

OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MASSACHUSETTS SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55  
Marion – Mattapoisett – Rochester  
135 Marion Road, Mattapoisett, MA 02739

# **Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention Plan**

**Provided by the:  
Marion, Mattapoisett, Old Rochester and Rochester School Districts**

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## Introduction

The mission of our school system is to inspire all students to think, to learn, and to care.

The Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55 is dedicated to creating a safe and nurturing learning environment that offers inclusive and engaging educational experiences. Through collaborative relationships with our school community members, we strive to foster a respectful culture that prioritizes academic excellence and social emotional readiness. Our primary objective is to provide every student with the necessary skills and developed mindset to embrace future opportunities and become responsible, lifelong learners and contributing global citizens.

The core values of Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55 foster a strong sense of pride and belonging among all school community members. These values represent how our school community embraces the pursuit of academic excellence, models the respect and appreciation of human differences and prepares students to be responsible and accountable global citizens.

*Our school community will inspire us to:*

**THINK:**

Cultivate a culture of academic rigor and integrity which encourages critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, and effective communication.

**LEARN:**

Strive for academic excellence in educating the whole child through authentic, rigorous, and evidence-based learning opportunities that foster real world application and a continuous pursuit of learning.

**CARE:**

Ensure a caring and safe environment for all school community members by promoting a sense of belonging and respect for all.

In compliance with M.G.L.c.71,§ 370, the Old Rochester Regional School District and the Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55 have created this Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention Plan.

This Plan is rooted in the belief that bullying and harassment prevention involves a multi-layered approach to:

- create a welcoming and supportive educational community,
- raise awareness of aspects of community and school culture that support bullying behaviors,
- provide educational opportunities for the community, for parents, for all school staff, and for students,
- provide clear policies and guidelines for behavior, and
- establish protocols and action plans to address both the disciplinary and the therapeutic response of the schools to bullying and harassing behaviors.

We believe that involvement of not only community members, but community groups, as well as school personnel, students and parents, in a cohesive and all-inclusive effort to raise awareness of the issues contributing to bullying will be the most effective way to create an environment where all students and staff feel welcome and treated with respect and dignity.

This Plan applies to students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to educators,

administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals.

## **I. LEADERSHIP**

Within the Old Rochester, Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester School Districts (sometimes collectively referred to herein as “the Districts”) leadership at all levels has played a critical role in developing and implementing this Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention Plan (‘the Plan’) in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. In the Districts, leadership is defined as all faculty in the role of educating students, which includes but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, custodians, bus drivers, paraprofessionals and all other school personnel. Leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying and harassment. Leaders must involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the Plan.

### **A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan**

A team of faculty across buildings and levels initially drafted the Plan updates based on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, with suggestions from legal counsel. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, this Plan has been developed in consultation with parents, community members, law enforcement, teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, administrators, the school resource officer, school committee members and school councils. A draft version of this Plan was provided to all stakeholders through a series of open forum meetings, including School Council meetings, School Committee meetings, Policy Sub-Committee, and through feedback solicited individually, through Superintendent and Principal newsletters and the District website via Google Form.

### **B. Assessing Needs and Resources**

This Plan is the Districts’ blueprint for improving prevention and response to issues of bullying and harassment within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff, have assessed the adequacy of current programs, reviewed current policies and procedures, reviewed available data on bullying and behavioral incidents and assessed available resources (including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services). This ‘mapping’ process has assisted the Districts in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, the Districts have revised and developed policies and procedures, established partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement, and set priorities. The District administers a student survey every four years to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in schools. The survey results will be used to assess the effectiveness of bullying prevention curricula and instruction that is required under the bullying prevention and intervention statute. Additionally, building-specific data is regularly collected and analyzed on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying and this information has helped to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and has informed decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult

supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services.

