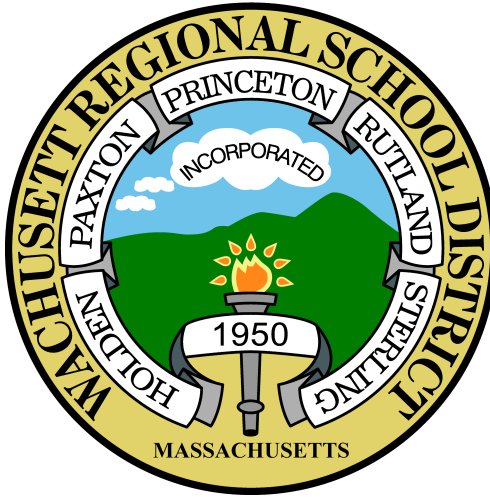


WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN - PAXTON - PRINCETON - RUTLAND - STERLING



Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Previous Update: December 2023
Biennial Review December 2025

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Wachusett Regional School District Vision

A safe, supportive, and inspiring learning community where our students grow to be creative and independent thinkers, compassionate and kind individuals, responsible and empowered citizens, and curious life-long learners

Our Mission

To ensure a vibrant, inclusive, and respectful educational community in which we:

- Foster a safe, nurturing, and welcoming environment
- Provide all students with equitable opportunities for deep and meaningful learning through multiple pathways
- Empower all students to develop and apply their unique strengths, passions, and curiosities
- Partner with our community to meet our goals while optimizing the effective and efficient use of our resources

Our Core Values

Collaboration

Empathy

Inclusivity

Integrity

Perseverance

Responsibility

I: LEADERSHIP

The Wachusett Regional School District (WRSD) will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior 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 involvement.

The WRSD Leadership is committed to implementing the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") and in conjunction with community efforts, to promote and ensure a safe and positive teaching and learning environment. The WRSD fosters and strives to maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. WRSD recognizes that leadership at all levels plays a critical role in developing and implementing the District's Plan in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote a positive school climate.

District leaders, community leaders, teachers, parents, guardians, and student leaders have a primary role in teaching students to regard one another in a respectful, civil, and dignified manner to create an environment that improves and sustains the emotional and behavioral health of all students. These stakeholders will promote understanding and respect for diversity and differences in all venues through modeling respectful behavior and promoting and sustaining a commitment to programs that are focused on supporting social-emotional development at all grade levels.

This Plan is just one part of a comprehensive effort to promote learning, understanding and acceptance of differences, and to eliminate all forms of harmful and disruptive behavior from our school community. The WRSD will provide age-appropriate anti-bullying educational experiences for all students in the district. As a school district, WRSD will enhance student achievement by creating and maintaining an educational environment where all students feel safe. In the unlikely event that a student feels uncomfortable, the school culture will strongly support student communication of their concerns to teachers, staff, administrators, parents or guardians.

A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the WRSD Plan was originally developed in consultation with school staff, professional support personnel, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, parents, and guardians.

Prior to the presentation of this plan to the School Committee for purposes of amendment/revision, a final draft of the Plan will be made available on the WRSD website for Public Comment. The Plan will be reviewed and updated biennially (every 2 years).

B. Implementation

Consistent with applicable laws and regulations, all Principals, with the support of the Superintendent and/or the School Committee, will implement the following documents/action plans:

- Receive and investigate reports of Bullying

- Plan intervention support strategies that meet the needs of the targets, aggressors, retaliators, and bystanders involved in the reported incidents
- Choose and implement a Bullying Prevention Curriculum that each school will use
- Review, and where necessary, update District student and staff handbooks, and codes of conduct
- Lead parent, guardian, and family engagement efforts by providing appropriate informational materials for this group
- Collect, analyze, and report on building and district-wide data on past bullying incidents to understand trends and patterns, define the present problem, and create a baseline from which to measure improved outcomes
- Create a Records Retention Plan for incidents

C. Planning & Oversight

The Plan has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including school and district administrators, school-based mental health staff, parents/guardians, school committee members, and local law enforcement. The Principal or designee is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan within their school, except when a reported bullying incident involves the Principal or Assistant Principals as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report and other related steps, including addressing the safety of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report and other steps necessary to implement the plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target.

II: TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the WRSD provides ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals as well as providing opportunities for parents, guardians, and community members to participate in this anti-bullying/ cyber-bullying initiative.

