings at the beginning of each school year.

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 for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;

- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting student’ interest and participation in non-academic extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

C. Evidence-Based Social Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention

Curricula

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) helps students acquire the skills necessary to be respectful and responsible members of their school community and the ever-evolving global society. Effective SEL programs emphasize the development of five core social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

The STGRSD provides age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention and intervention in each grade that is incorporated into the district’s curricula. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

- i. **PBIS (Grades PK-6):** Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based three-tiered framework to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. Tier 1 practices and systems establish a foundation of regular, proactive support while preventing unwanted behaviors. Schools provide these universal supports to all students, school-wide. Tier 2 practices and systems support students who are at risk for developing more serious problem behaviors before those behaviors start. These supports help students develop the skills they need to benefit from core programs at the school. At Tier 3, students receive more intensive, individualized support to improve their behavioral and academic outcomes. At this level, school rely on formal assessment to determine a student’s need. For more information please visit <https://www.pbis.org>.
- ii. **Responsive Classroom (Grades PK-2):** The Responsive Classroom approach is a research-based approach to teaching that offers elementary schools practical strategies for bringing together social and academic learning throughout the school day. Responsive classroom has a set of core beliefs and guiding principles based on the idea that in order for students to be successful they should have experience with cooperation,

assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. For more information please visit <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org>.

- iii. **Elementary and Middle School Health/Social Emotional Learning Curriculum (Grades 3-8):** The curriculum focuses on the critical thinking skills, knowledge, and motivation needed to optimize personal health, safety, and wellness. Students explore the social, emotional and physical health issues of adolescence and work to develop a strong sense of self and personal control. The health curriculum aligns with the National Health Standards and MA Health Framework. It is comprehensive and sequential with a strong emphasis on learning and practicing the life skills needed to make responsible decisions, resist peer pressure, resolve conflicts, build resiliency, engage in self advocacy, process objective content information, and develop relationships.
- iv. **General Health (Grade 9):** This comprehensive program addresses the major health issues faced by teens today through a wellness approach. Topics include personal health, family health, injury prevention and emergency health services, mental and emotional health, use and misuse of substances, diseases and disorders, consumer health, nutrition, community health, and environmental health.
- v. **Contemporary Health Issues (Grade 10):** This course explores critical issues that affect teens' lives every day through classroom writing and literature instruction. Through music, movies, news items, poetry, humor, and stories, topics will be addressed through a variety of viewpoints. Issues to be explored include HIV/AIDS, alcohol and other drugs, depression and suicide, divorce, teen pregnancy, and self-esteem.

VI. Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

A. Planning and Oversight

- i. The building principals are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan in their schools including:
 - 1. receiving and investigating reports on bullying and retaliation;
 - 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 ongoing professional development in conjunction with the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, the director of students services, and the Instructional Leadership Team;
 - 5. identifying and recommending supports that will respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
 - 6. implementing the curricula that each school will use;

7. leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and
 8. providing annual reports to the superintendent.
- ii. The school committee reviews revised policies for bullying including Internet and technology use policies as needed. Policy review and development includes designating key staff to be in charge of implementation.
 - iii. The superintendent or her/his designee amends student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying and retaliation of other students or by school staff will not be tolerated.
 - iv. The superintendent ensures that student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct include bullying requirements of the Plan and STGRSD policy.
 - v. The instructional technology specialist and the technology director are responsible for updating the Empowered Digital Use Policy for the review of the superintendent and school committee.
 - vi. The superintendent, or her/his designee, will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Plan biennially, or more frequently as needed should new regulations and laws be enacted.
 - vii. Oversight of the STGRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be provided by the designated school, district administrators, and leaders. Please refer to Appendix I for a chart outlining the delineation of responsibilities.

B. Assessing Needs and Resources

The superintendent and/or her/his designee, with input from staff and school councils, will assess the adequacy of current programs. This may include the following:

- review of current policies and procedures;
- review of available data on bullying and behavioral incidents;
- assessment of available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services;
- reading of current and relevant articles and research on best methodology to prevent and intervene to address bullying and cyber-bullying;
- research and review of field-tested and research-based anti-bullying curricula and instructional guides;
- development of a resource bank of relevant materials for both parents and students;
- Review of the MA comprehensive Health and Wellness Curriculum Frameworks to provide a working curriculum context for anti-bullying curriculum; and
- assessment of initial and periodic needs, by surveying students, staff, parents, and guardians on school climate and school safety issues.