### **Links to DESE State Students Discipline Data Report**

- [Marion School District Discipline Data Report](#)
- [Mattapoisett School District Discipline Data Report](#)
- [Rochester School District Discipline Data Report](#)
- [Old Rochester Regional Discipline Data Report](#)

### **C. Planning and Oversight**

Administrators from each respective school are responsible for the following: 1) receiving reports on incidents that could be determined to be bullying or harassment; 2) collecting and analyzing school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and trends, and to measure improved outcomes; 3) creating a process for recording and tracking incidents reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; 4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law and is responsive to the needs of the Districts' communities; 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 6) choosing and implementing the curricula, in partnership with central office administration, that the school or district will use; 7) developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them; 8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to ensure compliance with the law; 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and 10) reviewing and updating the Plan every two years, or more frequently if needed, with input from administrators, faculty, and the community.

### **D. Priority Statements**

Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55 affirm that all of our students are afforded the same protection regardless of their status under the law. The Districts are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and harassment. All students are afforded the same protection regardless of their status under the law. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

The Districts recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school and districts work to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

The Districts will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, harassment, or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will promptly investigate reports, including anonymous reports, and complaints of bullying, harassment, and retaliation, and take action to end that behavior, prevent its recurrence, and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent, guardian, or community involvement.

The Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and harassment. The Districts are committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening and responding to incidents of bullying and harassment. The school Principals (or administrative designees) are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying, harassment incident involves a principal or assistant principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for implementing the Plan, including addressing the safety and support of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee, or its designee shall be responsible for implementing the Plan, including addressing the safety and support of the alleged target. Throughout this document, the term "Principal/ Investigator" is used in describing responsibilities of the school principal which may be taken on by another designated administrator as described in this paragraph.

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

The Districts are dedicated to providing ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, substitutes, advisors to extracurricular activities, and coaches. Our plan for providing professional development is informed by research and reflects the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 370.

### **A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan**

The Districts have trained faculty representatives from each building to support the implementation of this Plan. Through this "Train-the-Trainer" Model, faculty representatives will serve as liaisons to all staff. Annual Training will be provided as part of Opening Day Faculty Orientation and as part of the Annual Professional Development Plan on one day per school year. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last year. In addition, Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention is discussed as an ongoing topic during faculty meetings to assure that faculty has a structured forum to raise issues and concerns related to the implementation of this Plan.

### **B. Ongoing Professional Development**

The Plan includes ongoing professional development to build the skills of all members of school staff to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development includes:

- developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
- developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among the aggressor, the target, and any witnesses to the bullying or harassment;
- research findings on bullying or harassment, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying or harassment in the school environment;
- the incidence and nature of cyberbullying and harassment; and
- internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying and harassment
- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying, harassment, or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing student’s Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disabilities affect social skills development.

C. Written Notice to Staff

All District employees will be provided a copy of the Plan. Additionally, staff also receive annual training about the Plan at the beginning of the school year. Portions of the Plan are published in the student handbooks and it is available as an electronic document on the Districts’ website at <https://www.oldrochester.org/>.

**III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. This Plan describes the strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the schools’ or Districts’ capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying and harassment, available services reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and harassment and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. This Plan also includes strategies for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets and family members of those students.

A. Resources

The Districts are well staffed to be able to provide consultation, counseling, and other services and supports for vulnerable populations including but not limited to potential and identified bullying or harassment targets, aggressors, and their families. These resources have been put in place to assist students who are experiencing academic, social- emotional or behavioral concerns.

B. Counseling and Other Services

All schools in the Districts are staffed with a school adjustment counselor or school social worker to provide a variety of services, including but limited to, check ins, individual case management, crisis screening and intervention, consultation for other faculty members, parents/guardians, and other school districts, individual counseling, group counseling, and collaboration with students' service providers outside of the school environment. These professionals, as well as administration and school psychologists, assist in developing safety and support plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation. Additionally, counselors provide social skills programs to prevent bullying and harassment, and offer education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. The Districts utilize these services as a means of supporting a positive school environment that focuses on early intervention and prevention of bullying or harassing behavior.

C. Students with Disabilities

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

D. Referrals to and/or Collaboration with Outside Services

The Districts have a protocol for referring students and families to appropriate services, in accordance with relevant laws and policies. School based counselors and other staff are available to assist families in identifying and connecting with appropriate community resources.

