

Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention Plan

WARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2025-2026

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I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Ware Public School District will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying. Ware Public Schools provides protection of all school community members without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, military service, union activity or genetics. In addition, all students are afforded the same protection regardless of their status under the law.

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, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics. The school or district 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.

II. GOALS

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. 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. This Plan will:

- comply with all applicable state law
- define what constitutes bullying, retaliation and/or harassment
- identify district response timelines and discipline for incidents that fall within the definitions outlined in this policy

III. DEFINITIONS

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

Bullying is defined as 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.

Bullying does not include elements of bias (as defined under: **Harassment**). It is also important to note the bullying and harassment can take place within the context of a dating relationship.

Cyber-bullying is defined as any willful and repeated harm inflicted through, but not limited to, Web pages, social networking sites, email, instant messaging or text messaging using computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. The following are examples of cyberbullying, when they are intentional and result in social-emotional harm and/or distress:

- Sending text messages over the Internet or using a cell phone or texting device or medium
- Posting text, images, audio, or video to a Web page
- Sending or posting text, images, audio, or video on or over the Internet or through a cell phone or electronic network, including social networking sites
- Sending a threatening, intimidating, graphic or sexually explicit picture or video via the Internet or using a cell phone or electronic network, including social networking site

Cyber-harassment is defined as any willful and repeated harm inflicted through, but not limited to, Web pages, social networking sites, email, instant messaging or text messaging using computers, cell phones and other electronic devices which is motivated by the target individual or individuals membership in a protected group, whether real or perceived.

Harassment is defined as unwelcome, intentional, unprovoked discriminatory behavior, toward an individual or individuals, motivated by membership (real or perceived) in a protected category including: race, color, religion, ethnicity/natural origin, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and age. Harassment includes **cyber-harassment** (see definition: Cyber-harassment).

Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Reporter is defined as a person reporting an incident under this policy who is a third party and not the recipient of the alleged behavior that violates the policy. Any member of the school community, including students and district/school staff, may be named the “aggressor” or “perpetrator” in a bullying report.

Retaliation is defined as any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a school community member directed against another school community member for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under this policy, or for taking action consistent with this policy.

School Community Member is defined as any student, district or school employee including but not limited to administrators, educators, paraprofessionals, advisors to paraprofessionals, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, school committee member, independent contractor, school volunteer, parent or legal guardian of a student, or a visitor on school premises or at a school-related or school sponsored function or activity.

Sexual harassment is defined in Massachusetts as: sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions or decisions regarding student evaluation or participation in school programs or activities (**quid pro quo** sexual harassment); or,
2. such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or school performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive environment (**hostile environment** sexual harassment).

Sexual harassment may occur between student-to-student, adult to student, student to adult, adult-to-adult, male to female, female to male, female to female, and/or male to male.

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

IV. POLICY SCOPE

Laws and Regulations:

The Department, districts and schools are required to address bullying prevention and intervention as a requirement of the [Act Relative to Bullying in Schools](#), the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying law (G.L. c. 71, §370 Chapter 92) that was passed in 2010. In 2013, the original legislation was amended with the passing of Chapter 86, [An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools - 2014](#).

Related state regulations and federal laws include:

- [Notification of Bullying or Retaliation Regulations](#) (603 CMR 49.00)
- [Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g](#) and [34 CFR Part 99](#)
- [Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00](#)

Any form of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying, and/or cyber-harassment is prohibited, whether in the classroom, on school premises, immediately adjacent to school premises, traveling to or from school, or at school-sponsored events, whether or not held on school premises.

“Traveling to or from school” includes on a school bus or other school related vehicle, at official school bus stops, and walking to or from school within a reasonable time before or after school hours. In short, any activity that is sponsored by the school or includes a significant school population.

Bullying, retaliation or harassment, including cyber-bullying and/or cyber-harassment, that is not conducted at locations noted above are covered by this policy if the incident results, or could result, in a substantial disruption of the school learning environment for one or more individuals and/or the orderly day to day operations of the school.

V. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIONS

Each member of the school community is responsible for immediate reporting of any observations of bullying, retaliation or harassment, or credible information that such an act has taken place.

