

# Swansea Public Schools

## Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan 2021-2022

*An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010*, requires school leaders to create and implement strategies to prevent bullying, and to address bullying promptly and effectively when it occurs

Requirements of this legislation are identified in, M.G.L.c.71, § 370.

Other provisions amend the state’s special education law, M.G.L.c.71B: and the student handbook requirements of M.G.L.c.71, § 37H, 37H-1/2 and 37H-3/4.

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## I. LEADERSHIP

- A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. Swansea Public Schools engaged its administrators, teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, community representatives, parents/guardians and local law enforcement in its initial development and implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan through the following activities.
- “Preparing For the New Bullying Prevention Law” - June 18, 2010 - Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology – Massachusetts DESE – MARC Bridgewater State University
  - Approval of amendments to handbook and development of the ‘Plan’ by School Councils at all our district schools.
  - Parent/Guardian - Faculty/Staff - Student Surveys
  - Parent/Guardian – Community Information Night - October 26, 2011 at Joseph Case Junior High School.
  - “Train the Trainer” – MARC-Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, yearly recertification. Bullying & Cyber Bullying Prevention Certified Staff:  
Mr. Robert Silveira – Principal of Joseph Case Junior High School  
Mr. William Courville – Principal of M. Hoyle Elementary School
  - Annual training continues to be provided by certified staff via Bullying Intervention and Prevention Faculty and Staff Training Video.
- B. Assessing needs and resources.  
Swansea Public Schools Administration and Building Administrators develop strategies and implementation plans specific to the needs of their buildings and stakeholders based upon ongoing review of bullying reports and incidents. The Superintendent is identified as the District Coordinator of all anti-bullying efforts.

Review of bullying data will continue to prompt the revision and development of policies for:  
Bullying, Cyber-bullying;  
Student Computer Network / Internet User Agreement;  
Faculty and Staff Computer Network / Internet User Agreement (*See Appendices*); and,  
any new policies needed.

- C. Planning and oversight. Identification of school or district leaders’ responsibilities.
- 1) Receiving reports on bullying:

- Joseph Case High School	Principal, Mr. Brian McCann Assistant Principal, Mr. Christopher Costa
- Joseph Case Junior High School	Principal, Mr. Robert Silveira Assistant Principal, Mr. Gregory Kelley
- E.S. Brown Elementary School	Principal, Ms. Wendy Williams
- J.G. Luther Elementary School	Principal, Mr. Sean Scanlon
- M. Hoyle Elementary School	Principal, Mr. William Courville
- Gardner Elementary School	Principal, Mr. Nicholas Overy
  - 2) Collecting and analyzing data to assess present problems and measure improved outcomes:
    - Building and Individual Schools: Building Administrators (See Section I-C1)
    - District: Superintendent, Mr. John J. Robidoux
  - 3) Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports and accessing information related to targets and aggressors:
    - Recording, documenting – Building-based Aspen/X2 Data Management System, Building Administrators (See Section I-C1)
    - Tracking incident reports for District- District base Tracking database and documentation – Swansea Public Schools: Director of Finance and Technology, Mrs. Randi Arruda

Superintendent, Mr. John J. Robidoux

- 4) Professional development planning:  
Superintendent, Mr. John J. Robidoux  
Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Elizabeth White
- 5) Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors:
  - Building Administrators (See section I-C1)
  - Joseph Case High School, Director of Guidance, Mrs. Karen Fisher
  - School Adjustment Counselors:
    - Joseph Case High School: Mrs. Erin Nientimp and Mr. Keith Mello
    - Joseph Case Junior High School: Ms. Tanya Provost
    - Elementary Schools: Mrs. Kacie Martel, Mrs. Rebecca Platt, Mrs. Megan Silva, Mrs. Kyla Maderios
- 6) Choosing and implementing the curricula that the district will use:
  - Superintendent, Mr. John J. Robidoux
  - Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Elizabeth White
  - Coordinator of Health and Physical Education K-12, Mr. Jeffrey Hetu
- 7) Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the 'Plan'. Including an internet safety policy and designating staff to be in charge of implementation:
  - Policy sub-committee – members are identified and approved annually by the School Committee.
  - Building Administrators & School Councils
  - Staff designation and implementation - Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent
- 8) Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct:
  - Building Administrators
  - Each individual School Council
- 9) Leading parent and family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials:
  - Superintendent, Mr. John J. Robidoux
  - Building Administrators
- 10) Reviewing and updating the 'Plan' each year or more frequently:
  - Superintendent, Mr. John J. Robidoux
  - Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Elizabeth White
  - Building Administrators

