

Safe School Climate Plan

2021-2022 School Year



NEW LONDON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Section 1: Introduction

The Safe School Climate Plan was developed by the Board of Education Policy Subcommittee in response to Public Act 11-232 and was approved on December 5, 2011. The New London Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, the Board has developed this plan, consistent with state law and Board Policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to establishing positive school climate and building the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. It also focuses a specific plan to address bullying and cyberbullying and sets forth the Board's expectations for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying.

"Bullying" means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student attending school in the same district that:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
2. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
3. creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
4. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
5. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal 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 and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, 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.

The following sections of this guide are intended to outline and further delineate key components and information related to the New London Public Schools Safe School Climate Plan. For further information, or specific language in the plan, please refer to the full policy and regulation located in the Appendix.

Section 2: Key Roles and Responsibilities

Safe School Climate Coordinator

Director of Culture and Climate: Maureen Bransfield

*Safe School Climate Specialists

Harbor Elementary: Mayra Hutton

Jennings Elementary: Shawn Brown

Nathan Hale Arts Elementary Magnet: Maria Carrillo

Winthrop STEM Elementary Magnet: Leah Champ-Burdick

Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School: Janet Farquhar

New London Multi Magnet High School: Bryan Mahon

**Safe School Climate Committees

Harbor: Jason Foster, Ernest Covino, Jean Searle, TBD - Kindergarten

Jennings: Norma Delara, Ninon Guinassi, Hector Aquino, Gloria Rodriguez, Kara Saranich

Nathan Hale: Laurelle Texidor, Rebecca Wilcox, Cheryl Potter, Annie Ryan

Winthrop: Michael Podeszwa, Caitlin Flynn, Kristin Ciotto, Joe Buzzelli, Vernon Skau

BDJMS: Chris Vamvakides, Janet Farquhar, Michael Willie, Amy Griffin, Kim Molina, Jose Roman, Dora Pero, Kelly Putz, Mike Stroneski

NLHS: Jose Ortiz, Bryan Mahon, Missy Parker, Ben Capers, Dave Richardson, Kasi Fletcher

**The Safe School Climate Coordinator will meet with the Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss issues relating to bullying in the school district and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Plan.*

*** All Safe School Climate Committees will meet twice each year to review efforts to foster a safe school climate and to develop plans to address any issues related to bullying in the school. In particular, the committee shall review data regarding bullying, review policies related to bullying, review the Safe School Climate plan as it relates to that school, discuss opportunities to educate students, employees and parents/guardians on issues related to bullying and address any other duties as determined by the principal as it relates to building and maintaining positive school climate and preventing bullying. Committees will consist of the membership listed above as well as a parent/guardian representative.*

Section 3: Programs for Prevention and Intervention

The New London Public Schools has various programs in place for building positive school climate, as well as educating students and staff in a variety of topics related to bullying prevention and intervention. These, include but are not limited to the following:

- 6-12 School Counseling Curriculum
- 6-12 Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum
- Second Step Curriculum
- Connect Curriculum
- Teen Dating and Violence Prevention Curriculum
- Responsive Classroom Elementary Model
- Schoolwide Assemblies
- NLPS Advisory Program
- Mentoring
- Small Group and Individual Counseling
- Scientific Researched-Based Interventions (SRBI)
- Town Meetings
- Interventions
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Handle with Care

Section 4: Process and Procedures

Reports of bullying may be received from students, school personnel, parents/guardians or may be anonymous. Students and parents/guardians may file written reports of bullying with the building administrator or Safe School Climate Specialist.

Students may request anonymity when making a report to a school employee or to the Safe School Climate Specialist. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed, and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, while maintaining the confidentiality of the source of the complaint. Note that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.

School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying **must** orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or school administrator **not later than one school day** after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The same school employee **must** file a written report **not later than two school days** after making the oral report.

All reports of bullying will be reviewed and investigated.

The process for reporting, investigating, and responding to complaints of bullying is outlined in the diagram in the appendix.

Section 5: Documentation and Maintenance of Log

Each school shall maintain written complaints of bullying, along with supporting documentation received and/or created as a result of bullying investigations, consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law. All forms to be utilized for reporting and documentation purposes are found in the Appendix.