All stakeholders in the WRSD must be made aware of the state anti-bullying law and how it impacts the definitions, reporting, investigation, and punishment of bullying incidents. Our School Committee, administrators, and faculty will be responsible for disseminating the information set forth in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

A. Annual staff training on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

School-based annual training for all school staff by the building Principal or designee will include:

- Staff responsibilities under the law and District policies;
- An overview of the steps that the Principal or his/her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation;
- Modeling bystander expectations and reporting procedures;
- An overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grade levels at each school in the district.
- Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in this 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 two (2) years.

B. Ongoing professional development.

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the tools available for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development builds upon the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying incidents. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and district-wide professional development is informed by research and includes information on:

- Effective and developmentally or age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally or age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to bullying;
- Current research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Current information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying;
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also continue to address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 Plans.

Additional areas identified by the WRSD for professional development may include:

- Emphasizing the importance of establishing and maintaining supportive student-teacher/staff relationships in school
- Emphasizing the importance of repairing harm (repairing relationships) in alignment with the Restorative Practices approach
- Teaching empathy, perspective-taking, and respect for the diversity and differences that exist among people
- Focusing on building students' social-emotional learning competencies and skills
- Incorporating trauma-sensitive teaching strategies
- Strategies for promoting prosocial bystander actions

C. Written notice to staff

The District will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan. Sections related to staff responsibilities will be included in the District Employee Handbook.

III: ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting a positive school climate is ensuring that the underlying social and emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed.

In order to enhance the District's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, these services will be available to reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and to provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors.

The Superintendent or their designee will regularly update and provide to all schools a list of mental health resources available in the community, as well as community programs/partnerships that support student well-being. School administrators, staff, and parents will collaborate in determining appropriate referral services.

A. Identifying resources

WRSD will annually review its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This will include a review of current staffing and programs that foster positive school culture, as well as identifying any gaps in services and resources that need to be addressed. Principals will assess the needs of their individual schools in order to analyze existing resources.

B. Counseling and other services

The WRSD will work collaboratively with school mental health staff and outside agencies to maintain a list of providers that will support schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Schools may consider current tools, including, but not limited to: behavioral intervention plans, restorative practices, social skills groups, and other related resources and approaches. The District will reference the American School Counseling Association for guidance on these matters.

C. Students with disabilities

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

D. Referral to outside services

The District will use a referral procedure for referring students and families to outside services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and local policies.

E. Student Surveys and Data Collection

At least once every four (4) years, the WRSD will administer a student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools.

Additionally, the District will annually report bullying incident data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Data from these surveys will be compiled and shared with District and school administration, as well as the School Committee, in order to promote continual improvement.

IV: ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

WRSD seeks to create a safe, respectful, and caring school and classroom environment for all students regardless of their race, color, national origin, creed, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, family situation, or disability. WRSD will lay the foundation for a positive school climate in pre-school and will continue to teach, nurture, and positively reinforce prosocial behavior throughout students' academic experiences.

- Each grade level will be provided with developmentally-appropriate and evidence-based curriculum and instruction to teach pro-social skills that support academic success. Engaging Schools identifies these skill sets as follows: ([see Appendix C: Learning & Life Competencies](#))
 1. **Self-Awareness:** *The ability to accurately assess my feelings, behavior, interests, values, and strengths through my experiences, and name and describe the benefits of skills, behaviors, and mindsets that help me to be a good student.*
 2. **Self-Management:** *The ability to express emotions skillfully, manage my emotions by using strategies, sustain focus and pay attention, and accept help, feedback, correction, or consequences with goodwill.*
 3. **Social Efficacy:** *The ability to listen respectfully, make an effort to understand the emotions, words, and actions of others, and help and support others.*
 4. **Academic Efficacy:** *The ability to invest in quality work, organize to learn and study, and set goals and self-assess.*
- The entire school community (e.g., students, teachers, parents, bus drivers, lunchroom staff, janitorial staff, etc.) will work collaboratively to promote a caring and supportive school environment among all of its staff and students.

A. Non-Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:

- The administration will review student behavioral expectations during assemblies during the first few weeks of school.
- The definition of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and the protocol for handling incidents of bullying will be emphasized.
- Staff presence will be increased in areas where bullying is most likely to occur, such as bus arrival and departure locations, hallways, lunchrooms, recess, and near restrooms.
- A variety of evidence-based prevention programs to promote diversity awareness and respect for self and others will be explored and offered. District schools currently use the following programs: Second Step, Responsive Classroom, MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center), and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) ([See Appendix B for full descriptions of these programs](#))
- Schools will create opportunities for students to engage in a variety of activities that are meaningful to them and that help them to feel positively connected to the school and/or the local community.
- Schools will promote a culture of kindness and community where students are empowered to speak out against bullying.

B. Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:

- When possible, Learning and Life Competencies for School Success, including related target behaviors, will be incorporated into classroom activities and instruction, as well as other aspects of the school day ([See Appendix C](#))

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

WRSD will investigate all bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation incidents in a fair, timely, and thorough manner while being mindful of personal privacy rights and the stigma that a student may experience from being labeled in some way or another. Verified incidents of bullying, in all of its forms, will be addressed appropriately. Dispositions will begin with education and, when deemed necessary, will move to progressively sterner measures including, for students, possible long-term suspension from school and, for employees, termination of employment.

All disciplinary actions will balance the need for safety and accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior and/or lagging social-emotional skills ([see Learning & Life Competencies in Appendix C](#)).

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation:

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents /guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member will be recorded in writing.

A school or District staff member is required to report immediately to the Principal or designee, or to the Superintendent or designee, when the Principal or Assistant Principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the School Committee or designee when the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation that the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.

Reports made by students, parents/guardians, or other individuals who are not school or District staff members, may be made anonymously. Reports made anonymously will be investigated to the extent reasonably possible; however, no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The WRSD makes a variety of reporting resources available to the school community, including, but not limited to, a paper [Incident Referral Form](#), an online anonymous [Incident Referral Form](#), a phone number, and email and mailing addresses.

Phone Number: 508-829-1670 ext. 253

Email: report@wrsd.net

Mailing Address: Attention: Director of Student Support, 1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522

When reporting in writing, administrators, teachers, students, parents/guardians, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, playground monitors, and any and all other staff and community members can access the “**Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Retaliation Incident Referral Form**” ([see Appendix A](#)) in the

Main Office of the school, guidance/school psychologist's office, the nurse's office, and on the WRSD website.

1. Reporting by Staff:

A staff member will promptly report to the Principal or designee any instances of bullying or retaliation witnessed by the staff member, or that is reported to the staff member by a student, parent/guardian, or other individual, and then follow up with an **Incident Referral Form**. The requirement to notify the Principal shall not, however, limit the authority and responsibility of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline. ([See Appendix A for reporting form](#))

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others:

The WRSD believes that it is the responsibility of students, parents, guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal or designee.

Any individual who wishes to file such a report of bullying or retaliation may request, and shall be provided with, assistance from a school staff member to complete a written report. Use of the Incident Referral Form is not required as a condition of making a report. Students will be provided with practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the Principal or designee. The Incident Referral Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students, parents, and guardians.

The filing of a knowingly false or fabricated report of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action ([See Appendix A for reporting forms](#)).

B. Responding to Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying, or Retaliation- Allegations of Bullying

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety and well-being in school to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses may include, but are not limited to, creating an individual support plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; the implementation of a No Contact Order between the aggressor and target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The Principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation individuals who have reported bullying or retaliation, who have witnessed bullying or retaliation, who provide information during an investigation, or who have reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to Parents or Guardians

Upon completion of an investigation of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, the Principal or his/her designee will promptly inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the target and the aggressor of the investigation determination and any actions taken to prevent further incidents. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

While prior notice of an investigation shall not be required, there may be incidents where parents/guardians are notified prior to the Investigation.

b. Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school, school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications 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 or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if they have a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the Principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the School Resource Officer, if any, and other individuals the Principal or designee deems appropriate.

3. Investigation

The Principal or designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s), student developmental factors, and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the Principal or designee will, among other actions, interview the target and alleged aggressor, student and staff witnesses, and others as necessary. The Principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the Principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given their obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school and District policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

4. Determinations

The Principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is substantiated by a preponderance of the evidence obtained through the investigation, the Principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The Principal or designee will:

- 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and
- 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary actions are necessary.

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

The Principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor in writing about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notices to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken against an identified aggressor unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directives that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The Principal or designee shall further inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

5. Responses to Bullying / Consequences from Findings

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in its level of seriousness and the impact it has on the target 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 in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O and this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will generally warrant disciplinary action against the aggressor(s), whether and to what extent disciplinary actions are imposed (e.g., detention, suspension, etc.) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Principal or their designee. The law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (d) (v).