D. Developing priority statements. Swansea Public Schools is committed to preventing, harassment, discrimination, bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation within its schools and extended environments. The District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. The rights of all individuals to receive a free public education devoid of discrimination and harassment in any form are a priority of Swansea Public Schools. The district's administration, faculty and all service providers will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation in our school buildings; on school grounds or in school related activities. We will respond promptly and consistently to all reports for such discrimination, harassment, bullying or retaliation. The district/schools' response will include prompt and thorough investigation of all reports and complaints of discrimination, harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation, and take prompt action to end such behavior and restore the target's sense of safety and a safe, nurturing

educational environment that provides the “advantages and privileges” of a safe school. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extra-curricular activities and parent and guardian involvement.

Swansea Public Schools understands that members of certain student groups, including but not limited to students with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, discrimination or retaliation. The district/schools will provide the necessary supports and take the necessary steps 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 harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. Swansea Public Schools is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies and the community to prevent issues of harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, retaliation or violence. In consultation these constituencies we have established this “Plan” for preventing, intervening and responding to incidents of harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. The building principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the “Plan” at his/her respective school.

## **II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Swansea Public Schools provides training and professional development for all staff. A training video, recorded by Building Administrators William Courville and Robert Silveira, is available electronically on the district website. All staff are required to view training at the beginning of the school year. The training video is an ongoing resource available for new staff and shall be used for reference throughout the school year for all existing staff.
- B. Ongoing professional development. Swansea Public Schools will provide ongoing Professional Development to its staff. Professional development activities will focus on establishing a common understanding of the tools necessary for staff to create and maintain a school climate and culture that promotes safety, civil communication and respect for differences. Staff will also be trained on the skills that are necessary and productive in preventing, identifying and responding to bullying.

Professional development activities will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying
- Developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among aggressor, target and witnesses to bullying;
- 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
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying
- Information on internet safety issues as these relate to cyber-bullying
- Prevention and responding to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students’ IEP’s. To include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills and development
- Promoting and modeling the use of respectful language
- Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and differences

- Building relationships and communicating with families
- Constructively managing classroom behaviors
- Applying constructive disciplinary practices
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management and empathy for others
- Engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students

C. Written notice to staff. All employees of Swansea Public Schools have been provided with an electronic document of the District Bullying. All employees are required to read and signed off on the document yearly. Documentation of sign-offs are available on the District website. A printed version of the plan may be requested through the Superintendent's Office in the School Administration building or in any of the school offices.

### III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

#### A. Identifying resources.

Counseling Resources:

- **M. Hoyle Elementary School: Grades K-2**  
School Adjustment Counselor: Mrs. Megan Silva  
School Nurse: Mrs. Leslie Stolts  
Principal: Mr. William Courville
- **J.G. Luther Elementary School: Grades 3-5**  
School Adjustment Counselor: Mrs. Rebecca Platt  
School Nurse: Mrs. Emily Lachance  
Principal: Mr. Sean Scanlon
- **Gardner Elementary School: Grades K-2**  
School Adjustment Counselor: Mrs. Kacie Martel  
School Nurse: Mrs. Susan Notorangelo  
Principal: Mr. Nicholas Overy
- **E.S. Brown Elementary School: Grades 3-5**  
School Adjustment Counselor: Mrs. Kyla Maderios  
School Nurse: Ms. Christine Serejczyk  
Principal: Ms. Wendy Williams
- **Joseph Case Junior High School: Grades 6-8**  
Guidance Counselors: Mrs. Monique Grauer and Mrs. Alyssa Mathieu  
School Adjustment Counselor: Ms. Tanya Provost  
School Nurse: Mrs. Erin McGough-Silvia  
Assistant Principal: Mr. Gregory Kelley  
Principal: Mr. Robert Silveira
- **Joseph Case High School: Grades 9-12**  
Guidance Counselors: Mrs. Karen Fisher, Ms. Cassie Reis and Mr. Ian Maher  
School Adjustment Counselor: Mrs. Erin Nientimp and Mr. Keith Mello  
School Nurse: Mrs. Jennifer Andreozzi  
Assistant Principal: Mr. Christopher Costa  
Principal: Mr. Brian McCann
- **Student Services**  
Director: Dr. Julie L. Garell  
Assistant Director: Mrs. Danielle Costa