C. Data Collection

STGRSD will review annual Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Survey results, sponsored by the MA DESE, to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Any and all data collected through the survey will be maintained and protected in compliance with Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), state student records regulations, and DESE guidance regarding student confidentiality. Additionally, the district will annually report bullying incident data to DESE.

D. 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 must be recorded in writing. All employees are 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 and/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 and each principal's phone number (Appendix H).

Use of the STGRSD 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 the Incident Reporting Form 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 the Incident Reporting Form on the district'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, 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, and the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school and district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

- i. **Reporting by Staff:** A staff member will 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 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.
- ii. **Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others:** The school and 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 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. 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 incidents of bullying and/or retaliation with a staff member, or with the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, and to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor.

E. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

- i. **Safety:** Upon receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee/Superintendent or designee/School Committee/designee, with the assistance of appropriate support staff, will take prompt steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target(s), along with those who report, witness, provide information in an investigation of, or have reliable information about bullying or retaliation. The Principal/superintendent/school committee or designee also takes steps to protect these individuals from further bullying or retaliation. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee, at their discretion and in accordance with applicable law, contacts parents or guardians prior to any

investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Responses to promote safety may include, but shall not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; predetermining 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, and a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying and/or retaliation will be maintained to the extent possible given the school’s obligation to investigate the matter.

ii. Obligations to Notify Others

1. **Notice of Parents or Guardians:** Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee shall promptly notify the parents/guardians of the alleged target(s), the student aggressor(s), or aggressor(s) of the report 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.
2. **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/superintendent/school committee or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal/superintendent/school committee 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.
3. **Notice to Law Enforcement:** At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued

against the aggressor(s), the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee 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.

If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee shall notify 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(s) or aggressor(s).

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable STGRSD policies and procedure, consult with the superintendent or her designee, and with any other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate after consultation with the superintendent. The Principal shall document the reasons for his/her decision to notify law enforcement if such notification is made. Notice to any law enforcement agency under this section shall be consistent with 603 CMR 49.00, STGRSD Policy, including the Memorandum of Agreement between the School and Police, and the confidentiality requirements of the Plan.

F. Investigation

The principal/superintendent/school committee or designee, investigates 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. Specifically, the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee shall complete the investigation within a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed 15 school days following the date of the report.

The principal/superintendent/school committee or designee, as appropriate, may conduct interviews with students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The investigator will remind the alleged student aggressor(s), aggressor(s), target(s), 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.

To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal/superintendent/school committee or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal/superintendent/school committee or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation, including the preservation of all email, text communications, and other evidence.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with STGRSD policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with the superintendent regarding consultation with legal counsel pertaining to the investigation of the alleged report.

G. Determination

The principal/superintendent/school committee or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, it is determined that a violation of the district's anti-bullying policy occurred, the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to stop the prohibited conduct, prevent its reoccurrence, and to ensure that the target(s) is/are not restricted in participating in school and in benefiting from school activities. Specifically, the principal or designee shall:

- Determine what remedial action is required, if any;
- Determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary, including where appropriate, consultation 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 and/or retaliatory behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development or referral to one or more of the resources identified in the Plan;
- Implement a full range of disciplinary actions up to and including suspension and expulsion;
- In the event of a staff member, the administrator will consult with the superintendent to determine the appropriate course of action.
- Notify the parents/guardians of the target(s) and the aggressor(s) of the determination and, if it is determined that a violation of the district's anti-bullying policy occurred, what action is being taken to respond to the bullying or retaliation; and
- Notify the parents/guardians of the target(s) of the action to be taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation.
- 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.

All notices to parents/guardians shall comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Due to the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal/superintendent/school committee

or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parents/guardians about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a stay away order or other directive that the target(s) must be aware of in order to report violations.

The principal shall maintain a file of all reports of bullying or retaliation, along with the investigative materials and documentation of the report(s) made to law enforcement. A quarterly report shall be provided to the superintendent or her designee.

