

Walter C. Polson Middle School
2024 -2025 Safe School Climate Plan

The Madison Public School District is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, and teen dating violence. The goal is the establishment of a positive school climate in which norms, values, and expectations make students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and teen dating violence and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. The District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

This plan addresses the mandated areas of compliance which are required by Connecticut General Statutes. In addition to the following current efforts, the administration, faculty and staff of this school are committed to improving and enhancing the plan which will be updated and implemented biennially in order to best serve the students, parents, guardians and the community.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy will be updated according to amendments received by Shipman & Goodwin. The policy will be brought forth to the Policy Committee for review and to the Board of Education for adoption, as needed.	Superintendent's Office
Implement and enforce the policy which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student codes of conduct that are defined and prohibit bullying and/or teen dating violence in accordance with state law.• A prohibition against bullying and/or teen dating violence on 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 local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device.• A prohibition of bullying and/or teen dating violence outside of the school setting if such bullying results in any of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed,(ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or(iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. A prohibition against any form of discrimination and retaliation directed toward an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is also strictly prohibited. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.	Superintendent of Schools School Administrators

Notification Requirements

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
Provide to all school employees a written or electronic copy of the district's Safe School Climate Plan annually. The plan will also be posted on the district website.	Safe School Climate District Coordinator
Educate students about the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan as well as teen dating violence through developmentally appropriate discussions of the schools' behavioral expectations as specified in the policy.	School Administrators Teachers School Psychologist Counselors Health Teachers
Educate parents/guardians about the school's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy through a variety of communication vehicles including open houses, Parent Advisory Council meetings, orientations, community forums, websites, etc.	School Administrators
Publish Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Safe School Climate Plan on the district website and in handbooks for access by parents, guardians and students. Include notification for students and parents/guardians of the process by which students may make reports of bullying and/or teen dating violence. Include policy in annual notifications.	Superintendent of Schools Safe School Climate District Coordinator School Principal

Safe School Climate Committee

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
Appoint Safe School Climate Specialist in each school.	School Principal
Establish Safe School Climate Committee in accordance with the law, including at least one parent/guardian/caregiver of a student at the school.	Safe School Climate Specialist
Ensure that parents, guardians and caregivers serving on the committee do not participate in any activities that may compromise the confidentiality of any student.	Safe School Climate Specialist
<p>Establish roles, responsibilities and procedures for Safe School Climate Committee including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying;b. Review and make recommendations to amend school policies relating to bullying;c. Educate students, school employees, and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying and/or teen dating violence;d. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and/or teen dating violence, in accordance with the law; <p>Perform any other duties as determined by the school principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and/or teen dating violence for the school.</p>	Safe School Climate Specialist

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
Identify effective evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies. Strategies may include, but are not limited to the following:	District Team Coordinator Safe School Climate Specialist
<p>a. Implement a positive behavioral intervention and support process or another evidence-based curriculum or program for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students engage in lessons on healthy decision making ● The PRIDE acronym is used to promote positive behavior. PRIDE posters hang in the halls ● Students may participate in the Peer Helpers Program ● 7th grade students participate in an annual team building trip to Camp Hazen ● Teachers and related service staff represent Polson on the district Wellness Committee ● Monthly leadership meetings include safe school climate as a regular agenda item ● A survey is administered bi-annually to students, parents, and staff 	Polson Faculty
<p>b. Make students aware of school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation, and establish appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Student Handbook is reviewed with students in grade level meetings at the beginning of each year ● The Code of Conduct is reviewed with students in grade level meetings at the beginning of each year ● Developmental Guidance Lessons are conducted throughout the year on topics such a friendship, bullying, and sexual harassment ● A full-time security guard is on campus ● An armed supernumerary and School Resource Officer are on campus at various times of the day 	School Administrators and All Employees
<p>c. Provide adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, the buses, and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indoor/Outdoor seating for lunch is provided with adult supervision ● Securly is used to monitor student actions on school technology ● Certified staff members supervise students during arrival and dismissal ● After school clubs and sports are supervised by qualified staff ● A full-time Security Officer supervises arrival, transitions and dismissal ● A part-time School Resource Officer is on campus ● Buses are equipped with video monitoring ● Surveillance cameras are in all main hallways and outside areas 	School Administrators and All Employees

Prevention and Intervention Strategy (cont'd.)