## **Crisis Management Teams by School:**

- ◆ **E.S. Brown Elementary School:**
  - Ms. Wendy Williams – Principal
  - Mrs. Kyla Maderios – School Adjustment Counselor
  - Mrs. Elizabeth Audet – Administrative Assistant
  - Ms. Christine Serejczyk – School Nurse
- ◆ **Gardner Elementary School:**
  - Mr. Nicholas Overy – Principal
  - Mrs. Susan Notorangelo – School Nurse
  - Mrs. Kacie Martel – School Adjustment Counselor
  - Mrs. Katelyn Rapoza - Teacher
  - Ms. Jennifer Kenyon - Teacher
- ◆ **M. Hoyle Elementary School:**
  - Mr. William Courville – Principal
  - Mrs. Leslie Stolts – School Nurse
  - Mrs. Rose Oliveira – Teacher
  - Mrs. Megan Silva – School Adjustment Counselor
- ◆ **J. G. Luther Elementary School:**
  - Mr. Sean Scanlon – Principal
  - Mrs. Emily Lachance – School Nurse
  - Ms. Stacy Jacob – School Secretary
  - Mrs. Kelly Roy-Sale – Teacher
  - Mr. Scott Sunaz-Lods – Paraprofessional
  - Mr. Steven Luciano – Teacher
  - Mrs. Lisa Keyes – Paraprofessional
  - Mrs. Katelyn Dawson – Paraprofessional
  - Mrs. Crystal St. Pierre – Paraprofessional
  - Mrs. Rebecca Platt – School Adjustment Counselor
- ◆ **Joseph Case Junior High School:**
  - Mr. Robert Silveira – Principal
  - Mr. Gregory Kelley – Assistant Principal
  - Mrs. Erin McGough-Silvia – School Nurse
  - Mrs. Monique Grauer – Guidance Counselor
  - Mrs. Alyssa Mathieu – Guidance Counselor
  - Ms. Tanya Provost – School Adjustment Counselor
  - Mrs. Lauren Farinha– 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Representative
  - Mr. Peter Soares – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Representative
  - Mr. Barry Mello – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Representative
  - Mr. Shane Mello – School Resource Officer
- ◆ **Joseph Case High School:**
  - Mr. Brian McCann – Principal
  - Mr. Christopher Costa – Assistant Principal
  - Mrs. Karen Fisher – Guidance Counselor
  - Mr. Ian Maher – Guidance Counselor
  - Ms. Cassie Reis – Guidance Counselor
  - Mrs. Erin Nientimp – School Adjustment Counselor
  - Mr. Keith Mello – School Adjustment Counselor
  - Mr. Anthony Palladino – Athletic Director
  - Mr. Adam Palmisciano – Department Head
  - Mrs. Jennifer Andreozi – School Nurse
  - Mr. Shane Mello – School Resource Officer

Swansea Public Schools will continue to analyze the data as well as incident reports and complaint reports throughout the school year. As a result of the data resources will be allocated according to the needs identified by the data.

- B. Counseling and other services. The district provides culturally and linguistically appropriate resources on an as needed basis. Translated printed materials are made available, as well as, providing interpreters on an as need basis.

Staff responsible for developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying and developing and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors are identified in Section III A.

Swansea Public Schools has developed protocols and strategies for staff to calculate and support parents/guardians/caretakers and inform parents of outside resources to address bullying behavior and its effects on students and families. Parents are provided with a community service agency data base. (See Appendix F)

Services provided by Swansea Public Schools:

- Small therapeutic classroom settings;
- Social skills education groups addressing issues of building community; respect; harassment; sexual harassment; anger management; stress management; conflict resolution; peer-mediation; problem solving; organization-study-time management skills;
  - Parent/Teacher Meetings and Conferences
  - Functional Behavior Assessments
  - Development of Behavior Intervention Plans
  - Development of Behavior Contracts
  - Teacher Consultation – Mentoring
  - Transition Planning
  - Individual Health Care Plans

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

Swansea Public Schools – Director of Student Services Dr. Julie L. Garell and/or Assistant Director of Student Services Mrs. Danielle Costa will chair all IEP/Team meetings and ensure that the mandated requirements in regards to student with disabilities and their needs to avoid and respond to bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment or teasing are met. All IEPs of students with disabilities will address the student skills and proficiencies to avoid a response or engage in bullying, harassment or teasing.

- D. Referral to outside services. Swansea Public Schools, through its site-based Administration Teams and Counseling personnel, has an established protocol for referring students and families to outside services (see Appendixes E and F).

#### **IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**



- A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
  - empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
  - helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
  - emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
  - enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
  - engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

**Curriculums:**

Grades K – 2: “Second Step”

Provided through the Health Education and Physical Education classes and curriculum in conjunction with Student Adjustment Counselors.