Reports of bullying, retaliation or harassment incidents, including cyber-bullying and/or cyber-harassment, occurring outside the scope (see above) of the school/district will be investigated to determine if the incident(s) resulted in a potential or actual disruption of the school learning environment for one or more individuals and/or the orderly day to day operations of the school.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of both target(s) and alleged aggressor(s) of bullying, retaliation or harassment incidents, including cyber-bullying and/or cyber-harassment, will be notified of such incidents within a timeframe that will be set per the district’s procedures. Results of investigations of incidents will be communicated to parent(s)/guardian(s) of both targets and alleged aggressor s within a timeframe that will be set per the district’s procedures, and also within the restrictions of the Federal Educations Rights and Privacy Act. If additional time is required to conduct the investigation, this will be communicated to the parent/guardian (s). Every attempt will be made to complete the investigation in a timely fashion; however extenuating circumstances may inhibit the immediate response of the district. Notifications will continue to be made as the investigation is underway.

VI. DISTRICT PROCEDURES

The Superintendent, and/or their designee, will define the guidelines and procedures to implement this policy in the district’s “Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention Plan and Procedures”. The written plan and procedures developed by the Superintendent, and/or his/her designee, to enforce this policy shall comply with applicable laws, including without limitation the Federal Educations Rights and Privacy Act, as amended.

The plan shall provide for schools, at each level, appropriate procedures for reporting and investigating incidents of bullying, retaliation and/or harassment. Building Principals and/or Assistant Principals or their designee will be responsible for receiving and following up on reports. The procedures will include a reporting form that may be used by any school community member for all incidents and types of bullying, retaliation and/or harassment. The purpose of the reporting form is to trigger an investigation, which protects the safety of the target(s), bystanders, and/or concerned family/community members.

The plan will also specify procedures, in conjunction with the district’s memorandum of understanding with the Ware Police Department and Eastern Hampshire District Attorney’s office, for notifying local law enforcement where criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Within the requirements of FERPA, the guidelines and procedures to implement the Bullying and Harassment Policy shall include a specific amount of time within which parents will be informed of a complaint and a specific amount of time for investigations to be completed.

Additionally, the plan will include procedures for communicating with parent/guardians, including dissemination of prevention information; a professional development plan for all staff; and instruction for students at all school levels in social-emotional learning and violence prevention.

VII. CONSEQUENCES

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying, retaliation and/or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion as outlined in the schools’ Codes of Conduct.

Retaliation or threats of retaliation in any form designed to intimidate the target of bullying and/or harassment, those who are witnesses to such behavior or those who are investigating such behavior will be subject to discipline as outlined in the Ware Public Schools Discipline Matrix located in the Student Handbook.

Acts of bullying or harassment allegedly committed by adult members (including teachers, administrators, staff members, other school personnel, parents/guardians, community partners, or other visitors to the school) of the school community will be reported to school administrators and/or the Superintendent’s office, for investigation by the District Civil Rights Officer and consequences, in accordance with applicable procedures, including appropriate legal actions.

Retaliation or threats of retaliation by adult members (including teachers, administrators, staff members, other school personnel, parents/guardians, community partners, or other visitors to the school) of the Ware Public Schools community in any form designed to intimidate the target of bullying or harassment, those who are witnesses or those investigating an incident of bullying or harassment, will be subject to additional consequences, in accordance with appropriate procedures.

VIII. OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Superintendent presented the district’s initial “Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan” to the School Committee in December of 2010. The plan is posted and updated as necessary on the Ware Public Schools website. In addition, relevant sections of the plan including the Ware Public Schools bullying policy and necessary procedures are included in the student/staff handbook that is distributed annually. The plan shall be reviewed and revised by the district administrative team every two years and such revisions will subsequently be presented to the School Committee. The plan is made available in Spanish and any other additional language upon request to a district administrator.

The Superintendent, and/or his/her designee, will report on the total number of complaints, investigations, verified acts and any trends of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying and/or cyber harassment district-wide at least annually to the School Committee.

At least once every four years beginning with 2015-2016 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

IX. OTHER LEGAL REMEDIES

Any school community member may also pursue legal remedies or other avenues of recourse, including, but not limited to, filing a complaint with:

- The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

X. Resources from State and Federal Agencies

- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:
 - [Office of Student and Family Support](#)
 - [Systems for Student Success \(SfSS\)](#)
 - The Department's *Views of Climate and Learning Survey Project* was developed per legislative requirement to survey students at least once every four years to assess school climate and prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in schools. Information can be found on the Office of Planning & Research's [Views of Climate and Learning Survey Project \(VOCAL\)](#) page.
 - School districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools are required to collect and report data on bullying. Information is reported annually through [the School Safety and Discipline Report \(SSDR\)](#) and [Data and Accountability](#).
 - [Commissioner's Memo: Bullying and Harassment - Office of Civil Rights](#)
 - [Commissioner's Memo: Implementation Timelines for Bullying Prevention and Intervention Planning](#)
 - [Commissioner's Memo: Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O](#)
 - [Commissioner's Memo: Bullying Prevention and Intervention in Public and Non-Public Schools](#)
- Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General:
 - [Attorney General's Guidance to Schools on Hate and Bias Incidents](#)
 - [Cell Phone and Social Media in Schools - A Toolkit for School Leaders and Communities](#)
- [Massachusetts Trial Court Law Libraries](#) The library posts links to state laws and other resources on bullying and cyberbullying.

- Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Child & Youth Violence Prevention Programs: [Bullying Prevention | Mass.gov](#)
- USDE Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Bullying Prevention Resources:
 - A [2014 dear colleague letter](#) by the USDE Office of Civil Rights.
 - A [2000 dear colleague letter](#) by the OCR and OSERS, which explained that bullying based on disability may violate civil rights laws enforced by OCR as well as interfere with a student's receipt of special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
 - A [fact sheet for parents](#) on schools' obligations under federal law to address bullying. The fact sheet is also available in [Spanish](#).
 - [StopBullying](#) is the US Department of Education's website which provides useful information on bullying prevention and remedies.
 - Seeking help from [OCR](#). The office investigates complaints of disability discrimination at schools. To learn more about federal civil rights laws or how to file a complaint, contact OCR at 800-421-3481 or email OCR@ed.gov. [Fill out a complaint form](#).

XI. LEGAL REFERENCES

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014

Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 - AN ACT RELATIVE TO BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

M.G.L. 71:37H - STUDENT CONDUCT

M.G.L. CH. 269, S.17. - CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

M.G.L. Chapter 71, S. 37H and 37L; M.G.L. Chapter 76, S. 16 and 17; Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993 and Chapter 766 Regulations, S. 338.0 also Mass. Dept. Of Education, Advisory Opinion on STUDENT DISCIPLINE

M.G.L. 71:37H - STUDENT HANDBOOKS

M.G.L. 71:55C and Acts of 1985c 614 Sec 1

Board of Education 603 CMR 36:00 - SCHOOL SAFETY

Title II, ADA of 1992

Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972

Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375

Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975

M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)

M.G.L. 76:5; Amended 1993

M.G.L.76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)

Board of Education Chapter 622 Regulations Pertaining to Access to Equal Educational

Opportunity, adopted 6/24/75, as amended 10/24/78

Board of Education 603 CMR 2600

Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 3/28/78

RELATING TO DISCRIMINATION

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended 45

Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission

Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et. seq. (Title IX)

Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

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 37H½, 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.

XI. INTERVENTION AND PROCEDURES

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

Any member of the school community who wishes to make a complaint regarding bullying, retaliation, and/or harassment behavior can find a universal reporting form in each school's main office, guidance office and nurse's office. The form can also be found online for download at <http://www.wareps.org/>. Forms will be available in Spanish and other languages as needed and a developmentally appropriate form for use with young children is also available. Forms should be returned to the person designated on the form to receive them. An online reporting tool is also available through the BRIM Incident Management System at <https://app.antibullyingsoftware.com/report-bullying/ma/ware/ware+public+schools>.

Anyone who wishes to report bullying, retaliation, or harassment behavior anonymously may do so by filling out the standard reporting form without including their name. Anonymous information will not be used as evidence for disciplinary proceedings but may trigger a further investigation into the allegation.

Any school community member who retaliates against another for reporting bullying/harassment, or who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying/harassment or retaliation, shall be subject to disciplinary action.

B. Investigation of Bullying or Retaliation

A complaint or incident of bullying, retaliation, or harassment behavior may be reported to administration either on the reporting form, or on an existing office referral form. If a complaint is verbal in nature, the administrator will ask the complainant / witness to fill out a reporting form.

Investigations are coordinated by the building administration. In all schools, the reports will be sent to the Assistant Principal. Investigations will be carried out by the building administrator or his/her designee. In many cases, a team of individuals may be called on to assist in the process.