A copy of the written reports and accompanying documentation that result from all investigations of bullying by the Safe School Climate Specialist will be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Principal of each school shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Given that any determination of bullying involves repeated acts, each investigation that results in a verified act of bullying for that school year shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of each report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of bullying in each school and shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including, but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

Section 6: Safe School Climate Plan Surveys

The State Department of Education (SDE) in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) developed Student, Parent and Staff School Climate surveys to be administered by districts biennially, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. There are three student survey forms that have been provided to be utilized at particular grade level ranges; the Early Elementary (K-3), Upper Elementary/Middle (4-8) and Middle/High School (9-12). Please refer to the appendix for copies of the Student, Parent and Staff School Climate surveys.

Districts may administer the surveys at any time during the school year, and may use an electronic survey format to facilitate the collection and analysis of data. All districts must survey one grade level within each category and administer the parent survey to the parents of the selected grade levels. All school staff members will be asked to participate in the Staff School Climate survey.

The data collected will be reported to the State Department of Education and will be reviewed by the Safe School Climate Committees and Safe School Climate Coordinator. The results of the surveys will be used to determine effective strategies and supports and to identify next steps or areas for focus in order to maintain and improve a positive school climate.

Appendix

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY

The New London Board of Education (“Board”) is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. 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 Board of Education.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (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. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying are likewise prohibited.

Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

For purposes of this policy, “**Bullying**” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property;
2. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;

3. creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
4. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
5. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal 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 and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, 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.

For purposes of this policy, "**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.

For purposes of this policy, "**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.

Consistent with the requirements under state law, the New London Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a Safe School Climate Plan in furtherance of this policy. As provided by state law, such Safe School Climate Plan shall include, but not be limited to provisions which:

- 1) Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make such reports;
- 2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying;
- 3) require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school

climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;

- 4) require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section and that 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 were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
- 5) require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- 6) include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with
- 7) bullying and teen dating violence;
- 8) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
- 9) require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;
- 10) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying;
- 11) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting required in subdivision (9) above, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying;
- 12) establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;

- 13) direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
- 14) prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
- 15) direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;
- 16) require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;
- 17) prohibit bullying (A) 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 local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, or (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;
- 18) require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
- 19) require that all school employees annually complete the training described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220a.

The notification required pursuant to subdivision (8) (above) and the invitation required pursuant to subdivisions (9) and (10) (above) shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the district's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

By September 1, 2014, the New London Board of Education shall submit its Safe School Climate Plan to the Department of Education for review and approval. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Department, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

Legal References:

Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145a

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145o

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-220a

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-222g

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-222h

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Public Act 14-172, "An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities Through Education And Ensuring Safe School Climates"

Public Act 14-232, "An Act Concerning The Review And Approval Of Safe School Climate Plans By The Department Of Education And A Student Safety Hotline Feasibility Study"

Public Act 14-234, "An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault"

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New London Public Schools

New London, CT

5131.911

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION REGULATION

SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN

The New London Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a safe educational environment free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, the Board has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan, consistent with state law and Board Policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and teen dating violence, and sets forth the Board's expectations for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying and teen dating violence.

Bullying behavior and teen dating violence are strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The district's commitment to addressing bullying behavior and teen dating violence, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which bullying, and teen dating violence will not be tolerated by students or school staff.

I. Prohibition Against Bullying, Teen Dating Violence, and Retaliation

- A. The Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior 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 or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.
- B. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior or teen dating violence outside of the school setting, as such acts (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such acts were directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such acts were directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly

operation of a school.

- C. In addition to prohibiting student acts which constitute bullying or teen dating violence, the Board also prohibits discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence.
- D. Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence, in violation of Board Policy and the Safe School Climate Plan, shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

II. Definition of Bullying

- A. For purposes of this Policy, **"Bullying"** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student attending school in the same district that:
 - B. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
 - C. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
 - D. creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
 - E. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
 - F. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- G. Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal 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 and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, 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.

III. Other Definitions

- A. **"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.