H. Responses to Bullying or Retaliation

The STGRSD has incorporated a range of individualized strategies and interventions that may be used in response to remediate a student's skills and or to prevent further incidences of bullying and/or retaliation.

- i. **Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building:** If the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee determines that a violation of the STGRSD anti-bullying policy has occurred, he/she will 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:
 1. offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying criteria;
 2. providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with school counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
 3. implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
 4. meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
 5. adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
 6. making a referral for evaluation.
- ii. **Taking Disciplinary Action:** If the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or his/her 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, which may include suspension and/or expulsion, will be consistent with the Plan, STGRSD disciplinary policies, and the school code of conduct. The STGRSD codes of conduct are available by school on the STGRSD website (www.stgrsd.org). Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are

governed by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which will be followed in conjunction with state laws regarding student discipline. If the principal/superintendent/school committee or designee determines that a student or staff knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student or staff may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the school's code of conduct/student handbook, including suspension and/or expulsion from school for students and up to and including termination for employees.

- iii. **Promoting Safety for the Target and Others:** The principal/superintendent/school committee 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/superintendent/school committee 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/superintendent/school committee or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

I. **Confidentiality**

All communications arising from the implementation of the Plan and the related STGRSD policy shall be consistent with applicable federal and state privacy laws and regulation, including but not limited to, the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations (603 CMR 23.00, et seq.) and FERPA 1974. In accordance with these laws and regulations:

- i. The principal/superintendent/school committee or designee may not disclose specific information to a target's parent/guardian about disciplinary action taken against an aggressor unless it involves a stay away order or other directive that the target and/or her/his parents or guardians must be aware of in order to report violation;
- ii. The principal/superintendent/school committee or designee may not disclose information from a target's or aggressor's student record to a parent/guardian unless the information is about the parent/guardian's own child;
- iii. The principal/superintendent/school committee or designee may, in a manner that protects the privacy of targets, student witnesses, and aggressors to the extent practicable under the circumstances, disclose a determination of bullying or retaliation to local law enforcement

authorities without the consent of a student or his/her parents/guardians;
and

- iv. The principal/superintendent/ school committee or designee may, in situations where he/she determines there is an immediate and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individual, disclose student record information about a student to appropriate parties, including law enforcement authorities, if such disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or individual.

J. Relationship to Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the STGRSD, 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 STGRSD 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 STGRSD 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, 37H½, or 37H¾, M.G.L. c.71, §§ 41 and 42, M.G.L.c.76 § 5, 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

File: JICFB - BULLYING PREVENTION

The School Committee is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

"Bullying" 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 themselves, or of damage to their 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" means 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 the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in 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 the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents/guardians and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or their designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target, however, shall not be subject to discipline for failing to report

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school Principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection, and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred they shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum, the Principal or their designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

Target Assistance

The school district shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the school district website.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended

Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

603 CMR [26:00](#)

M.G.L. [71:37O](#); [265:43](#), [43A](#); [268:13B](#); [269:14A](#)

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination

ACAB, Sexual Harassment

JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment

JIC, Student Conduct

JICFA- E, Prohibition of Hazing

SOURCE: MASC August 2013

Appendix B

Age Appropriate Bullying Prevention Language for the Woodland School Handbook

Below is some bullying prevention language parents can share with young children:

1. Be kind to each other.
2. Do not use words that would cause a classmate to feel sad, upset, or ashamed.
3. Keep your hands to yourself. Do not hit, kick, punch, pinch, or touch another student. Never touch another student in a way that might hurt them.
4. Do not say things that would hurt others' feelings, or make them feel scared.
5. If someone is saying or doing anything to you or any other student that makes you feel upset or scared, tell your teacher, principal, parents, or another adult right away.
6. If you say or do things to other students that make them feel upset or scared, there will be consequences.

Age Appropriate Bullying Prevention Language for the Powder Mill School Handbook

You can prevent bullying from happening if you follow this code of behavior.

1. Be kind to each other.
2. Do not use words that would cause a classmate to feel sad, upset, or ashamed.
3. Keep your hands to yourself. Do not hit, kick, punch, pinch, or touch another student. Never touch another student in a way that might hurt them.
4. Consider other people's feelings at all times before you speak.
5. Do not say or do anything to threaten another student.
6. Do not do or say anything that would make another student scared.
7. Do not tease, taunt, mock, embarrass, or humiliate your classmates.
8. If you are being bullied, tell an adult right away.
9. If you know another student is being bullied, tell an adult right away.
10. If you bully another student, you will be disciplined, up to and including expulsion from school.