There are several circumstances under which an incident may be referred to the District Student Services Director for investigation. These include:

- When a parent/guardian/student feels the situation is unresolved at the building level
- When the incident involves the administrator or other staff in a building who are responsible for investigations
- When the situation remains unresolved even after investigation and corrective action (at administrators' discretion but generally meaning there are two or more separate and substantiated incidents regarding a single person or group of persons)
- Adult to adult behavior (at the building administrator's discretion)

Investigation of the complaint will be documented on the "Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form". This form will help to determine if a civil rights/anti-bullying violation occurred and will document the type of violation. It will also document the corrective actions and/or disciplinary action(s) taken as well as notification of all relevant parties. All completed forms are sent to the District Equity Coordinator. It is recommended that the building Administration check with the District Director of Student Services before concluding an investigation to determine if the person(s) involved have been the subject of a previous complaint in another building.

Investigation of the complaint will be completed within 1-5 school days whenever possible, and if additional time is required to conduct the investigation, this will be communicated to the parent/guardian (s).

If the accusation(s) against the aggressor(s) prove to be substantiated, the investigator's report shall:

- i. provide for reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, corrective action intended to end the discrimination, harassment or bullying and prevent it from recurring, including appropriate disciplinary action as set forth by the Ware Public Schools Discipline Matrix;
- ii. document, as needed, reasonable steps to address the effects of the discrimination, harassment or bullying on the complainant; and,
- iii. document, as needed, reasonable steps to protect the target, witness, or informant from retaliation as a result of communicating the complaint.

Other actions to be considered include the following:

- i. have an educational discussion with the bully/cyber-bully and with bystanders. Discuss the dangers of such behavior and the fact that everyone is now aware of the situation. If relevant, discuss future legal problems the child may incur if they continue with these behaviors.
- ii. immediately inform bullies/cyber-bullies and bystanders about the consequences for bullying or cyber-bullying in school. If the alleged aggressor (s) engage in any bullying or cyberbullying in school, follow through on consequences immediately.

C. Notification

Parents/guardians of any students involved in a complaint will be notified by administration of the complaint within 24 hours of receipt.

The principal or designee must immediately notify the local law enforcement agency, per the Memorandum of Understanding (between the Ware Public Schools, the Ware Police Department, and the Northwestern District Attorney's Office), when criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor(s).

If the reported incident involves a student from more than one school district, charter school, nonpublic school, special education day or residential school or collaborative program, the Principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal/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.

The Principal or designee will promptly notify the parent/guardian of the aggressor(s) of the disciplinary action taken.

The Principal or designee will promptly notify the parent/guardian of the target, to the extent consistent with the state and federal law, of the actions taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation. Note that this last element does NOT permit the school to release information that is protected by existing confidentiality laws.

The building Administration will communicate to the original reporter of the behavior, when not directly involved and when a name has been provided, and within the confines of confidentiality, that his or her complaint has been investigated and action has been taken.

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.

D. Problem Resolution System

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. Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Public School Monitoring. That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent’s office.

E. Responses to Bullying or Retaliation

Teaching appropriate behavior through skill-building: Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Safety plans: Each school building administrator, in conjunction with the building Student Support Teams, will establish a safety plan for target (s) of bullying/harassment. The plan should include the following elements:

- selection of a “safe zone;” an area identified by the target where he or she can go to get help from a trusted adult. Each building in the District has a School Adjustment Counselor that is available for any student in need.
- when possible, the use of Ware Public Schools email will be used to inform all relevant adults (teachers, coaches, bus drivers, counselors and other support staff) of the situation between the aggressor(s) and target(s). This will provide documentation and time/date stamping to insure timely notification has been implemented.
- a plan for monitoring of less structured areas of the school environment, such as buses, lunchroom and playground and locker rooms.
- follow-up with parents/guardians of all involved to inform them of actions being taken.
- assessment of effectiveness of the above interventions on a regular basis. School climate surveys will be administered by the School Council in each building.
- 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.

F. Requirements for Students with Disabilities

For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, the IEP Team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (See M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by chapter 92 of the acts of 2010.)

Whenever the IEP Team evaluation indicates that a student’s disability affects social skills development, or when the student’s disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the IEP must address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (See M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by chapter 92 of the acts of 2010.)

G. Referral to Outside Services

The Ware Public School District makes referrals for students and families to outside services based on the individual needs of students. Students have access to counseling and service information. This assistance helps students and families access appropriate and timely services. The Ware Public School District will comply with relevant laws and policies. Ware Public Schools will make the appropriate referrals to outside services for any student whether considered a target, aggressor or the appropriate family members of the involved students.

