Cambridge Public Schools Domestic Violence and Teen Dating Violence Administrative Guidelines

I. Introduction

As detailed in the Cambridge Public Schools Policy Against Domestic Violence and the Cambridge Public Schools Policy Against Teen Dating Violence, the Cambridge Public Schools is committed to providing a learning environment in which domestic violence and teen dating violence are not tolerated. Consistent with this philosophy, the Cambridge Public Schools is committed to promoting an environment free from domestic violence and teen dating violence. Accordingly, the Cambridge Public Schools seeks to increase awareness of domestic violence and teen dating violence and help in responding to the needs of victims and children who are witnesses to such violence.

The Cambridge Public Schools seeks to:

- educate all students about domestic violence and teen dating violence;
- educate all students about school department and school-based rules;
- intervene when any acts of domestic violence or teen dating violence are observed;
- To respond appropriately to students and/or employees who disclose that they are victims of domestic violence and/or teen dating violence; and
- implement programs to reduce teen dating violence and domestic violence

Domestic violence and/or teen dating violence occurring in any setting is unlawful and domestic violence and teen dating violence occurring in any school or work related setting will not be tolerated. Further, retaliation against an individual who has complained about domestic violence or teen dating violence or cooperated in an investigation of domestic violence or teen dating violence will not be tolerated. The Cambridge Public Schools will respond promptly to complaints and reports of domestic violence, teen dating violence or retaliation and corrective action will be taken where necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while these guidelines set forth the goals of the Cambridge Public Schools of promoting an educational and work environment free from domestic violence and teen dating violence, it is neither designed nor intended to limit the Cambridge Public Schools' authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which the Cambridge Public Schools deems to be unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definitions of violence set forth below.

II. Definitions

For purposes of these guidelines, the following definitions are used:

Domestic Violence/ interpersonal violence: Domestic Violence is a pattern of coercive behavior in which one partner attempts to control another through threats or actual use of tactics, which may include any or all of the following: physical, sexual, verbal, financial, and psychological abuse.

Domestic Violence affects every community across the country, regardless of ethnic group, culture, or background. People of all ages, income levels, faiths, sexual orientation, gender, and education levels experience domestic violence.

Teen Dating Violence: Dating violence (or relationship abuse) is a pattern of over-controlling behavior that someone uses against their romantic partner. Dating violence can take many forms, including mental/emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. Someone may experience dating violence even if there is no physical abuse. It can occur in both casual dating situations and serious, long-term relationships.

Child Witness/Exposure to Domestic Violence: Witnessing violence can affect every aspect of a child's life, growth, and development. Exposure can include seeing or hearing the abuse, discovering the effects of abuse (their parent/guardian/caregiver's injuries or broken furniture, etc.) and/or being injured/hurt defending a parent/guardian/caregiver against the abusive behavior.

Family Violence*:* Family violence is a broader definition, including child abuse, elder abuse, and other violent acts between family members.

Battered/Victim/Survivor: interchangeable terms to refer to the person who has been hurt, abused or threatened with harm.

Batterer/Abuser/Perpetrator: interchangeable terms to refer to the person inflicting the abuse and causing harm

Additionally, such conduct may also constitute harassment, a form of discrimination that is prohibited by federal and state law as well as by the Cambridge Public Schools Non-Discrimination Policy, Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy and/or the Cambridge Public Schools Anti-Bullying Policy.

III. Recognizing Warning Signs

Signs of abusive behavior include: acting really jealous if their romantic partner talks to others, trying to decide what the other should do, blowing disagreements out of proportion, constantly threatening to break up, losing their temper verbally, blaming the other for their own problems, and physically and emotionally hurting their partner.

Signs of victimization include: constantly cancelling plans for reasons that do not sound right, always worrying about making their romantic partner angry, giving up things that are important to them, showing signs of physical abuse, such as bruises or cuts, getting pressured into having sex or feeling like a sex object, having a romantic partner that wants them to be available all the time, and becoming isolated from family or friends.

IV. Procedure for Reporting Domestic Violence or Teen Dating Violence

Procedures for Students

A student who believes that they have been a victim of domestic violence or teen dating violence, believes that they are in danger of teen dating violence, or has a restraining order against an individual, may report the matter to any of the following individuals: (1) Principal, (2) Assistant Principal, (3) Dean, or (4) other appropriate school administrator.

The person who receives the report must immediately notify the principal.

Additionally, any employee who observes an incident of domestic violence and/or teen dating violence on school property or at a school related event, must immediately notify the principal.

The principal must immediately do the following: (1) notify the parents/guardians/caregivers of the victim, and (2) notify the Office of Safety and Security.

Where a report is against a caregiver, please also follow the Cambridge Public Schools Administrative Guidelines Regarding Child Abuse and Neglect, which addresses reporting obligations to the Department of Child and Family Services in filing a 51A report. The principal must also refer the student and/or the student's parents/guardians/caregivers to the Cambridge Public Schools Non-Discrimination Policy and Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy which address procedures for informal resolution and filing of formal complaints and the Cambridge Public Schools Anti-Bullying Policy and provide copies of the same upon request.

When a report of domestic violence or teen dating violence occurring on school property or at a school related event, or a violation of a restraining order on school property or at a school related event is received, the Cambridge Public Schools will act promptly to notify the appropriate authorities of the alleged incident. Reporting of any such incident will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

It is important to take third party information seriously where teen dating violence is concerned. It is recommended that a school staff member who has a relationship with the student in question, approach the student to discuss what has been heard and potential concerns. If abuse is acknowledged, a "safety plan" should be worked on, in addition to

recommending and sharing referrals for counseling, support groups and police/court assistance.