- B. **"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.
- C. **"Electronic communication"** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system;
- D. **"Hostile environment"** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;
- E. **"Mobile electronic device"** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;
- F. **"Outside of the school setting"** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education;
- G. **"Prevention and intervention strategy"** may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where or teen dating violence bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees, (6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions, and (9) culturally competent

school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation. Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement strategy may originate from public, private, federal or philanthropic sources. For purposes of this section, “interventions with the bullied child” includes referrals to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service, and periodic follow-up by the Safe School Climate Specialist with the bullied child.

- H. **"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.
- I. **"School employee"** means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.
- J. **"School-Sponsored Activity"** shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Education.

IV. Leadership and Administrative Responsibilities

A. Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent shall appoint, from existing school district staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator (“Coordinator”). The Coordinator shall:

- i) be responsible for implementing the district’s Safe School Climate Plan (“Plan”);
- ii) collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying and teen dating violence in district schools;
- iii) provide data and information, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education regarding bullying;
- iv) meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss

issues relating to bullying in the school district and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Plan.

B. Safe School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the principal of each school (or principal's designee) shall serve as the Safe School Climate Specialist. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence and act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying or teen dating violence in the school.

V. Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan

- A. For the school year commencing July 1, 2012 and each school year thereafter, the Principal of each school shall establish a committee or designate at least one existing committee ("Committee") in the school to be responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence in the school. Such committee shall include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, as appointed by the school principal.
- B. The Committee shall: 1) receive copies of completed reports following bullying investigations; 2) identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school; 3) review and amend school policies relating to bullying; 4) review and make recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the Safe School Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school; 5) educate students, school employees and parents/guardians on issues relating to bullying; 6) collaborate with the Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and perform any other duties as determined by the Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and teen dating violence.
- C. Any parent/guardian serving as a member of the Committee shall not participate in any activities which may compromise the confidentiality of any student, including, but not limited to receiving copies of investigation reports, or identifying or addressing patterns of bullying among students in the school.
- D. Not later than January 1, 2012, the Board of Education shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to Board policy and submit such plan to the Department of Education. Not

later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Board, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

VI. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Complaints of Bullying

- A. Students and parents (or guardians of students) may file written reports of bullying. Written reports of bullying shall be reasonably specific as to the basis for the report, including the time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of incidents, the target of the suspected bullying, and the names of potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any building administrator and/or the Safe School Climate Specialist (i.e. building principal), and all reports shall be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with this Plan.
- B. Students may make anonymous reports of bullying to any school employee. Should a student request anonymity when making a report, the Safe School Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall meet with the student (if the student's identity is known) to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact that maintaining the anonymity of the complainant may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that does not disclose the source of the complaint, and is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.
- C. School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying shall orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, **not later than one (1) school day** after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The school employee shall then file a **written report not later than two (2) school days** after making such oral report.
- D. The Safe School Specialist shall be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of bullying and shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. The Safe School Climate

Specialist or designee shall provide prompt notice that such investigation has commenced to 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 were directed. In order to allow the district to adequately investigate complaints Filed by a student or parent/guardian, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied should be asked to provide consent to permit the release of that student's name in connection with the investigation process, unless the student and/or parent has requested anonymity.

- E. In investigating reports of bullying, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The Safe School Climate Specialist will interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

VII. Responding to Verified Acts of Bullying

- A. Following investigation, if acts of bullying are verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the students against whom such acts were directed as well as the parents or guardians of the students who commit such acts of bullying of the finding **not later than forty-eight hours** after the investigation is completed. This notification shall include a description of the school's response to the acts of bullying. In providing such notification, however, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of other students, including the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian's own child, may not be disclosed except as provided by law.
- B. In any instance in which bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying. In addition, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting with the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by

the school to prevent further acts of bullying.