XII. PREVENTION

A. Needs Assessment

Initial and periodic needs assessments will be conducted via the following methods:

- Surveying students/staff/families on school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools
- Collecting and analyzing building specific data on bullying and harassment behavior

B. Professional Development

1. Initial staff training: Staff and Administrators received initial training on 3/10/2010 by Curtis Frick, Assistant District Attorney for Northwestern District Court. This training was comprehensive and provided a baseline of expectations for the new guidelines being imposed in the law.
2. Annual staff notice and training: Each school year (SY), opening day professional Development will be provided to alert and train staff about the dangers and warning signs of bullying to include the process for reporting and requirements. This is an attendance required event.
3. Ongoing professional development opportunities: The content of such professional development is to include, but 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 cyber- bullying; and
 - vi. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

C. Student Education

1. Activities, programming and curricula that support a safe and respectful school culture:

Social Emotional Curricula:

- Responsive Classroom (SMK - school-wide)
- Woven Word Program (Kindergarten)
- Second Step (Pre-K through Grade 5)
- All Stars Program (Grade 6)
- Steps to Respect (Grade 3)
- After School Bullying Prevention Group (WJHS)
- Bullying Survey (WHS)
- Social Skills Curriculum (Grade 7 English)
- Social Thinking (Pre-K through SP)

Evidence-Based Curricula

- [Al's Pals](#) (PreK): A social emotional learning curriculum designed specifically for PreK
- [Character Strong](#): A PreK–12 multi-tiered curricula to improve behavior, increase safety, and support mental health
- [Olweus Bullying Prevention Program](#): A K–12 bullying prevention and positive school climate program (Clemson University)
- [PATHS Program](#) (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies): A PreK–5 SEL program focused on character development and violence prevention
- [Peacebuilders](#): A violence prevention curriculum and professional development program for PreK–12
- [RULER Approach](#): A PreK–12 SEL curriculum focused on emotional skills and positive school climate
- [Second Step](#): A PreK–12 curriculum program focused on social emotional learning skill building (e.g. empathy, problem solving, goal setting) with additional K–5 [bullying prevention units](#)

Prevention Curricula:

- Good Character Board (SMK – school-wide)
- SMK Superstars Award (SMK – school-wide)
- Lunch Bunch (SMK – school wide)
- Lunch Groups (WMS – school-wide)
- Character Theme Months (WMS – school-wide)
- Bullying Prevention Presentation and Internet Safety by District Attorney's Office (9/10/2010 (WJHS)

Other Activities:

- Peer Mediation (Grades K-12)
- Student Leadership Council (Grade 6)
- Climate Council (WMS Faculty)
- Ware Domestic Violence Task Force (WMS and WJSHS – school-wide)

2. Internet Education

The Attorney General’s Office has released advisories to parents regarding student access to social networking sites on the internet and cyber-bullying. These advisories provide parents with suggestions for educating children to the dangers associated with these sites, including the phenomenon of cyber bullying. The Ware Public School District is committed to protecting students from exposure to inappropriate content on internet sites. Student access to internet sites while they are in school is monitored on a daily basis. Sites that are not monitored effectively by the site authors and contain inappropriate content and/or language are blocked by the school.

The struggle to provide students with access to rich sources of content for use in their classes while protecting them from exposure to inappropriate content, stalking, and cyber-bullying is an ongoing one. We will continue to monitor student access to internet sites and will block access to sites that contain inappropriate or potentially injurious content. We urge parents to read the attached advisories and pay close attention to the sites that your children are accessing at home. The internet is a powerful educational tool that should be monitored closely by both parents and schools.

D. Collaboration with Families

As required, the Ware Public Schools have included provisions for informing parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the district and schools including:

- i. how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan;
- ii. the dynamics of bullying; and
- iii. online safety and cyber-bullying.

Parents and guardians must also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians.

E. Notification Requirements

Each year the Ware Public Schools will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used in each of the schools. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. The 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 via School Handbooks. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in School Handbooks and on individual school websites and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The district will also post the Plan and related information on its website. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

Under the law, schools are required to inform families and guardians about bullying prevention efforts. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans are required to be posted to district websites. Schools must also notify families and guardians of targets of bullying of the availability of the Department's Problem

Resolution System and assist these parents and guardians in understanding the problem resolution process.

Complaints regarding a school or district not responding appropriately to bullying allegations may be investigated through the [Problem Resolution System Office](#). Emails can be sent to DESECompliance@mass.gov or individuals can call 781-338-3700.

APPENDIX A

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form

All educators, administrators, staff and students share responsibility for monitoring and reporting incidents of bullying/intimidation within the school community.