The Districts collaborate with and refer students to a wide range of community agencies to support students, staff, and parents/guardians. Some of these provide direct services, while others have useful information on ways to prevent and address bullying and harassment. These agencies/resources include but are not limited to, community psychiatrists and counselors, Community Service Agencies (CSA) for Medicaid eligible students, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Massachusetts Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS) and Department of Youth Services (DYS)/Probation. School counselors at each level can provide more contact information and referrals as needed.

**IV. ACADEMIC AND NONACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

A. Specific bullying and harassment prevention approaches

All students participate in social emotional learning curricula that are appropriate to their age and developmental level and are integrated into their school day. All curricula are evidence-based and instruction/implementation includes classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying and harassment prevention and social skills development.

The Districts utilize the following curricula/resources designed for specific age groups:

Elementary: “The Responsive Classroom” and the MARC K-5 Anti Bullying Curriculum, Second Step, Cyberbullying Research Center - How to Identify, Prevent and Respond, The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, Bullying/Cyberbullying | Safe Supportive Learning (ed.gov), supplemented by the Michele Garcia Winner’s Social Thinking Curriculum.

Junior High School and High School: “The Responsive Classroom”, PBIS curriculum, Educators for Social Responsibility, Cyberbullying Research Center - How to Identify, Prevent and Respond, The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, Bullying/Cyberbullying, Safe Supportive Learning (ed.gov), and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

Curriculum is continually assessed and revised as new, research-based curriculum becomes available. The Old Rochester, Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester School Districts utilize the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) as a primary resource for updating its Bullying Prevention and Intervention library.

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

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

B. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender nonconforming students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;

- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- support students' interests and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.
- communicating with parents/guardians regarding the schools' goals and expectations for students and student safety

## **V. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND/OR HARASSMENT**

### **Reporting Bullying and/or Harassment**

The Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55 School Districts are committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to intimidation, bullying, or harassment.

In the Districts, reports of potential bullying and/or harassment may be made by parent/guardians, students, District staff members, or other members of the community, and may be made orally or in writing. Staff members receiving an oral or written report must immediately record it using the Districts' form and forward to their building administration. If a staff member witnesses or becomes aware of any instance of bullying and/or harassment, they are required to immediately report it to the Principal/Investigator. Anonymous reports may also be made by students, families, and other community members using the Anonymous Reporting Form located on the Districts' website, or by mailing a letter to the school or District office. The bullying/harassment report form can be found on each school's web page under the Families and Students section. For example: [Bullying Report Form](#). While reports may be made anonymously, no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

If an individual is being targeted based upon membership in or identification with a protected class, the Districts' anti-harassment policy applies. All reports of bullying and/or harassment are investigated with consideration to the definitions of bullying and harassment, as there is frequent overlap between and among these behaviors and a report of bullying may actually be found to be harassment, and the other way around. A finding of both bullying and harassment is also possible.

To support the community in reporting bullying and/or harassment incidents, the Districts:

1. Make the bullying and harassment Incident Report Form available in each school's main office, the guidance office, nurse's office, central office, and other locations determined necessary by the school administration;
2. Post the Incident Report Form on the Districts' website; and
3. Make the Incident Report Form available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents/guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the Districts provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents/guardians with online written notice of its procedures for reporting acts of bullying or harassment. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal/Director, is incorporated into each of the

Student Handbooks, on the Districts' website, and in the information about the Plan made available to parents/guardians. This information is also provided in languages other than English.

### **Responding to a Report of Bullying, Harassment, or Retaliation**

The Districts' Principals/Investigators follow structured checklists for responding when they receive a report of bullying and/or harassment. These steps are described briefly below.

1. Restore Sense of Safety for Target

The first response to a report of alleged bullying, harassment, or retaliation is to inform the alleged target's parent/guardian about the report and set up a meeting or phone conference to restore the student's sense of safety. Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying and/or harassment, the Principal or designee, will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the alleged target and/or the alleged aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the alleged target; and altering the alleged aggressor's schedule and access to the alleged target. The Principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary for all parties involved. These steps take place prior to an investigation, as restoring safety is the first priority. Parents/guardians have input in developing the Support Plan and/or interim measures and they receive a written copy in their primary language.