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
<p>d. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula for teen dating violence;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental guidance lessons on the topics of friendship, bullying and sexual harassment • The See It, Say It, Send It App is introduced to students and parents • Peer Helpers, Allies, and the Rainbow Lounge provide opportunities for students to seek or provide support • Students engage in lessons on healthy decision making 	<p>Assistant Superintendent Health Teachers School Counselors School Administrators</p>
<p>e. Offer individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Study Team (SST) plans interventions and action steps for individual students with social-emotional needs • Individual and group counseling is available to all students • Upon confirmation of a bullying incident, a safety plan is established & communicated to the necessary people • Teams of teachers meet with parents on an “as needed” basis. • A partnership with Madison Youth & Family Services provides counseling and support to families in need • A full time Social Worker is available to support all students • A MYFS Social Worker is housed in the building • One clinician from Effective School Solutions (ESS) runs a program for students with social/emotional challenges 	<p>Safe School Climate Coordinator School Administrators All Employees</p>
<p>f. Annual school-wide training related to safe school climate, to include relevant training in Title IX/sexual harassment, Section 504/ADA, and cultural diversity.</p>	<p>Assistant Superintendent</p>
<p>g. Student peer training education and support, including advocacy for victims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Helpers Program • Student Council Program • Diversity Club • Rainbow Lounge • Principal’s Advisory Council 	<p>Safe School Climate Coordinator School Administrators and All Employees</p>
<p>h. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team meetings, trainings and individual interventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTO events/workshops • PPT and 504 meetings • Parent/Teacher conferences scheduled as needed • Parents and students are asked to confirm receipt of the Code of Conduct at the start of each school year • Parent representative on School Climate Committee 	<p>Safe School Climate Coordinator School Administrators</p>

Prevention and Intervention Strategy (cont'd.)

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
<p>i. Implement the evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies identified by the Safe School Climate Committee to promote learning and positive social, emotional, and ethical/civic development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Leadership Team meets to review the results of the student and parent surveys● Staff meetings are held to review the results of the student and parent surveys● The Social Emotional Student Study Team meets every 6 weeks to review student needs	Identified School Employees

Assessment of School Climate

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
Complete an assessment (biennially) using the school climate assessment instruments including surveys, approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education for this school.	Safe School Climate Committee
Submit assessment results for each school to the Superintendent of Schools.	Safe School Climate Committee
Review and analyze data obtained from climate surveys / make necessary modifications to the school plan.	Safe School Climate Committee
Compare and contrast survey results with the National School Climate Standards and best practices.	Safe School Climate Committee
Meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during each school year to discuss issues related to school climate/bullying and make recommendations to the Board of Education Policy Committee concerning revisions to the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and/or Safe School Climate Plan.	District Safe School Climate Coordinator
Require all school employees annually complete online or in-service training on the identification, prevention, and response to bullying and/or teen dating violence as required by law.	Safe School Climate District Coordinator & Specialists Principals HR Director

Training

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
Provide all school employees training.	CSDE Safe School Climate District Coordinator & Specialists
Provide annual notice to students and parents/guardians/caregivers of the process by which bullying reports are made.	School Principals
Ensure the inclusion of language in student discipline policy concerning bullying as posted in the district Policy Manual.	Superintendent of Schools Board of Education
Orally notify, within one school day after witnessing or receiving the report, the Safe School Climate Specialist or School Administrator after being witness to acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence.	All school employees
File a written report with the Safe School Climate Specialist within 2 days of oral notification, after witnessing acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence or receiving reports of bullying.	All school employees