Cyber-bullying Prevention:

1. Do not write anything in an email, text, tweet, online post, or in any other electronic forum that you would not say out loud for everyone to hear. Remember that these written messages are out of your control once you send or post them, and they may continue to exist long after you have deleted your copy.
2. Follow the rules above for preventing bullying and apply them to electronic communications.
3. If you are being cyber-bullied, tell an adult right away.
4. If you know another student is being cyber-bullied, tell an adult right away.
5. If you engage in cyber-bullying, you will be disciplined up to and including expulsion from school.

Appendix C

STGRSD Summary for Parents/Guardians for Handbooks

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed an Act Relative to Bullying in Schools. This new law prohibited bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents.

This plan is updated to reflect M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O as amended by Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 and Sections 72-74 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of July 2013, which changed the definition of “perpetrator” to include “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.” The amendment also made the plan applicable to school staff, including but not limited to, the individual listed in the amended perpetrator definition.

These requirements are included in the district’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“the Plan”). The Plan includes the requirements of the law, and information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, and to respond to it when it occurs.

This Plan will be reviewed biennially by the Superintendent and/or her/his designee, as mandated by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (5) (d). Consultation will include, at a minimum, notice on the STGRSD website, and a public comment period prior to adoption.

Definition of Terms

In order to work as collaboratively and as efficaciously as possible and to prevent and intervene on all acts of bullying, it is essential for school personnel, students, parents or guardians, law enforcement agencies, and other interested parties to use common language.

Aggressor, as defined in M.G. L. c.71, §37O, is a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, and educator, administrators, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation towards a student.

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

1. Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
2. Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
3. Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
4. Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or

5. 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 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.

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

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

Prohibition against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds,
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place 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,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a school computer or over the Internet using a school computer),
- at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic devices, if the bullying 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.
- Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

Reporting Bullying

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the STGRSD has policies and procedures in place for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures will ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

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 must be recorded in writing. All employees are 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 and each school's telephone number.

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

School staff members must report immediately to the principal or his/her designee if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, and paraprofessionals.

When the school principal or his/her designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or designee determines that a violation of the district's anti-bullying policy has occurred he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Professional Development for School and District Staff

The STGRSD will provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

The content of such professional development shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally 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.

Problem Resolution System

A parent/guardian who wishes to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). The information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu, or individuals can call 781.338.3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Office of the Assistant Superintendent.

Appendix D

STGRSD Summary for Staff Handbooks

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed an Act Relative to Bullying in Schools. This new law prohibited bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents.

This plan is updated to reflect M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O as amended by Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 and Sections 72-74 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of July 2013, which changed the definition of “perpetrator” to include “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.” The amendment also made the plan applicable to school staff, including but not limited to, the individual listed in the amended perpetrator definition.

These requirements are included in the district’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“the shoPlan”). The Plan includes the requirements of the law, and information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, and to respond to it when it occurs.

This Plan will be reviewed biennially by the Superintendent and/or her/his designee, as mandated by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (5) (d). Consultation will include, at a minimum, notice on the STGRSD website, and a public comment period prior to adoption.

Definition of Terms

In order to work as collaboratively and as efficaciously as possible and to prevent and intervene on all acts of bullying, it is essential for school personnel, students, parents or guardians, law enforcement agencies, and other interested parties to use common language.

Aggressor, as defined in M.G. L. c.71, §37O, is a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, and educator, administrators, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation towards a student.

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

6. Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
7. Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
8. Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
9. Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or

10. 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 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.

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

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

Prohibition against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds,
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place 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,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a school computer or over the Internet using a school computer),
- at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic devices, if the bullying 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.

Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

Responsibility of Staff to Report Bullying

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the STGRSD has policies and procedures in place for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures will ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

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 must be recorded in writing. All employees are 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 and each school's telephone number.

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

School staff members must report immediately to the principal or his/her designee if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, and paraprofessionals.

When the school principal or his/her designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or designee determines that a violation of the district's anti-bullying policy has occurred he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Professional Development

The STGRSD will provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

The content of such professional development shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally 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.