- C. If bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an act of bullying was directed. Such support plan will include safety measures to protect against further acts of bullying.
- D. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. The written intervention plan may include counseling, discipline and other appropriate remedial actions as determined by the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee, and may also incorporate a student safety support plan, as appropriate.
- E. Notice to Law Enforcement
If the Principal of a school (or his/her designee) reasonably believes that any act of bullying or teen dating violence constitutes a criminal offense, he/she shall notify appropriate law enforcement. Notice shall be consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law and Board policy regarding the disclosure of personally identifiable student information. In making this determination, the Principal or his/her designee, may consult with the school resource office, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.
- F. If a bullying complaint raises concern about discrimination or harassment on the basis of a legally protected classifications (such as race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability), the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also coordinate any investigation with other appropriate personnel within the district as appropriate (e.g. Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator etc.)

VIII. Documentation and Maintenance of Log

- A. Each school shall maintain written complaints of bullying, along with supporting documentation received and/or created as a result of bullying investigations, consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law. Any educational record containing personally identifiable student information pertaining to an individual student shall be maintained in a confidential manner, and shall not be disclosed to third parties without written prior written consent of a parent, guardian or eligible student, except as permitted under Board policy and state and federal law.
- B. The Principal of each school shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the

school and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Given that any determination of bullying involves repeated acts, each investigation that results in a verified act of bullying for that school year shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of each report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of bullying in each school and shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including, but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

- C. The Principal of each school shall report the number of verified acts of bullying in the school annually to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

IX. Other Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- A. Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in the nature of the offense and the impact the behavior may have on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying”, as defined above, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (e.g., detention, in-school suspension, suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building principal (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee). No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.
- B. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. This plan may include safety provisions, as described above, for students against whom acts of bullying have been verified and may include other interventions such as counseling, discipline, and other appropriate remedial actions as determined by the responsible administrator.
- C. The following sets forth possible interventions which may also be utilized to enforce the Board’s prohibition against bullying:
 - i. Non-disciplinary intervention
When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could

be considered bullying.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

ii. Disciplinary interventions

When acts of bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy. This consequence shall normally be reserved for severe incidents of bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior.

iii. Interventions for bullied students

The building principal (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address multiple incidents of bullying against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student may include the following:

- a) Counseling;
- b) Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations;
- c) Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;

- d) Peer mediation/restorative practice where appropriate;
- e) Student Safety Support plan.
- f) General Prevention and Intervention Strategies

D. In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other district actions may ameliorate potential problems with bullying or teen dating violence in school or at school-sponsored activities. While no specific action is required, and school needs for specific prevention and intervention strategies may vary from time to time, the following list of potential prevention and intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional employees in each school:

- a) Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process (PBIS) or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;
- b) school rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts;
- c) Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence are likely to occur;
- d) Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula, which may include instruction regarding building safe and positive school communities including developing healthy relationships and preventing dating violence as deemed appropriate for older students;
- e) Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student/teen dating violence victim, parents and school employees;
- f) School-wide training related to safe school climate, which training may include Title IX/Sexual harassment training, Section 504/ADA Training, cultural diversity/multicultural education or other training in federal and state civil rights legislation or other topics relevant to safe school climate;
- g) Student peer training, education and support; and
- h) Promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through

- individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
- i) Respectful responses to bullying and teen dating violence concerns raised by students, parents or staff;
 - j) Planned professional development programs addressing prevention and intervention strategies, which training may include school violence prevention, teen dating violence prevention, conflict resolution and prevention of bullying, with a focus in evidence based practices concerning same;
 - k) Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
 - l) Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping;
 - m) Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of staff and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;
 - n) Modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
 - o) Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
 - p) Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.
 - q) In addition to prevention and intervention strategies, administrators, teachers and other professional employees may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and teen dating violence to help eliminate such behaviors through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, harassing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying” or “teen dating violence.”

X. Annual Notice and Training

- A. Students, and parents or guardians of students shall be notified annually, at the beginning of each school year, of the process by which students may make reports of bullying.
- B. The Board shall provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying.
- C. At the beginning of each school year, each school shall provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district’s safe school climate plan and require that all school employees annually complete training on the identification, prevention and response to bullying and teen dating violence as required by law.

XI. School Climate Assessments

On and after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, the Board shall require each school in the district to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the Department of Education. The Board shall collect the school climate assessments for each school in the district and submit such assessments to the Department.