Outcomes:           Increases social competence and pro-social behavior  
                          Reduced incidence of negative, aggressive, or antisocial behaviors

Second Step is a classroom-based social-skills program for children 4 to 14 years of age that teaches socio-emotional skills aimed at reducing impulsive and aggressive behavior while increasing social competence. The program builds on cognitive behavioral intervention models integrated with social learning theory, empathy research, and social information-processing theories. The program consists of in-school curricula, parent training, and skill development. Second Step teaches children to identify and understand their own and others' emotions, reduce impulsiveness and choose positive goals, and manage their emotional reactions and decision-making process when emotionally aroused. The curriculum is divided into two age groups: preschool through 5th grade (with 20 to 25 lessons per year) and 6th through 9th grade (with 15 lessons in year 1 and 8 lessons in the following 2 years). Each curriculum contains five teaching kits that build sequentially and cover empathy, impulse control, and anger management in developmentally and age-appropriate ways. Group decision-making, modeling, coaching, and practice are demonstrated in the Second Step lessons using interpersonal situations presented in photos or video format.

Grades 3 – 5: “Steps to Respect”

Provided through the Health Education and Physical Education classes and curriculums in conjunction with Student Adjustment Counselors.

Outcomes:           Positive social norms  
                          Socially responsive behaviors to witness bullying  
                          Collaborative school communities taking responsibility to decrease bullying  
                          Reporting bullying to adults

*Steps to Respect* is a classroom based program with a dual focus on bullying and friendship. The program is based on research showing that friendship protects Children from the harmful effects of bullying (*Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro and Bukowski, 1999*). Students will learn a variety of relationship skills including strategies for making and keeping friends and steps for joining a group activity.

The *Steps to Respect* program also teaches children skills for coping with bullying, including recognizing bullying, using assertive behaviors to respond to bullying, and reporting bullying to adults. Because many children become involved as bystanders to bullying (in both helpful and

harmful ways), the *Steps to Respect* program emphasizes that all members of a school community must take responsibility for decreasing bullying.

Bullying has far-reaching implications for children's emotional well-being and general school safety. Worldwide research conducted over the past two decades has added significantly to our knowledge about the harmful consequences of bullying. There is a clear negative impact on the development of both children who are the targets of bullying and those who bully others. At the same time, research and scientific evidence shows that the *Steps to Respect* program can have a positive impact on this difficult problem (Frey et al., 2005; Hirschstein and Frey, 2006). This review provides a summary of research on bullying, with a particular emphasis on elements that influenced the conceptualization and development of the *Steps to Respect* program.

#### Grades 6 – 8:

Provided through the Health Education and Physical Education classes and curriculum.

Resources include:

Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders, Thinking and Acting to Prevent Violence  
Education Development Center Inc.

Lifeskills Training, Promoting health and Personal Development.  
Gilbert J. Botvin, Ph.D.

#### Grades 9 – 12:

Provided through class group meetings, Advisories and grade 9 Freshman Academy.

Grades 9-12 utilize strategies outlined by MARC to address bullying prevention rather than a single, prescribed anti-bullying curriculum. These strategies are communicated to students via advisories and within their health classes. In terms of cyber skills training for students, the high school utilizes strategies from ISTE and their commitment to age-appropriate digital citizenship to make students aware of acceptable internet usage. Students are encouraged by the high school's administration, teachers and the guidance department to report incidents of perceived bullying so that the prescribed steps can be taken to address each situation accordingly.

### **Supplemental Activities and Programs**

Supplemental anti-bullying programs and activities are provided throughout the school year in each of the schools and are grade level and age-appropriate for all our students. These activities may include presentations, shows, assemblies, student advisories, extra-curricular activities and groups. Specific program information may be obtained at each of the schools.

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

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously.

Swansea Public Schools has implemented a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including:

- Incident Reporting Form is accessible at each building at designated location and on district and school websites (*also included in Appendices*)
- Dedicated voice mailboxes at each school specific to reporting bullying
- Email addresses and voice mailboxes of building administrators, counselors or nurses
- Incident Follow-Up Report Form (*also included in Appendices*)

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 in packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians or caretakers.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

#### 1. Reporting by Staff

All members of the school staff, not just all teaching staff, must immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has either witnessed or become aware of, to the principal or school designee. 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. The report will be documented on an Incident Reporting Form.

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

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

### B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

#### 1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The building administrator or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The building administrator or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting a student 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.

