IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Bullying for the purposes of requirements related to Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 legislation is defined as the following:

The repeated use by one or more students [aggressor(s)] of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/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. For the purposes of requirements related to this law, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the more complete definition of cyberbullying.

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

Aggressor is a student or any 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.

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

HISTORY OF THE PLAN

The creation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was a community effort in North Reading. On May 3, 2010, An Act Relative to Bullying, Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 was approved by Governor Patrick. Prior to, and since that time, North Reading's P.A.U.S.E. (Public Awareness and Understanding of Social Education) group, has met in order to address the concerns about bullying prevention and intervention. The group includes staff members from all schools, parents, administrators, local officials, law enforcement, local community groups, and community members. An initial draft of the plan was developed in October, 2010. After review and revisions, the School Committee offered an approved document for public comment. Community forums took place in November and the final document was submitted to the DESE in December, 2010.

The complete Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan can be found online at:
www.north-reading.k12.ma.us

Incident Reporting Forms can be downloaded and submitted to a school administrator.
Dr. Miriam Meyer– Principal
Mrs. BarriAnn Alonzo – Asst. Principal

To make anonymous reports please send your letter via U.S. mail to:
Mr. Sean Killeen
Assistant Superintendent
North Reading Public Schools
189 Park Street
North Reading, MA 01864

North Reading High School

in conjunction with the North Reading Public Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Protocol

The North Reading School Committee prohibits any act of bullying or retaliation for reporting bullying behaviors. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying are expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

Hornet Pride

WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL DO?

- ***Promptly respond to and investigate reports of bullying and/or retaliation.***
- ***Take steps to restore a sense of safety to students and others as needed.***
- ***Follow the procedures for reporting bullying and/or retaliation while maintaining confidentiality.***
- ***Notify parents/guardians of the report and the procedures for response.***
- ***Take steps to prevent recurrence and ensure non-restrictive participation in school and at school activities.***
- ***Determine possible disciplinary actions and/or notify law enforcement, and other agencies if necessary.***
- ***Maintain complete documentation of the report and follow-up procedures as needed.***

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS DO?

- ***Work cooperatively with the school to restore a sense of safety.***
- ***Report incidents of suspected bullying.***
- ***Respect the confidentiality of all parties involved.***

OUR STEPS AND PROCESS

Step One: Safety

- Take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target.
- Parental notification for both the aggressor and the target consistent with 603 CMR 49.00.

Step Two: Investigation

- Investigate, research, and collect all available information known.
- Interviews will be conducted to gather evidence and inform those involved of school policy and law.

Step Three: Determination

- Make a determination based on all of the facts and circumstances.
- If necessary, take steps to reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence.
- If necessary, determine what remedial, responsive, and /or disciplinary actions are required.

Step Four: Disciplinary Action

- If appropriate, take steps according the student handbook, state, and federal law.

Step Five: Obligations to Notify Others

- Contact appropriate administrators of other schools/institutions as needed.
- Contact law enforcement if criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Step Six: Closing the Complaint

- Follow up with target to assess for safety and/or possibility of additional support

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I file a report?

The North Reading Public Schools expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving at the high school to report it to the principal or the assistant principal. An incident report form should be completed within 24 hours of the report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report.

What happens if a bullying incident happens outside of school?

There is a provision in the law that allows for school involvement if the alleged incident creates a hostile environment in the school. A **hostile environment** is defined as one 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 a student's education.

What can be done to protect the confidentiality of a bullying reporter?

The confidentiality of the complaintant and the other witnesses will be maintained to the extent practical given the school's obligation to investigate and address the matter.

Can the police ever get involved?

Yes. Under the law, 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.