Legal References:

Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-8, Series 2008-2009 (March 16, 2009)

Approved: December 22, 2011

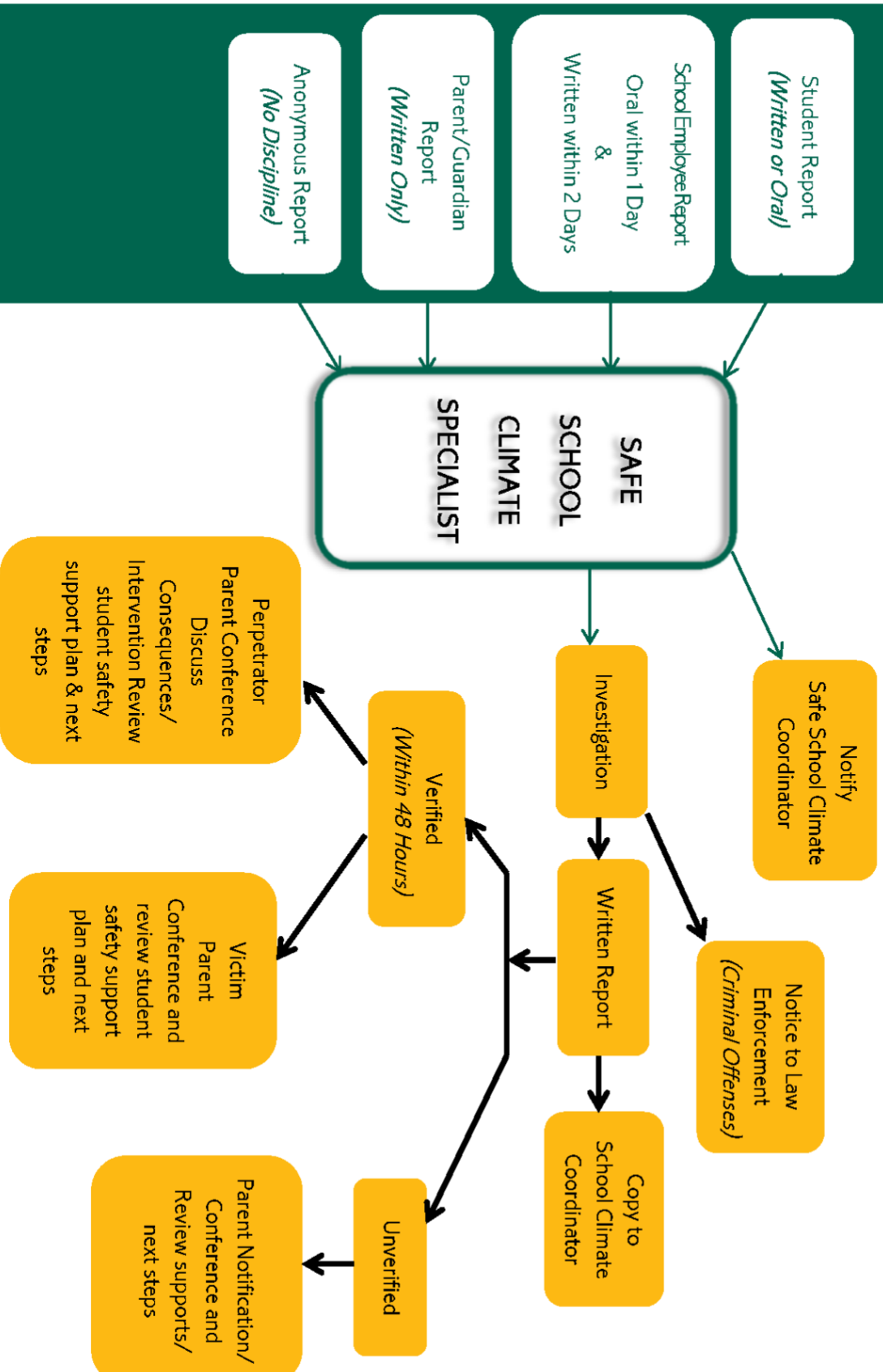
New London Public Schools

New London, Connecticut



NEW LONDON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Process for Reporting of Suspected Bullying Behaviors