2. Notify appropriate parties

a. Notice to parents/ guardians

The next step is to formally notify parents/ guardians of both the alleged target and the alleged aggressor, orally and in writing, that bullying, harassment or retaliation has been reported and an investigation will take place. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00. If the alleged aggressor is a staff member, the notification goes directly to the employee with copies also forwarded to the Superintendent and Human Resources Director.

b. Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from outside of the District, the Principal/ Investigator must promptly notify the principal of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communication will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying, harassment or retaliation, if the Principal/Investigator has a reasonable basis to believe that a crime has been committed and criminal charges may be pursued against an alleged aggressor, they will notify the relevant town's police department. Notice is consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00.

d. Notice to the Department of Children and Families

If a reported incident results in a mandated reporter having a reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is suffering from abuse and/or neglect, the matter will be reported to DCF in a manner consistent with state law and district policy.

3. Investigate

The Principal/ Investigator promptly investigates reports of bullying, harassment or retaliation and, in doing so, considers all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. During the investigation the principal conducts interviews, beginning with the alleged target. Students, staff, and community witnesses are interviewed, as is the alleged aggressor(s). The Principal/ Investigator instructs all parties of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful, and the fact that retaliation against someone who participates in a bullying or harassment investigation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. Relevant documents and other available evidence (e.g. screen shots, emails, etc.) are collected. To the extent practicable, and given their obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal/ Investigator maintains confidentiality during the investigation process. The Principal/ Investigator keeps a written record of the investigation. Procedures for investigating reports of bullying, harassment and retaliation are consistent with the Districts' procedures for investigations. As needed, the Principal/ Investigator, in consultation with the Superintendent, consults with the Districts' legal counsel about the investigation.

#### 4. Determinations

When the investigation is complete, the Principal/ Investigator considers all of the information and evidence gathered and makes a determination based upon the facts and circumstances. The Principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending on the circumstances, the Principal or designee may consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or counselors, and the target's or aggressor's parents/guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional concern(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development or counseling.

The Principal/ Investigator promptly notifies the parents/ guardians of the alleged target and the alleged aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying, harassment or retaliation is substantiated, what action(s) is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying, harassment or retaliation. Notices to parents/ guardians are in compliance with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because student and personnel records are confidential, the Principal/ Investigator cannot report specific information to the target's parents/ guardians about disciplinary actions taken unless they involve a "stay away" order or other directives that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The Principal/ Investigator informs the parent/ guardian of the target about the [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System](#) and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying, harassment, or retaliation determination. This information will be made available in both hard and electronic formats.

Following the determination and the ordering of safety, remedial, and/or disciplinary measures, the Principal/ Investigator ensures ongoing contact with the target to determine whether the prohibited conduct recurs and whether additional supportive measures are needed.

The Principal/Investigator ensures the protection from bullying, harassment or retaliation for anyone who: reports bullying, harassment or retaliation; witnesses bullying, harassment or retaliation; provides information during an investigation; has reliable information about a

reported act of bullying, harassment or retaliation.

## 5. Responses to Bullying or Harassment

### 1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skill-building

Upon the Principal/Investigator's determination that bullying, harassment or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the schools or Districts use a range of responses balancing the needs for safety, accountability, and education. The first priority in developing a response to ensure that the bullying or harassment stops. A Safety Plan may be developed with administration, parents and school guidance counselors. If a Safety plan is developed, it will be shared with parents and all teachers, specialists, staff, and extended day staff who work with the students to ensure implementation.

Skill building approaches that the Principal/Investigator may consider include but are not limited to the following:

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

### 2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Principal decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or investigator, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's and district's code of conduct. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvements Act (IDEA) and Section 504, which should be read in coordination with state laws regarding student discipline.

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

### 3. Promoting safety for the target and others

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

Within a reasonable period of time (specific to each situation and in consultation with parents/guardians) following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary

action, the Principal or designee will follow up with the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

#### 4. Addressing School Climate and Culture

If there is a finding of civil rights harassment, the school climate and culture must be considered to determine if these contribute to a hostile school environment for members of protected classes. Steps should be taken to restore a sense of community and inclusion for all students and staff members. These can include but are not limited to professional development for faculty and staff, as well as educational opportunities for students.