Complaint Process and Reporting Procedures

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
Any student who believes they have been the victim of bullying/cyber-bullying and/or teen dating violence or who has witnessed bullying behavior should report the matter to any school employee in writing or anonymously.	All students
Parents/guardians/caregivers may file written reports of suspected bullying/cyber-bullying and/or teen dating violence.	All parents/guardians/caregivers
Report acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence that may constitute a criminal offense to appropriate law enforcement.	School Administrator and/or School Resource Officer
Develop and disseminate investigation procedures for use by Safe School Climate Specialists.	Safe School Climate District Coordinator
Investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and/or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigations are completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. Notify the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts that such investigation has begun.	Safe School Climate Specialists School Administrators

Investigation

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
<p>Promptly review all anonymous reports of bullying and/or teen dating violence.</p> <p>Upon completion of investigation, determine whether the alleged conduct occurred and if such conduct constitutes bullying and/or teen dating violence as defined in the district policy. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of bullying were verified, and, when acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.</p>	<p>Safe School Climate Specialists School Administrators</p>
<p>Investigate bullying and/or teen dating violence incidents that raise concerns about discrimination or harassment on the basis of legally protected classifications.</p>	<p>School administrators refer investigations to District School Climate coordinator and/or Title IX officer and/or Section 504 coordinator and/or SRO</p>
<p>Upon determination that bullying has occurred, take prompt corrective action (non-disciplinary and/or disciplinary) that is reasonably calculated to stop the bullying and/or teen dating violence and prevent any recurrence of such behavior.</p>	<p>Safe School Climate Specialists School Administrators</p>
<p>Within 48 hours after completion of the investigation, notify the parents/guardians/caregivers of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed. This notification shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts, with care taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of other students, including the perpetrator. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian/caregiver's own child may not be disclosed except as provided by law.</p>	<p>School Administrators</p>

Response to Verified Acts of Bullying

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
<p>Upon determining that bullying has occurred, invite the parents/guardians/caregivers of students who engage in any verified acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence, after the completion of the investigation, to a meeting at which the following will be shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A description of verified act(s) ● A description of the school's interventions in response to the act(s) ● Consequences, as appropriate ● Consequences that may result from further acts 	School Administrators
<p>Upon determining that bullying has occurred, invite the parents/guardians/caregivers of student against whom an act of bullying and/or teen dating violence was verified, after completion of the investigation, to a meeting at which the following information will be shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A description of verified act(s) ● A description of the school's interventions designed to keep the student safe and prevent any further act(s) of bullying ● The content of the student safety support plan <p><i>Such meetings with parents and guardians shall be separate and distinct from each other.</i></p>	School Administrators
<p>Upon determining that bullying has occurred, develop a Student Safety Support Plan for any student against whom an act of bullying and/or teen dating violence was directed. The plan shall address safety measures the school will take to protect students against further acts of bullying.</p>	Safe School Climate Specialists School Administrators
<p>Upon determining that bullying has occurred, develop case-by-case interventions to address repeated incidents of bullying and/or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline.</p>	Safe School Climate Specialists School Administrators

Documentation and Record Keeping

Task	Responsible Party(ies)
Establish a procedure for schools to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in the school• Maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school and make such list available for public inspection. This public list must not contain any personally identifiable information about any student or information that might reasonably lead to the identification of any student.	Safe School Climate District Coordinator and Specialists
Annually report the number of verified acts of bullying in each school to the Safe School Climate District Coordinator	Safe School Climate Specialists

ANNUAL BULLYING NOTICE

Bullying behavior by any student in the Madison Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive which:

- Caused physical or emotional harm to an individual;
- Placed an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or
- Infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or physical, mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Cyberbullying means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

Teen Dating Violence means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

In accordance with state law and the Board’s Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on 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 local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- Creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed;
- Infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school; or
- Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

Students and/or parents/guardians may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying, cyberbullying or teen dating violence behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying, cyberbullying, or teen dating violence to school employees. Any report of bullying, cyberbullying, or teen dating violence will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying, cyberbullying, or teen dating violence are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with the rights of due process. Board policy #5131.911, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, set forth this prohibition. This policy can be found on the district website, is included with the annual student notifications, and is available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.