

South Hadley Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Retaliation Strictly Prohibited

Retaliation includes any adverse actions, such as intimidation, threats, harassment, or discrimination, taken against an individual, for reporting bullying or participating in an investigation of bullying incidents. Retaliation undermines the effectiveness of the District's bullying prevention efforts and has a negative effect on reporting, thereby perpetuating a cycle of silence and harm.

Retaliation against individuals who report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation is strictly prohibited within the South Hadley School District. The District is committed to ensuring that all individuals feel safe and are safe and supported in coming forward to report bullying behavior without fear of retaliation.

Reports of retaliation are taken seriously and will be promptly investigated in accordance with District policies and procedures. Individuals found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Restoring A Sense Of Safety For A Target and Assessing The Target's Needs For Protection

- **Immediate Support**

The South Hadley Public School District requires that the target of bullying receive immediate support and assistance. This may include, but depending upon the particular circumstance is not limited to, providing a safe space to talk and to receive reassurance and comfort from a trusted adult.

- **Assessment of Safety**

Each school within the South Hadley School District is required to conduct a thorough assessment of the targeted student's safety needs. This involves determining the severity and frequency of the bullying incidents, if confirmed as bullying, as well as identifying any potential physical or emotional harm. In many cases, following the safety assessment, the development of a Safety Plan may be an appropriate next step to ensure student safety following the incident and as a result of any post-investigation findings (see Individualized Support Plan, below).

- **Confidential Reporting**

South Hadley Public Schools ensures that any target of bullying, or any witness to bullying, will be provided a safe and confidential opportunity to report any such incident. This includes the provision of multiple reporting options, such as speaking to a teacher, counselor, administrator, or using anonymous reporting systems.

- **Individualized Support Plan**

Each school within the South Hadley School District must, based on the unique circumstances of each case, develop and implement an individualized support plan for the targeted student, as necessary, based on his/her/their specific needs and circumstances. Importantly, this plan will outline strategies for restoring the targeted student's sense of safety and well-being.

- **Safety Measures**

Each school within the South Hadley School District is required to implement appropriate safety measures to protect the targeted student from further harm. These may include changes to his/her/their daily routine and/or the daily routine of the aggressor, increased supervision in certain areas of the school, providing escorts between class and/or the development of a safety plan.

- **Social Emotional Support**

Each school within the South Hadley School District will provide support and counseling services to help the targeted student cope with the emotional impact of bullying. This support includes, but may not be limited to, providing the targeted student access to trained counselors or mental health professionals who can offer guidance and support. In many cases, school counselors and/or administrators may consult with the District Mental Health Coordinator in the development of age/stage and context appropriate social emotional supports.

- **Educational Support**

Each school within the South Hadley School District will ensure that the targeted student's educational needs are met during the challenging process following an incident of bullying. These efforts will include teachers and administrators working with the targeted student to provide accommodations as needed to support his/her/their academic success.

- **Communication with Caregivers**

Each school within the South Hadley School District will communicate regularly with the targeted student's caregivers to keep them informed about the situation and to seek their input on how best to support their student. This communication may include providing resources and guidance to caregivers on how they might support their child at home as well as providing them with information concerning available community resources.

- **Follow-Up and Monitoring**

Each school within the South Hadley School District is required to conduct regular follow-up meetings with the targeted student to assess his/her/their progress and to adjust support strategies as needed. This may include, but not limited to, monitoring the effectiveness of interventions and periodic assessments to ensure that the targeted student feels supported throughout the process.

- **Documentation and Record-Keeping**

Each school within the South Hadley School District must maintain detailed records of all incidents of bullying, actions taken, and support(s) provided to the targeted student. This may include documenting any changes in behavior or academic performance as a result of the bullying incidents.

- **Collaboration with Community Resources**

Each school within the South Hadley School District will collaborate with community resources, such as local law enforcement or mental health organizations, as necessary, to ensure the safety and well-being of the targeted student both in and out of school.

- **Empowerment and Advocacy**

Each school within the South Hadley School District will empower the targeted student to advocate for themselves and to assert their rights in situations of bullying. This may include providing education and resources on assertiveness, conflict resolution, and self-advocacy skills.

Protections From Bullying or Retaliation of Persons Reporting Bullying, Providing Information During a Bullying Investigation, Serving as a Witnesses to Bullying, or Providing Reliable Information about an Act of Bullying

- **Multiple Ways to Report**

Each school within the South Hadley School District will provide multiple confidential reporting options for individuals who report bullying, witness bullying, or have reliable information about bullying incidents. These options can include anonymous reporting systems, trusted adults and online reporting forms. The District will investigate additional alternative reporting mechanisms to support and encourage reporting.

- **Education on Reporting Procedures**

Each school within the South Hadley School District will educate students, staff, and caregivers annually on the importance of reporting bullying incidents and the procedures for doing so.

- **Immediate Support and Intervention**

Each school within the South Hadley Schools District will offer immediate support and intervention to individuals who report bullying or provide information during an investigation, including providing information to the alleged aggressor and/or other witnesses about confidentiality and prohibitions concerning retaliation.