Student Safety Procedures:

- Communication and conference with target, perpetrator/aggressor and parents, guardians or caregivers
- Conference with Administrator or designee, counselor and/or School Resource Officer with target and or perpetrator/aggressor to validate student's right to physical and emotional safety
- Monitoring of students' progress – Administrator or designee and counselor
- Increased awareness, supervision and observation of students including target and perpetrator/aggressor
- Provide opportunities for development of peer/social networks to support target and perpetrator/aggressor

2. Obligations to Notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00 (*Also see Appendix H – Parent Communication Form, Appendix I – Consequence and Procedure Charts, Appendix J – Administrative Procedure Protocol Flow Chart.*)
- b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency (*See Appendix K – Memorandum of Agreement and Understanding, Swansea Public Schools and the Swansea Police Department*). Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource

officer, if any, and other individuals the building administrator or designee deems appropriate.

- C. **Investigation.** The building administrator or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

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

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

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the building administrator or designee will consult with legal counsel and local law enforcement about the investigation, in accordance with school or district procedures. (*See Appendix J – Administrator or Protocol Flowchart, Appendix L – Administrator Interview Procedure*)

**Investigation, Procedure and Protocol:**

- 1) Identification of problem, students and sites. Completion of Incident Report by adult, target, perpetrator/aggressor, witnesses.
- 2) Questioning and documentation of all parties involved (witnesses, victim, and perpetrator statements).
- 3) Preservation of physical evidence.
- 4) Clear explanation of consequences for engaging in bullying/harassment to all parties.
- 5) Notification of parents / guardian of the target and the perpetrator/aggressor.
- 6) Completion of Incident Follow-Up Reporting Form.

**Administrative Action:**

- 1) Prompt, effective, and consistent response to all incidents of bullying/harassment.
- 2) Prompt remedial action to prevent reoccurrence. Interview and support target; interview perpetrator/aggressor; interview witnesses; (\*Always separate students when interviewing and documenting). Perpetrator/aggressor complete Reflection / 'Think About It' Form / exercise), monitor safety of target, increase supervision of perpetrator/aggressor.
- 3) Apply age-appropriate disciplinary measures that escalate with severity and reoccurrence of conduct (progressive disciplinary procedure) as outlined in the District Policy and Student Handbook; document incident and consequence.
- 4) Parental contact made to the parents of the target and the perpetrator/aggressor.
- 5) Appropriate support and counseling from the School staff and the School Resource Officer for the target, perpetrator/aggressor and appropriate family members as needed. A clear explanation of consequences and direction toward reconciliation will be provided.
- 6) Restore non-discriminatory environment for the target.
- 7) Make appropriate law enforcement referrals/reports (assist target in reporting to law enforcement). Criminal charges may be filed at the discretion of the School Resource Officer.

- 8) Document strategies and accommodations employed to provide a safe environment for the target.

D. Determinations. The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. (See *Appendix I – Age Appropriate Consequence Charts*, *Appendix N – Think About It Form*.)

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

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations. (See *Appendix H – Parent Communication Form*, *Appendix M – Confidentiality Flow Chart*.)

E. Responses to Bullying

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

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

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct. (See *Appendix I – Age Appropriate Consequences Chart*)

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.

Swansea Public Schools and the Student Services Department, through the IEP process, will consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies of students with disabilities to avoid and respond to bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment or teasing. 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, cyber-bullying, harassment or teasing. The IEP will address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment or teasing. (M.G.L. c. 71B § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010.)

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

### 3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

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

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

## VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. Parent education and resources. The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations. The Swansea Public School Administrators in collaboration with its Parent Teacher Organizations, School Councils and Special Education Advisory Councils will offer education and information programs that are site-based which will focus on parental components of anti-bullying and any social competency curricula used by the district and the school. Programs will also address recognizing and reporting bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation as well as the investigation procedure and consequences and interventions.
- B. Notification requirements. Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet Safety Policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district will post the Plan and related information on its website. (*See Appendix C1 – Student Computer/Internet Usage Policy.*)

## VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## **VIII. DEFINITIONS**

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

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is 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 target that:

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

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 cyber-bullying.

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

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

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria



workers, custodians, bus drivers, and athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

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

Bystander is a student or person who tolerates or ignores the behavior of an aggressor/perpetrator of bullying behavior, which the bully perceives as justification for their action.

Egger is a student or person who actively supports and befriends an aggressor/perpetrator of bullying behavior.

## **IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or disability. 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, 37H-1/2 or 37H-3/4, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.