Bullying is defined as the victimization, intimidation or mistreatment by others in the school community, based on unequal physical, psychological or social power or perceived power. Bullying does include cyber-bullying and may constitute a crime. Bullying includes behaviors that can cause physical and/or emotional harm, are unwelcome, intentional, and usually repeated. Bullying can be verbal, physical, direct (face-to-face) and/or indirect (e.g. through another person, in writing, etc.). Bullying generally involves a pattern of conduct that is directed at another person, rather than a single, isolated incident. Bullying does not include elements of bias (as defined under: Harassment).

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 Staff member (specify role) _____

Parent Administrator Other (specify) _____

Your contact information/telephone number: () _____

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

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: _____

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: _____

Where did the incident occur? (check all that apply)	What happened during the incident? (check all that apply)		Did a physical injury result from this incident? (check one)
<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus/Stop <input type="checkbox"/> To/From School <input type="checkbox"/> Text/hone/internet/Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> School sponsored activity <input type="checkbox"/> Event off school property <input type="checkbox"/> School Grounds <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Taunting <input type="checkbox"/> Threat <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation <input type="checkbox"/> Stalking <input type="checkbox"/> Theft <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Retaliation <input type="checkbox"/> Humiliation <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Contact <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, medical attention required <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, medical attention NOT required <hr/> Student absent from school as a result of incident? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Number of days absent:

Describe additional 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

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation: YES NO
- Bullying Incident documented as _____
- Retaliation Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

- Target's parent/guardian Date: _____ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____
- District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: _____ Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

- Loss of Privileges Detention Suspension
- Community Service Education Other _____

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

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

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

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

(If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Therapeutic Resources and Partnerships

The following is a list of locally available counseling venues for assistance in therapy or guidance: (the list is arranged by distance to school and in no way is an endorsement of these services.)

Behavioral Health Network

(4.6 miles)

96 South St.

Ware, MA 01082

413 967 6241

The West Brookfield Counseling Center

(5.9 miles)

62 Ware St.

West Brookfield MA 01585

508 867 4451

Griswold Center

(10.4 miles)

40 Wright St.

Palmer MA 01069

413 283 7651

If necessary, the school can provide you with a release of information form so that we may contact or provide information to the service provider at your request. Please see your guidance office for the form.

APPENDIX C

Action Steps for Educators to Take to Stop Bullying

Use this chart as a starting point to help participants in your staff training identify specific actions they can take.

To stop bullying before it starts, we can:	If we hear or see evidence of bullying, we can:	If we see or learn of a pattern of bullying, we can:	We should ask questions when we see:
Adopt and publicize an anti-bullying policy that includes clear procedures and consequences.	Stop the bullying immediately.	Bring staff together to discuss the behavior and agree on a unified course of action.	Ripped or damaged clothing.
Provide school-wide training.	Offer guidance to bystanders on how to intervene appropriately.	Let an administrator know immediately.	Students who isolate themselves from others.
Create a safe and nurturing environment where all can learn.	Take note of problem areas and work towards making them safer for all.	Work towards a prevention strategy so that patterns will change.	Students who are always unhappy or typically happy and suddenly not.

APPENDIX D

Additional Resources for Bullying Prevention

Additional resources that may address evidence-based bullying prevention and intervention efforts as well as support social-emotional learning in schools include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [About Bullying | Youth Violence Prevention | CDC](#)
- Center on PBIS: [Bully Prevention in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(BP-PBIS\)](#). The website provides tools, publications, presentations, and videos.
- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](#): The Center is focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5.
- [Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#): CASEL's mission is to make evidence-based SEL and integral part of education from preschool through high school.
- Cyberbullying Research Center - [How to Identify, Prevent and Respond](#)
- [Edutopia](#): This website focuses on what works in education and is dedicated to improving the K-12 learning process.
- [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
- The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments: [Bullying/Cyberbullying | Safe Supportive Learning \(ed.gov\)](#)
- [National School Climate Center, National School Climate Standards](#): The Center promotes positive and sustained school climate: a safe, supportive environment that nurtures social and emotional, ethical, and academic skills.
- Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center: [PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center](#)
- [Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development \(SECD\)Lab](#). The SECD Lab guides schools-based efforts on prevention, social and emotional learning, social decision making and social problem solving, violence prevention, and character development.
- [Search Institute](#): This Institute partners with organizations to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development, relationships, and advances equity.
- The University of Colorado Boulder: [Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development](#)
- [University of Illinois at Chicago: Social Emotional Learning Research Group](#): The group's primary focus is the group focuses on school, family, and community approaches to enhance students' social, emotional, and academic learning.