New London Public Schools

Bullying Incident Investigation Form

I. INCIDENT

1. Name of Person Filing Report: _____
(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)
2. Check whether you are: The target of the behavior ☐ Reporting the behavior (not the target) ☐
3. Check whether you are: ☐ A Student ☐ A Staff member (specify role) _____
☐ A Parent ☐ An Administrator ☐ Other (specify) _____

Please provide your contact information/telephone number:

Phone	
Email	

5. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target of behavior: _____

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

Date(s) of Incident(s): _____

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: _____

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

Did the incident include electronic communication ☐ YES ☐ NO If so, where _____

If able, please provide the link of the site _____

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

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other _____

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other _____

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other _____

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

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

8. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ Date: _____
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)
9. Form Given to: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____
- Signature: _____ Date Received: _____



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

☐ Interviewed aggressor(s) Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

☐ **Interviewed target** **Name:** _____ **Date:** _____

☐ **Interviewed witnesses** **Name:** _____ **Date:** _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION ☐ Yes ☐ No

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

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation: ☐ YES ☐ NO

☐ **Bullying** ☐ Incident documented as

☐ Retaliation ☐ Discipline referral only

3. Contacts:

☐ Target's parent/guardian Date: ☐ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date:

☐ District Equity Coordinator/Title IV (DEC) Date: ☐ Law Enforcement Date:☐ Loss of Privileges ☐ Detention ☐ In-School Suspension ☐ Out of School Suspension☐ Community Service ☐ Educational Assignment ☐ Other

5. Describe Safety Planning: _____

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

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

Report forwarded to Principal: Date _____ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date _____
(If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: _____ **Date:** _____

BULLYING INCIDENT LOG

[illegible]

Documents (Examples only)

STUDENT SUPPORT/INTERVENTION PLAN

School: _____ Verified: _____ Unverified _____

Student: _____ Grade: _____

Victim _____ or Perpetrator _____ (check one)

Student Safety Support Plan _____ or Intervention Plan _____

Start Date: _____

Describe below the components of the Plan (include responsible individuals and timelines as applicable.)

I have read and understand the components of the plan outlined above.

Safe School Climate Specialist: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Student: _____ Date: _____

Notice of Parent Conference

Date:

Mr. and Mrs.

New London, Ct

Dear Mr. and Mrs.

Please be advised that a meeting will be convened on behalf of:

Student: _____ DOB: _____ Grade _____

The meeting is scheduled as follows:

Date:

Time:

Location:

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the outcome of the investigation of an alleged bullying incident that has been reported. At this meeting, the findings of the investigation will be shared and discussed, as will any other interventions or plans for ensuring a safe school experience for your child and others. Please make every effort to attend this meeting, as parent/guardian participation in this process is very important.

If you have any questions or wish to reschedule the meeting, please contact me at (860)

Sincerely,

NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SAFE SCHOOLS CLIMATE PLAN
VERIFIED ACTS OF BULLYING REPORTING SHEET

School: _____ Year: _____

Verified Acts of Bullying

Month	Number of Verified Acts
September	
October	
November	
December	
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	
Total Verified Acts	

New London Public Schools School Climate Survey Process

General Information

The New London Public Schools administers Climate Surveys annually in the spring of each year.

Surveys are available for the following stakeholder groups:

- Parents / Caregivers
- Staff
- Elementary Students (Grades 3 – 5 only)
- Secondary Students (Grades 6 – 12)

Note:

Administration of parent and staff surveys is mandatory.

Administration of student surveys is optional and at the discretion of the school leader.

Process

1. Email District Data Analyst and Coordinator (Beth McCaffery, mccafferye@newlondon.org) to indicate which surveys will be administered by your school
2. Provide in your email the following information:
 - Which survey(s) you will administer
 - Parent (mandatory)
 - Staff (mandatory)
 - Student (optional at elementary level, mandatory at secondary level)
 - Survey window dates, i.e. when to open the survey to accept responses and when to close the survey so that responses are no longer accepted
 - If you want to make paper copies available to each stakeholder group
 - If you need any of the surveys translated - please be specific about which survey and which language(s)
3. Once the survey window is closed, school survey responses will be collected and charted for use by the School Data Team (for analysis and action planning/goal setting)
4. Reports will be provided to Building Administrators prior to the start of the new school year