The needs and safety of the target will also be considered as part of restoring resolution to the bullying matter. Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the building Principal or their designee and

will address the acts of the aggressor and the needs of the target, and assure the sanction against bullying behavior is enforced with the goal that the bullying behavior will cease and desist. Skill-building approaches that the Principal or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula;
- 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 non-academic 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 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.

Imposing consequences should be considered with the following factors in mind:

- A. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target;
- B. Degree of physical, psychological, and social harm on the target;
- C. Student's age, development, and degree of maturity;
- D. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred;
- E. Prior disciplinary history and persistent patterns of behavior;
- F. Relationship between and among the parties involved;
- G. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred;
- H. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior and social-emotional skills.

Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or District's code of conduct. The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, may include but are not limited to:

- A. Verbal explanation and/or reprimand focusing on the nature of the harm caused
- B. Temporary removal from the classroom
- C. Loss of privileges (including before and after school activities)
- D. Detention
- E. In-school suspension
- F. Short-term or Long-term Out-of-school Suspension
- G. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- H. Reassignment of classes
- I. Referral to an outside agency
- J. Report to law enforcement
- K. In cases of bullying or retaliation by a school staff member, termination of employment or other employment-related consequences

In addition, instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behaviors will be given, which may include, but are not limited to:

- A. Reparation to the target in alignment with the Restorative Practices philosophy and model
- B. Completion of a related curricular-based assignment(s)
- C. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator

- D. Completion of community service is designed to increase the aggressor's skills in empathizing with others
- E. Therapeutic support, including counseling or referral, for both aggressor(s) and target(s)

**** All completed Bullying Reports will be forwarded to
Central Office for record-keeping and review. ****

VI: COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

WRSD recognizes the importance of collaboration with families in order to optimize the school's effectiveness in preventing and responding to bullying.

A. Parent Education & Resources:

The District will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and social competency work being done in the District. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and other similar organizations.

B. Notification Requirements:

Each year, the District will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about:

- The dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety
- Strategies that parents or guardians can use to support the school district by reinforcing the curriculum at home
- Strategies for home-based online safety and cyberbullying prevention

The District will provide parents and guardians with written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's and District's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school and District will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII: PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The Wachusett Regional School District strictly prohibits all forms of bullying and retaliation.

All students will be afforded the same protection under this Plan, regardless of their status under the law. The Wachusett Regional School District recognizes 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, socioeconomic status homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status,

sexual orientation, 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.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

(i) on school grounds, 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;

(ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

*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.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses a bullying incident, or has reliable information about bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in severe disciplinary consequences, including long-term suspension from school. Retaliation constitutes separate grounds for discipline.

VIII: PROBLEM RESOLUTION

Any parent or guardian wishing to file a claim/concern or seek assistance outside of the District may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System Office (PRS). That information can be found at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/>. Emails can be sent to DESECompliance@mass.gov or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Superintendent's office.

IX: DEFINITIONS:

1. Aggressor:

A student or a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional who engages, either individually or as part of a group, in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

2. Bullying:

The repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- I. causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the target's property;
- II. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his/her property;
- III. creates a hostile environment at school for the target ;
- IV. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- V. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

3. Cyber-bullying:

Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, 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, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying.

4. Hostile Environment:

A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the target's education.

5. Local law enforcement agency:

Local police department

6. Principal:

The administrative leader of a school in the Wachusett Regional School District or their designee for the purposes of investigating and responding to reports of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

7. Retaliation:

Any form of Intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses a bullying incident or has reliable information about bullying.

8. 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, and paraprofessionals.

9. Target:

A student who has been subject to bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

X: RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Wachusett Regional School District, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. 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, school rules 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 under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H1/2, 37H3/4, or other applicable laws, school rules, or District policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Bullying Reporting Forms



Wachusett Regional School District

Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

Bullying, Cyber Bullying, and Retaliation Incident Referral Form

Thank you for taking a few minutes to fill out this form. Our intent is to take all bullying reporting incidents seriously and to investigate them immediately. No disciplinary action will be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report, however please be advised that making a **knowingly false report** may result in disciplinary consequences.

This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g.