Bully Bust is an awareness campaign designed to reduce bullying in schools by teaching students and adults how to stand up to bullying and promote upstander behavior. An upstander is someone who witnesses bully behavior and does something about it.

[Bully Police USA](#)

This watchdog organization advocates for bullied children and provides links to state anti-bullying laws, along with a rating of each state law's effectiveness.

[Committee for Children](#)

The Committee for Children develops evidence-based bullying, child abuse and violence prevention education curricula that teach social-emotional skills to children, families and educators.

[youth.GOV](#)

A clearinghouse site for information prepared by the federal government to help prevent and address bullying in communities.

[Gay Straight Alliance \(GSA\) for Safe Schools](#)

This Wisconsin-based organization offers programs, trainings, and resources to make middle schools and high schools safe for all students, including LGBT youths.

[GLSEN: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network](#)

Through national programs including the Day of Silence and No Name-Calling Week, GLSEN strives to assure that each member of every school community is respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

[National Center for Bullying Prevention](#)

Programs and resources for teens, parents and schools, including information on National Bullying Prevention Month (October), online surveys and a digital petition. Teens Against Bullying offers engaging activities and strategies for teens to combat bullying.

[National Education Association \(NEA\)](#)

This site provides a Diversity Tool Kit, links to anti-bullying resources (including a downloadable Safe Zone poster), and a school employee's guide to LGBT issues.

[Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\)](#)

Tools to create safe schools, a training program, and updates on safe-schools legislation pending in Congress and advice for supporting LGBT parents of school-aged children.

[Safe Schools Coalition](#)

This public-private partnership aims to reduce bias-based bullying and violence in schools across the nation by raising awareness among students, educators and parents. Also includes content on law and public policy; Spanish-language resources; and classroom materials

["The Secret to Stopping a Bully?"](#)

This *Boston Globe Sunday Magazine* article examines anti-bullying programs, with a focus on bystander training.

[Stop Bullying Now](#)

This interactive Web site offers resources for children (including cartoons and Webisodes) and adults (including strategies for bullying awareness, prevention and intervention).

[Learning for Justice](#)

Classroom activities, professional-development resources and free teaching kits to fight bias, reduce prejudice and promote tolerance and understanding of differences. Below are a few activities to reduce bullying:

APPENDIX E

Curriculum Resources and Materials

Books for Adults and Teachers:

[The Bully Free Classroom](#), over 100 tips and strategies for teachers K – 8, Dr. Allan L. Beane

[Steps to Implementing a Bully Free Program](#), (A Workbook for Planning Teams / Committees)

[It is Time to be Bully Free!](#), an Anti-Bullying Guidebook for School Leaders, Dr. Richard A. Spurling

Too Good for Violence Program, Mendez Foundation

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, provided by ARP Phoenix

Prevent Bullying at Your School! No – Bullying Program for Grades K – 8, from Hazelden, provided by ARP Phoenix

[The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander](#), by Barbara Coloroso

[Bullies and Victims: Helping Your Child Through the Schoolyard Battlefield](#), by SuEllen Fried, and Paul Fried

[Bullyproof: A Teacher’s Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students](#), by Nan Stein

[Bully-Proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools](#), by Carla Garrity, Kathryn Jens, William Porter, Nancy Sager, and Cam Short-Camilli

[Great Peacemakers True Stories From Around the World](#), by Ken Beller and Heather Chase

[Childhood Bullying and Teasing](#), Dorothea M. Ross

[Tackling Bullying in Your School](#), by Sonia Sharp and Peter K. Smith

[Quit It! A Teacher’s Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Students in Grade K – 3](#), by Merle Froschl

Reducing School Violence through Conflict Resolution, by David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson

Books for Children:

Bailey the Big Bully, by Lizi Boyd (K – Grade 3)

Best Enemies Again by Kathleen Leverich (Grades 2 – 5)

Bootsie Barker Bites by Barbara Bottner (PK – Grade 3)

Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain, by Trevor Romain (Grades 3 – 8)

Bully, by Janine Amos (K – Grade 4)

The Bully Buster Book, by John William Yee (Grades 7 – 9)

Bully on the Bus, by Carl W. Bosch (Grades 2 – 6)

Bully Trouble, by Joanna Cole (PK – Grade 3)

Cliques, Phonies, and Other Baloney, by Trevor Romain (Grades 3 – 8)

The 18th Emergency, by Betsy Byard (Grades 4 – 7)

Fighting Invisible Tigers, by Earl Hipp (Grades 6 – 12)