RESPONSE PLAN – The Districts’ Response Plan may include the implementation of the below action steps, as appropriate.

<b>Target Safety</b>	<b>Remediation Actions</b>	<b>Disciplinary Actions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Guidelines for avoiding further unnecessary contact with the target</li> <li>o Clarification about who will be notified</li> <li>o Notify appropriate staff about incident and danger of further contact</li> <li>o Strategies to avoid further bullying (e.g., script, role playing, etc)</li> <li>o Identifying trusted adults</li> <li>o Education about rights to be free of retaliation and reasonable expectations about social consequences for being part of a bullying investigation (e.g., people will talk about it, but they may not retaliate)</li> <li>o Periodic check-ins</li> <li>o School-wide or classroom community meetings</li> <li>o Identification and empowerment of bystanders</li> <li>o Education about technology</li> <li>o Increased Monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Counseling</li> <li>o Education including strategies to prevent repeating behavior.</li> <li>o Revision of IEP, if applicable</li> <li>o Individual Behavior Plan</li> <li>o Referral to Special Education, as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Admonishment, warning</li> <li>o Loss of privileges</li> <li>o Classroom or administrative detention</li> <li>o In-school suspension during the school week or the weekend</li> <li>o Out-of-school suspension</li> <li>o Legal action</li> <li>o Consequences for repeat offenses</li> </ul>

### Bullying and Harassment Prevention & Intervention Incident Process

<b><i>Initial Actions</i></b>
Receipt of Report of Bullying (verbal OR written)
Notify the Civil Rights and Title IX Coordinator (verbal AND written)
Restore a sense of safety for the alleged target and protect the alleged target from possible further incidents
Notify Parents of Alleged Target and Request Meeting (verbal AND written)
Notify Parents of Alleged Aggressor(s) – (verbal AND written)
Develop Support Plan for Target and Safety Plan for alleged Aggressor, as needed
<b><i>Investigation Process</i></b>
Interview Alleged Target
Interview Alleged Aggressor(s)
Interview Student Witness(es)
Interview Adult/Staff Witness(es)
Review of All Applicable Documentation/Evidence (Incident Reports, Witness Statements, Screen Shots, Social Media etc.)
Draft Investigation Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Statement of Allegations</li> <li>● Summary of Interviews</li> <li>● Summary of Documents Reviewed</li> <li>● Findings and Conclusions</li> </ul>
<b><i>Follow Up Actions</i></b>
Notify Parents of Alleged Target of Findings
Notify Parents of Alleged Aggressor(s) of Findings
Take Necessary Actions and/or Implement Consequences. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support Plan</li> <li>● Safety Plan(s)</li> <li>● Ongoing Monitoring</li> <li>● Education, Teaching, Training</li> <li>● <b>Discipline (FOLLOW DISCIPLINE PROCESS)</b></li> </ul>
<b><i>Special Considerations/Circumstances</i></b>
If Aggressor(s) are Staff – <b>NOTIFY HUMAN RESOURCES</b>
Is the Bullying alleged based on one or more Protected Class? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Race/Color</li> <li>● Religion/Creed</li> <li>● National Origin</li> <li>● Sexual Orientation</li> <li>● Sex</li> <li>● Gender Identity</li> <li>● Age</li> <li>● Disability</li> <li>● Pregnancy or pregnancy related condition</li> <li>● Veteran’s Status</li> </ul>

OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
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- Citizenship

**IF YES, FOLLOW CIVIL RIGHTS PROCESS**

**VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

- A. Parent education and resources. Old Rochester, Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester School Districts provide community forums on topics related to a positive, inclusive school culture in collaboration with local Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs), PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), and other similar organizations. In addition, principals will notify parents when students are receiving curriculum instruction around this topic. For individual students who may be identified as a bullying or harassment target or aggressor, families are informed and have an opportunity to partner with the school. School counselors may recommend connections with community-based organizations if a family is in need of additional support services. Additional resources are available to families online: [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Resources](#).
- B. Notification requirements. At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians are informed about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used through communication from the Building Principal. This notice includes information about how they can support their children at home, the dynamics of bullying and harassment, including cyberbullying and online safety, as well as the student-related sections of the Plan and the Districts' Internet policy. The Old Rochester, Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester School Districts will post the Plan and related information on its website. Additionally, portions of the Plan are published in the Student Handbook, which is updated regularly and housed on the Districts' website.

**VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING and RETALIATION**

Acts of bullying or harassment, which include cyberbullying and retaliation, are prohibited:

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

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

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

non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

### **Bullying and Harassment via technology**

All district policies and procedures concerning bullying and harassment continue to apply in full during any part of the school year that students are engaged in online learning. Cyber-bullying and harassment includes bullying or harassment through the use of technology or any electronic communication and is prohibited under Massachusetts' anti-bullying, harassment law. Similarly, harassment is not dependent on the means by which the harassment is carried out and includes forms of electronic communication.

### **VIII. DEFINITIONS**

**Aggressor** is a student or staff member who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment, cyberbullying, or retaliation under state law or district policy.

**Bullying**, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O and adopted by the Districts, is the repeated use by one or more students or staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- A. Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property
- B. Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property
- C. Creates a hostile environment at school for the target
- D. Infringes on the rights of the target at school
- E. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

**Harassment** is conduct of a verbal, written, electronic, or physical nature directed towards a person of a protected class based on their race, sex, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, or disability that is designed to distress, agitate, threaten or endanger, students includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, marital status or disability which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment. Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- **Cyberbullying/harassment** is bullying or harassment through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, tablets, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, social media postings, and other Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.
- **Sexual Harassment** is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature determined by a reasonable person to be subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive, that it effectively denies a person equal access to the district's education program or activity. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment.

- **Gender-based Harassment** is unwelcome conduct based on a student's actual or perceived sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. It includes slurs, taunts, stereotypes, or name-calling, as well as gender-motivated physical threats, attacks, or other hateful conduct.

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

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

**Staff** includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

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

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

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Districts, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§, 37H3/4, 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

## **X. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM**

Any parent/ guardian wishing to file a claim or concern, or who is seeking assistance outside of the Districts may do so by contacting the Department of Elementary and Secondary Problem Resolution System (PRS). More information about PRS can be found at <http://doe.mass.edu/prs>.

The PRS specialist assigned to the Districts can be found at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/intake/default.html> or an email can be sent to the general PRS mailbox at [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu).

For complaints involving federal civil rights laws, parents/guardians may contact:  
Administrative agencies with jurisdiction in these matters include:  
The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination ("MCAD")

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One Ashburton Place, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108 (617) 727-3990

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights  
5 Post Office Square 8th Floor  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
(617) 289-0111

Massachusetts Department of Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148  
(781) 388-3300

## BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

### I. INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. **Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:** *This line may be left blank if an anonymous report is being made*  
(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the: **Target of the behavior**  **Reporter (not the target)**

3. Check whether you are a:  **Student**  **Staff member (specify role)** \_\_\_\_\_  
 **Parent**  **Administrator**  **Other (specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact information/telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

4. If student, state your school: \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. If staff member, state your school or work site: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Information about the Incident:

**Name of Alleged Target (of behavior):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Alleged 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):** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ • Student • Staff • Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ • Student • Staff • Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ • Student • Staff • Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. 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 the back if necessary.

### FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

9. **Signature of Person Filing this Report:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

10: **Form Given to:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Received:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**II. INVESTIGATION**

1. Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Position(s): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Interviews:
- Interviewed alleged aggressor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Interviewed alleged target Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Interviewed witnesses Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Any prior documented incidents by the alleged aggressor?  Yes  No  
If yes, have incidents involved alleged target or target group previously?  Yes  No  
Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION  Yes  No

Summary of Investigation:

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

**III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION**

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:  YES  NO
- Conduct based on protected class \_\_\_\_\_
  - Bullying  Incident documented as \_\_\_\_\_
  - Retaliation  Discipline referral only \_\_\_\_\_
2. Contacts:
- Target's parent/guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Assistant Supt. of Student Services Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Law Enforcement Date: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Action Taken:
- Loss of Privileges  Detention  Suspension  Referral
  - Community Service  Education  Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Describe Safety Planning: \_\_\_\_\_
- Follow-up with Target: scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and date when completed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and date when completed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Report forwarded to Principal: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_