Problem Resolution System

A parent/guardian who wishes to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). The information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu, or individuals can call 781.338.3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Office of the Assistant Superintendent.

APPENDIX E

INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. **Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:** _____

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. **Check whether you are the:** Target of the behavior Reporter (not the target)

3. **Check whether you are a:** Student _____ Grade/Age Staff member (specify role)
 Parent Administrator Other (specify)

Your contact information/telephone number: _____

4. **If student, state your school:** _____

5. **If staff member, state your school or work site:** _____

6. **Information about the incident:**

Name of Target (of behavior): _____

Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): _____

Date(s) of Incident(s): _____

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: _____

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____

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

Name: _____ Student Staff Other

Name: _____ Student Staff Other

Name: _____ Student Staff Other

8. **Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used.) Please use additional space on back, if necessary.**

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

9. **Signature of Person Filing this Report:** _____ **Date:** _____

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

10. **Form Given to:** _____ **Position:** _____ **Date:** _____

Signature _____ **Date Received:** _____

II. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____ Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

- Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ Date: _____
- Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____
- Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____

3. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor? Yes No
- If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? Yes No
- Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION? Yes No

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document, as needed)

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. **Bullying Determination Questions:**

Was there a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at the victim: YES NO If NO, then there is no finding of bullying. If YES, did that written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof:

	YES	NO
Cause physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Place the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or damage to his property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a hostile environment at school for the victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infringe on the rights of the victim at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

_____ If answers to all questions are NO then the conduct does not constitute bullying because it does not satisfy the state standard as defined by Massachusetts General Law c.71, §370.

If answers to any of the questions is yes, was the conduct repeated? Yes No

_____ If answers is YES, then the conduct constitutes bullying because it satisfies the "repeated" standard required by required by Massachusetts General Law c.71, §370.

_____ If answers is NO, then the conduct does not constitute bullying because it does not satisfy "repeated" standard required by required by Massachusetts General Law c.71, §370.

Did bullying occur: *(in order for the school to take action one of the following must be checked)*

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At school functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district;
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district;
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district and the act or acts in question: create a hostile environment at school for the target; infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Is the behavior an act of retaliation? Yes No

2. Finding of bullying or retaliation: Yes No

Bullying Incident documented as _____
 Retaliation Discipline referral only _____

3. Contacts:

Target's parent/guardian Date: _____ **Aggressor's parent/guardian** Date: _____
 Guidance Counselor Date: _____ **Law Enforcement** Date: _____

4. Action Taken:

Loss of Privileges **Detention** **Student Assistance Referral** **Suspension**
 Community Service **Education** **Other**

5. Describe Safety Planning:

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ **Initial and date when completed:** _____

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____ **Initial and date when completed:** _____

Report forwarded to Principal Date: _____ **Report forwarded to Superintendent** Date: _____

Signature and Title _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix F

Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District Safety Plan Contract Template

Date:

Staff member developing safety plan:

Name of Student:

Grade:

Brief Description of Incident:

Students Involved:

Strategies for the Safety Plan Contract

Strategy 1:

Strategy 2:

Strategy 3:

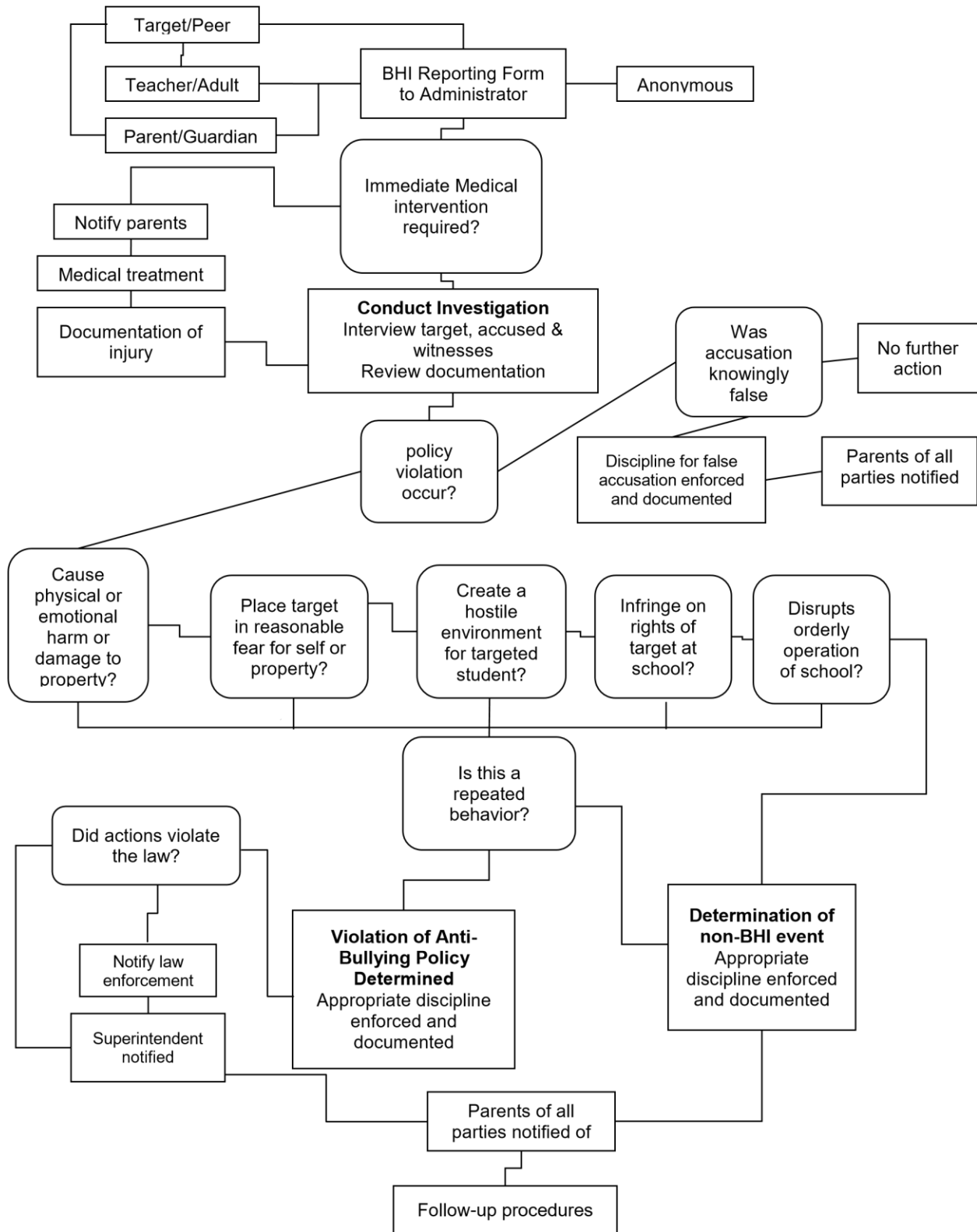
Student Responsibility:

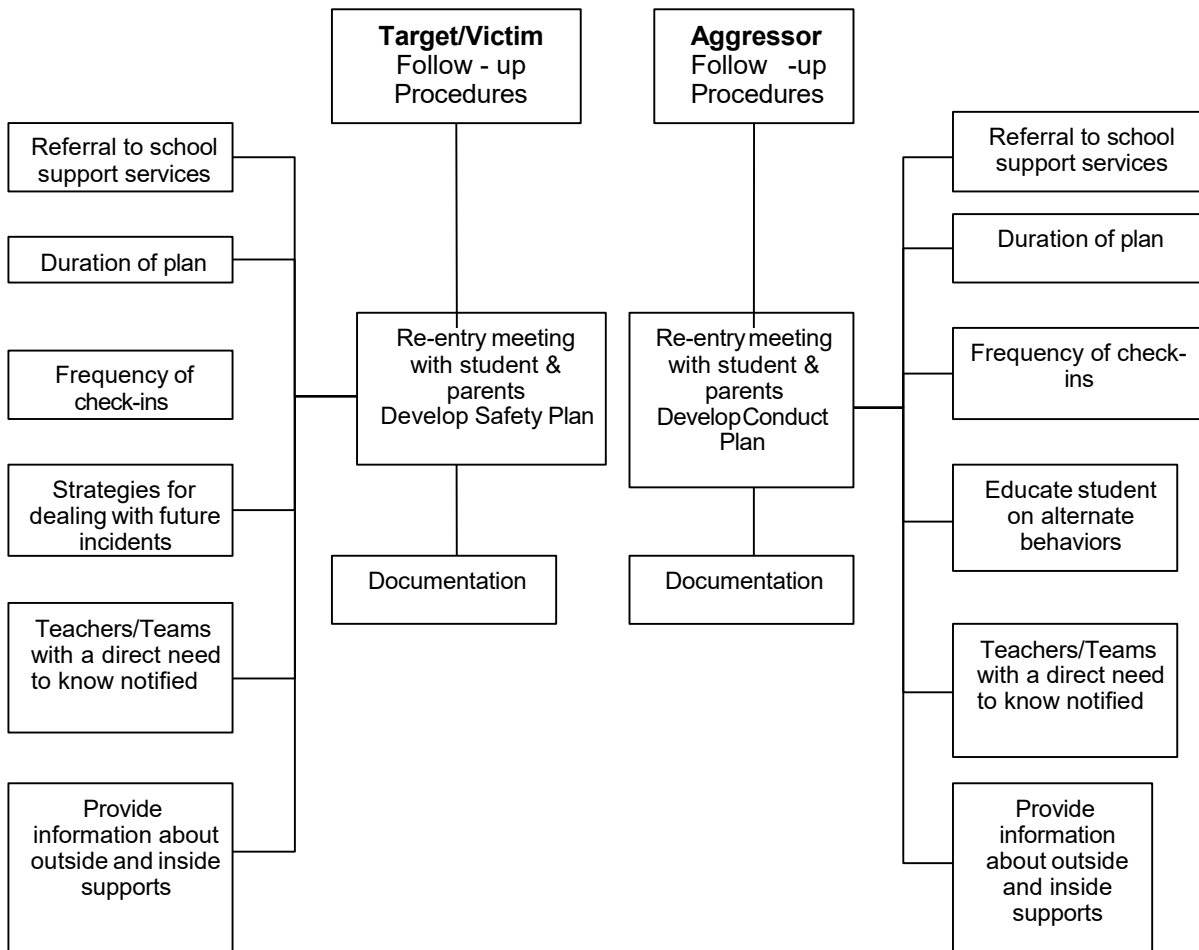
Parent Responsibility:

Principal or Designee Signature:		Date:	
Student Signature:		Date:	
Parent Signature:		Date:	

Appendix G

STGRSD Bullying/Harassment/Retaliation Flow Chart





Appendix H

List of School and Principal Contact Information

Southwick Regional School 93 Feeding Hills Road 413-569-6171	
Serena Shorter	Principal
Charles Jasak	Assistant Principal
Sean Rood	Assistant Principal
Powder Mill School 94 Powder Mill Road 413-569-5951	
Erin Carrier	Principal
Emma Rood	Assistant Principal
Woodland School 80 Powder Mill Road 413-569-6598	
Michael Pescitelli	Principal

Appendix I

STGSRD Chart of Oversight Tasks and Designees

Task	School Leader	District Leader
Receive bullying reports	Principal, her/his designee	Superintendent/designee
Collect and analyze building and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and measure improved outcomes	Principal, her/his designee Designated Teachers School Counselors	Superintendent Director of Student Services School Resource Officer
Create a process for recording and tracking incident reports and accessing information related to targets and aggressors	Principal, her/his designee	Superintendent
Plan ongoing professional development as required by law	Instructional Leadership Team	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction Director of Student Services Superintendent
Plan supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors	Principal, her/his designee School Counselors Designated Teachers Student Assistance Team	Director of Student Services Superintendent
Recommend and implement the curricula	Teachers Principals Student Assistance	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction Superintendent
Developing new or revise current policies and protocols including Internet Safety Policy and identify key personnel to oversee them	Principal, her/his designee Designated Teachers	Instructional Technology Specialist IT Director Superintendent School Committee
Amend and approve student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct	Principal	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction Superintendent School Committee
Lead parent and family engagement efforts and draft parent information materials	Parent Teacher Organizations School Councils Special Ed Parent Advisory Committee Principal, her/his designee	Director of Student Services Superintendent
Review and update Plan Biennially	Principal, her/his designee	Superintendent, or designee