1. Name of Reporter: _____ (please print)

I would like to remain anonymous

2. Date of filing of this report _____

3. Date of Incident _____

4. What type of incident was this? Bullying Cyber Bullying Online (texting / cell phone)

5. Where did the incident take place: on school property on a school bus at a bus stop
 at a school sponsored activity/event Other _____

6. Please tell us who you are: Student Parent Other (specify) _____
 Teacher Administrator

7. If student, state your school: _____ Grade _____ Homeroom _____

8. If staff, state your school or work site: _____

9. To the best of your knowledge, did a physical injury result from this incident?

Yes No Not Sure

10. Information about the Incident:

Name of target (person who was bullied): _____ Check whether: Student Staff Other

Name of the aggressor person who is bullying) _____ Student Staff Other

Name of any witnesses: _____ Student Staff Other

_____ Student Staff Other

Describe what you know about this incident on the back side of this form. (Please be as specific as possible)
After you have completed this form, please submit it to a school administrator.

Jefferson School
1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522
Telephone: (508) 829-1670 Facsimile: (508) 829-1680
www.wrsd.net



Wachusett Regional School District

Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

Student Reporting Form for Bullying and Retaliation

*Our intent is to take all bullying reporting incidents seriously and to investigate them immediately. No disciplinary action will be taken against a student solely on the basis of an initial report. Please be advised that making a **knowingly false report** may result in disciplinary consequences.*

This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g.

Today's Date _____ Date of Incident _____

Name _____ Grade _____

Please indicate **what** is happening, **when** it is happening and **where** it is happening.

What:

.

When:

Where:

After you have completed this form, please submit it to a school administrator.

Jefferson School
1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522
Telephone: (508) 829-1670 Facsimile: (508) 829-1680
www.wrsd.net

APPENDIX B: Research-Based Curricula

Second Step: (K - 5)

Second Step is a universal intervention designed for use with all students in a school. The Second Step teaches students how to effectively manage their emotions and demonstrate self-control. Research indicates that children who learn and use these skills do better in school academically. Direct observation of student behavior in various settings (i.e., classroom, cafeteria, and playground) during different stages of the intervention (i.e., baseline, two weeks after completion, and 6 months after completion) revealed decreases in physical aggression and increases in neutral and pro-social behavior.

Link for further information:

https://assets.ctfassets.net/98bcvzcrxclo/572krvYG2sugMcscwcioe8/389eafdbee237954b507f5560e85d2a7/SEL_Bullying_Paper.pdf

Responsive Classroom: (K - 8)

Responsive Classroom is a research-based approach to K-8 teaching that focuses on the strong link between academic success and social-emotional learning (SEL). We believe that high-quality education for every child is built on the foundation of a safe and joyful learning community.

Link for further information:

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/What-research-says-update-d-12.16.pdf>

PBIS:

Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occur. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining Tier 1 supports (universal), Tier 2 supports (targeted group), and Tier 3 supports (individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making targeted behaviors less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

Link for further information:

https://assets-global.website-files.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/65a1ada487ac6f391d15bcbd_PBIS%20Framework%20Makes%20Schools%20Better.pdf

MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center)

K-5 Bullying and Cyberbullying Curriculum

The goal of this curriculum is to educate children in grades K-5 about bullying and cyberbullying and to raise their awareness about how these behaviors impact children. It utilizes both Teacher-As-Educator and Peer Learning Models.

Link for further information:

<https://www.marccenter.org/k-5-curriculum>

Grades 6-12 Advisory Curriculum (Bullying & Cyberbullying)

This is a bullying, cyberbullying, and cyber-behavior curriculum, designed for use by grades 6 through 12. The Curriculum is divided into Lesson Plans designed to be conducted in a 20-minute period of time. The intention is to enable schools to use the Curriculum either during Advisory Periods or regular class periods.

Link for further information:

<https://www.marccenter.org/ms-advisory-curriculum>

High School Cyber-skills Curriculum

The goal of this research-based curriculum is to increase the knowledge and awareness of children in grades 9-12 about cyber-skills.

Link for further information:

<https://www.marccenter.org/high-school-cyberskills-curriculum>

APPENDIX C: Learning & Life Competencies

Positive **MINDSETS** that set the stage for developing Learning and Life Competencies

A **mindset** is a set of deeply held assumptions and beliefs that drive behavior and create powerful incentives to sustain prior habits, choices, and preferred ways of doing things. Mindsets set the stage for academic engagement and developing Learning and Life Competencies. Self-identification with the values of schooling and the roles of a learner will influence the attitudes and perceptions a student holds in relation to his/her learning and academic performance. When students feel that school and school work have value, when they feel a sense of belonging in the classroom, and they approach learning tasks with positive expectations, they have a capacity to sustain their effort over time and express their curiosity, enthusiasm, and personal interest in what they are learning. This boosts students' confidence about their day-to-day experiences and fires up hope in their future. The examples below provide a range of entry points for conversations with students.