- **Confidentiality Protocols**

Each school within the South Hadley School District will maintain strict confidentiality protocols to protect the identities of individuals who report bullying or provide information during investigations.

- Safety Measures

Each school within the South Hadley School District will implement safety measures to protect targeted students, witnesses or those contributing to an investigation, from bullying or retaliation. These may include changes to his/her/their daily routine and/or the daily routine of the aggressor(s), increased supervision in certain areas of the school, providing escorts between class and/or the development of a safety plan.

Individualized Safety Plans

Each school within the South Hadley School District will develop and implement individualized safety plans for individuals at risk of retaliation. Efforts will include collaborating with such individuals to identify potential risks and implement strategies to mitigate them.

Follow-Up Support

Each school within the South Hadley School District will conduct regular follow-up meetings with individuals who report bullying or provide information during investigations to assess their well-being and safety. These follow-up meetings will include ongoing support and assistance as needed.

Zero-Tolerance

Each school within the South Hadley School District will maintain a practice of zero-tolerance for bullying and retaliation. Zero tolerance does not mean that any school can guarantee a bully free environment at all times. Zero tolerance does mean that each school will zealously enforce consequences for all those engaging in such behaviors, holding any and all individuals engaging in such prohibited behavior accountable for their actions

Equal Protections for All Students Regardless of their Immigration Status Under the Law

Non-Discrimination

The South Hadley School District has established and does enforce non-discrimination policies that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on immigration status or any other protected category.

Safe and Inclusive Environment:

Each school within the South Hadley School District must develop, nurture and maintain a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment where all people within the school and district community are and feel valued, respected, and supported regardless of their immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, position, role or title or any characteristic used to otherize, disenfranchise or exclude.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

Each school within the South Hadley School District will protect the confidentiality and privacy of all students and will ensure that sensitive student information is not shared with unauthorized individuals or agencies without explicit consent from the student and/or their legal guardian.

Access to Education

Each school within the South Hadley School District guarantees equal access to education for all students, regardless of their immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, position, role or title or any characteristic used to otherize, disenfranchise or exclude. The district will ensure that all students have the equal opportunities to enroll in and attend school, participate in extracurricular activities, and receive support services.

Legal Protections

The South Hadley School District will annually familiarize students, caregivers, and staff with the legal protections available to all students, regardless of their immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, position, role or title or any characteristic used to otherize, disenfranchise or exclude. Information will be provided to staff about students' rights under federal and state laws, including the right to a free and appropriate public education.

Training and Professional Development

The South Hadley School District will provide training and professional development opportunities for school staff on issues related to immigration, diversity, and inclusion. The goal of such training will be to equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to support students and others and to address any concerns or challenges that may arise when trying to provide such supports.

Crisis Response Protocols

Each school within the South Hadley School District has developed and will implement crisis response protocols to address any emergencies or incidents involving students. Policies and practices are in place to ensure that school staff are prepared to respond effectively and sensitively to crisis situations as they arise.

Student Survey of School Climate*

An climate survey has been used by SHHS for a number of years. Modified versions of this student climate survey will be developed and implemented across the other schools unless current versions are age and stage appropriate and implemented.

Parent Template Letter

As part of the District's ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability, we want to inform you about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through this system.

The DESE's problem resolution system is designed to address concerns or disputes related to educational programs, services, or compliance with state and federal laws. This system provides an avenue for caregivers to seek assistance and resolution when they believe their child's educational rights may have been violated or if they have concerns about the quality of education provided.

*Implemented a minimum of every four years

Process for Seeking Assistance or Filing a Claim:

Gather Information: If you have concerns or believe there has been a violation of your child's educational rights, gather relevant information and documentation related to the issue.

Contact School Administrator: Start by contacting your child's school administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal) to discuss your concerns. They can provide information about the school's policies and procedures and may be able to resolve the issue informally.

Contact DESE Problem Resolution System: If your concerns are not resolved at the school level, you have the option to seek assistance from the DESE problem resolution system. You can contact DESE directly to file a complaint or seek assistance in resolving the issue.

[File a Complaint](#)

Submit Complaint or Request for Assistance: When contacting DESE, provide a detailed description of the issue, including relevant facts, dates, and documentation. You can submit a complaint or request for assistance through DESE's official channels at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/intake/default.html>

Investigation and Resolution: DESE will review the complaint or request for assistance and may conduct an investigation to gather additional information. They will work to resolve the issue in a timely and impartial manner, ensuring that your child's educational rights are protected.

Follow-Up and Feedback: DESE will communicate with you throughout the process and provide updates on the status of your complaint or request for assistance. After the issue is resolved, DESE may also follow up to ensure that the resolution is implemented effectively.

We want to assure you that our school is committed to addressing any concerns or issues that may arise and to ensuring that all students receive a high-quality education in a safe and supportive environment. We encourage open communication and collaboration between caregivers, school staff, and DESE to address concerns and resolve issues effectively.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the DESE problem resolution system, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to support you and your child every step of the way.