How to Handle Bullies, Teasers, and Other Meanies, by Kate Cohen-Posey (Grades 6 – 10)

The Kid's Guide to Working Out Conflicts, by Naomi Drew (Grades 5 – 10)

Make Someone Smile and 40 More Ways to Be a Peaceful Person, by July Lalli

Stick Up for Yourself! Every Kid's Guide to Person Power and Positive Self-Esteem, by Gershen Kaufman (Grades 3 – 7)

Teen Esteem, by Pat Palmer (Grades 7 – 12)

What Do You Stand For? For Teens, by Barbara A. Lewis (Grades 3 - 7)

What Do You Think? A Kid's Guide to Dealing with Daily Dilemmas, by Linda Schwartz (Grades 3 –7)

What Would You Do? A Kid's Guide to Tricky and Sticky Situations, by Linda Schwartz (Grades 3-7)

Why is Everybody Always Picking on Me: A Guide to Handling Bullies by Terrence Webster-Doyle

Videos:

Anger, Rage and You:

Techniques for dealing with anger before it get out of control. (Grades 5 - 9) (23 mins)

<https://nimcoinc.com/>

Bridging Racial Divisions:

Explores how racial division affects everyone. Triggers to violence are examined. (Grades 6 – 12) (30 mins) <https://www.at-risk.com/>

Broken Toy:

Addresses the physical and emotional harm that bullying causes. (Grades 3 – 7) (25 mins) www.educationalmedia.com

Bully Smart:

Teaches students to say no to negative peer pressure and get away from a bully without fighting. (K – Grade 5) (31 mins) <https://nimcoinc.com/>

Coping with Fighters, Bullies, and Troublemakers:

Offers special techniques for coping with disruptive classmates. Teaches students how to avoid being a victim and when to ask for help. (Grades 6 – 12) (22 mins) <https://nimcoinc.com/>

Disrespect, Rudeness, and Teasing:

Helps students learn what being disrespectful and rude tells us about a person, and why teasing is never a good solution. Learn how to disagree without being rude. (Grades 6 – 12) (22 mins) <https://nimcoinc.com/>

Don't Pick On Me!

Examines the dynamics behind teasing and models effective responses to being harassed. (Grades 3 – 8) (20 mins) <https://nimcoinc.com/>

How to Cope with School Violence:

Teaches students how to cope with violent confrontations in or around school. Effective ways to avoid violence. (6 – 12) (17 mins) www.nimcoinc.com

How to Resolve Power Struggles:

Students learn the best way to handle power struggles with siblings, parents and teachers, and how not to let bullies and troublemakers take advantage of them. (6 – 12) (18 mins) <https://nimcoinc.com/>

Other Materials:

Anger Management: Mad Me:

An activity book to help children learn to identify and handle feelings of anger. (K – Grade 2) <https://nimcoinc.com/>

Anger Management: From Mad to Worse:

An activity book to teach students positive ways to handle anger. (Grades 3 – 4) <https://nimcoinc.com/>

It's Not Okay to Bully:

Video and coloring book suggests ways to prevent bullying behaviors, including knowing when to stand up for yourself and when to tell an adult. (K – Grade 3) www.nimcoinc.com

The Anti-Bullying Game:

This game is intended to help both victims and bullies understand what causes bullying behavior and help them learn to interact more effectively. (Grades 1 – 10) www.taylorandfrancisgroup.com

Beyond Hate:

Two-tape set explores the origins and dimensions of hate. (6 – 12) www.adl.org

Source: Bristol County Sheriff's Office

Regulatory Authority:

The Department, districts and schools are required to address bullying prevention and intervention as a requirement of the [Act Relative to Bullying in Schools](#), the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying law (G.L. c. 71, §370 Chapter 92) that was passed in 2010. In 2013, the original legislation was amended with the passing of Chapter 86, [An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools - 2014](#).

Related state regulations and federal laws include:

- [Notification of Bullying or Retaliation Regulations](#) (603 CMR 49.00)
- [Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g](#) and [34 CFR Part 99](#)
- [Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00](#)

State Requirements:

M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37H, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010. M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370(e)(1) & (2). M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370(d), as amended.

Federal Requirements (IDEA-97)

Adoption Date: December 8, 2010

Revision Date: December 9, 2010

April 27, 2016

August 27, 2016

August 20, 2017

January 18, 2018

August 19, 2019

November 26, 2019

February 20, 2020

August 19, 2021

August 1, 2022

August 2025

Last Date Reviewed: October 2025