EXAMPLES:

- School and school work have value for me.
- I belong to an academic community.
- I approach tasks with positive expectations and an open mind.
- I accept challenges, take academic risks, and push myself to excel.
- My ability and competence grow with my effort.
- I express curiosity, enthusiasm, or personal interest in what I am learning.
- I cultivate personal talents, values, and positive qualities of character.
- I have hope in a positive future I can make for myself.

Learning and Life Competencies for School, College, and Career Success		
Skill Set	Competency	Target Behaviors
Self-Awareness	I know myself.	1. I am aware that my beliefs, mindsets, and emotions impact my capacity to learn and be skillful. 2. I can accurately assess my feelings, behavior, interests, values, and strengths through my experiences. 3. I know when I have done the right thing and when I make mistakes. 4. I know when I bother others or upset them.
	I am aware of skills, behaviors, and attitudes that help me.	5. I can name and describe the benefits of skills, behaviors, and mindsets that help me be a good student and a good person. 6. I know what motivates me. 7. I know when it is important to follow rules, procedures, and norms of acceptable behavior.
Self-Management	I identify, express, and manage emotions.	8. I name and assess emotions accurately 9. I express emotions skillfully even when I feel angry, frustrated, or disrespected. 10. I manage my emotions by using strategies to cool down and regain my balance.
	I exhibit self-regulation.	11. I sustain my focus and pay attention throughout an activity or task. 12. I work silently without bothering others. 13. I accept help, feedback, correction, or consequences with good will. 14. I follow instructions, procedures and rules.
	I demonstrate perseverance and resiliency.	15. I persist in my effort until I “get it” and finish the task. 16. I pursue and sustain efforts to complete long-term tasks and achieve long-term goals related to my future. 17. I can right myself and bounce back even when I experience temporary setbacks, failure, or adversity.

Learning and Life Competencies for School, College, and Career Success

Skill Set	Competency	Target Behaviors
Social Efficacy	I communicate and problem solve effectively	18. I focus my attention on people who are speaking to me. 19. I listen respectfully and paraphrase/summarize or question before speaking. 20. I use school-appropriate language and project appropriate body language. 21. I use problem-solving strategies to work things out. 22. I resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively.
	I demonstrate empathy and respect.	23. I make an effort to understand the emotions, words and actions of others. 24. I respect the dignity of each person and their rights to be heard, to be valued, and to learn in a safe classroom. 25. I accept other viewpoints respectfully and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences 26. I stand up for people whose rights, identity, or dignity have been violated. 27. I interrupt or call attention to incidents of bullying, harassment, prejudice, or teasing.
	I foster healthy relationships.	28. I greet and talk to people in a friendly manner. 29. I use words of common courtesy like please and thank you, excuse me, sorry about that. 30. I am dependable and follow through on what I say I am going to do. 31. I help and support others.
	I am assertive and I self-advocate.	32. I use neutral, non-aggressive language to express myself. 33. I can verbalize and present my ideas my values, and my needs to others. 34. I take initiative to seek help. 35. I can navigate across different settings in order to present my best self to others.
	I cooperate and participate.	36. I work effectively with different students. 37. I take on various roles and responsibilities to complete the learning task. 38. I take turns, listen to and encourage others, and do my fair share.
	I demonstrate civic responsibility.	39. I volunteer to take on leadership roles or extended responsibilities in a group. 40. I do positive things to make class a good place to learn. 41. I take responsibility for my words and actions and acknowledge the impact of my behavior on the community. 42. I make responsible decisions.
Academic Efficacy	I invest in quality work.	43. I attempt each part of the question, task, assignment, or test. 44. I revise, edit/proof, and correct for quality and accuracy. 45. I push myself to take academic risks. 46. I complete assigned tasks regularly. 47. I engage in critical, reflective and creative thinking.
	I organize to learn and study.	48. I attend class every day and arrive to class on time. 49. I organize myself and manage my materials. 50. I prioritize and manage my time and tasks. 51. I figure out the instructions before I begin a task. 52. I use a range of study strategies to remember and apply key knowledge, skills and understandings.
	I set goals and self-assess.	53. I make sure that I know the criteria for high quality work. 54. I set specific learning goals and identify and adjust action steps to improve my grade. 55. I monitor my academic progress through written and oral self-reflection and conferencing. 56. I can identify the evidence that shows my effort to meet my goal.