Additionally, school staff must remember to comply with all statutory reporting obligations for suspected abuse and neglect (51A reporting). Filing of 51A complaints should be done by following the Cambridge Public Schools Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Guidelines, including notifying the principal of the suspected abuse and neglect. Furthermore, school staff also must remember to report all crimes to the police. Staff should notify the principal, who will notify the Director of Safety and Security, who will coordinate notification to the police.

If the student in is immediate danger or is requesting immediate assistance, call the Office of Safety and Security immediately and call 911.

Procedures for Employees

An employee who believes that they have been a victim of domestic violence or has a restraining order against an individual may report the matter to any of the following individuals: (1) Principal, (2) Supervising Administrator, or (3) Executive Director of Human Resources.

The person who receives the report must advise the employee who believes that they have been a victim of domestic violence of their right to contact the Cambridge Police Department and must also refer the employee to the Cambridge Public Schools Non-Discrimination Policy and Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy which address procedures for informal resolution and filing of formal complaints and the Cambridge Public Schools Anti-Bullying Policy and provide copies of the same upon request, and encourage the employee to contact the Employee Assistance Program for assistance, counseling, safety planning and referrals. In addition, where allegations are of a serious nature, the person receiving the report must notify the Office of Human Resources and, where appropriate, the Office of Safety and Security.

If the employee in is immediate danger or is requesting immediate assistance, call the Office of Safety and Security immediately and call 911.

V. Procedures When The School Is Provided With A Copy of a Restraining Order

When a **student** or an **employee** has a restraining order against an individual and provides a copy of the order to the school, the principal should hold a meeting with the employee or with the student and their parents/guardians/caregivers to review the restraining order and its implications. A "safety plan" should be worked out to address the victim's needs and concerns, including staff to whom the student or employee may report if any concerns arise or any violation of the restraining order occurs while the student or employee is on school property or at a school related event. If the restraining order is against another student or an employee, a separate meeting should be held with that individual to review the restraining order and its implications, expectations and the consequences for violation of the order.

VI. Strategies for Speaking with a Student or Employee about Domestic Violence or Teen Dating Violence

1. Communicate your concern for the individual's safety and the safety of the individual's other family members (if applicable).

2. Tell the individual that you believe them and that what is happening is wrong. No one deserves to be hurt.

3. Tell the individual about services available to them (see section IV above).

4. Be clear that your role is to try to help and not to judge.

5. If speaking with a student, consult with the (1) Principal, (2) Assistant Principal, (3) Dean, or (4) other appropriate School Administrator. If speaking with an employee consult with the (1) Principal, (2) Supervising Administrator, or (3) Executive Director of Human Resources. These individuals may identify other resources or staff who have expertise in counseling individuals in such situations. In either situation, if there are concerns about school and/or workplace safety consult with the Director of Safety and Security.

6. Make sure all consultations and reporting of any incidents are conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

7. Avoid becoming overly involved in counseling the individual or offering personal favors. Maintain your professional relationship with the student or employee.

8. If you are concerned that an individual may be in an abusive relationship, you can be supportive.

   You can ask:

   Is someone hurting you?
   Did someone hurt you?
   Are you afraid of your partner?
   Has your partner ever hit/kicked/hurt you?
   Is there someone from a previous relationship making you feel unsafe now?

   You can say:

- I believe you.

- You are not alone. There are many people who have gone through this.
- I care about you, and I know how hard it is to talk about this.
- You don't deserve to be hurt, you've done nothing wrong, this is not your fault.
- What is happening is wrong.
- You know best what your partner may do. It's always best to have a plan in place.
- I can give you a number to call for help and advice.
- You are not alone. How can I help you?

What NOT to say:

- Why don't you just leave?
- Why did you return to your partner?
- What did you do to provoke your partner?
- Why did you wait so long to tell someone?
- Also, do not use labels ("You're crazy to stay with your partner.") and do not tell the individual what to do (this does not prohibit you from making the referrals detailed above in Section IV)

VII. Disciplinary Action

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed the Cambridge Public Schools will take such action as it deems appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from counseling, discipline of an employee up to termination of employment, or suspension or expulsion of a student from school.

VIII. Other Remedies

In addition to reporting a domestic violence and/or teen dating violence incident that occurs on school property or at a school related event in accordance with the procedures above, an employee or student who believes that they have been the victim of domestic violence and/or teen dating violence on school property or at a school related event may also file a complaint of harassment in accordance with the procedures set forth in either the Cambridge Public Schools Non-Discrimination Policy and/or Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy or the Cambridge Public Schools Anti-Bullying Policy.

Employees and students who believe that they are in danger may also seek a restraining order to protect a person from physical pain or injury or the threat of pain or injury by filing an application for a restraining order at the local courthouse.

IX. Resources

For Employers, Managers and Supervisors

National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233); TTY 1-800-787-3224; TEXT "START" to 88788; https://www.workplacesrespond.org/contact/

Employers Against Domestic Violence Telephone 978-808-7700

Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence email work@caepr; www.caepv.org

For Cambridge Public Schools administrators, managers and supervisors, Employee Assistance Program Telephone 1-888-993-7650

For Employees

For Cambridge Public Schools employees, Employee Assistance Program Telephone 1-888-993-7650

SAFELINK (24 hour live response hotline for emergency shelter, counseling, safety planning and resources). Telephone 877-785-2020

Transition House (24 hour crisis line, emergency shelter, education and outreach). Telephone 617-661-7203

Cambridge Police Department, Domestic Violence Unit Telephone 617-349-3371

For Batters

Emerge: Counseling and Education to Stop Domestic Violence Telephone 617-547-9879

Common Purpose: Working to Stop Violence and Abuse Telephone 617-522-6500

Policy References: *GBGB-2, GCCC, JICFB-E-1*
Legal References: *M.G.L.c. 71, §§1 & 2C; 119, §51A*
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