



DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

2026–2027 School Year

Aligned With:

DESE Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O | 603 CMR 49.00

An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools (Ch. 92, Acts of 2010; Ch. 86, Acts of 2014)

District Information	
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Schools Served	Four Elementary, Two Middle Schools, Shepherd Hill Regional High School

Adopted by the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee: _____

Annual Review Date: _____

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I. LEADERSHIP

Leadership at all levels plays a critical role in developing and implementing the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District (DCRSD) Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan") within the context of broader whole-school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. DCRSD leaders have a primary responsibility for teaching students to be civil to one another and to promote understanding of and respect for diversity and difference.

A. Statement of Priority

DCRSD expects that all members of the school community will treat each other with civility and respect for differences. The District is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. 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.

DCRSD recognizes that certain student groups — including students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, English learners, and students experiencing homelessness — may be more vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing. The District will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations and will provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying.

DCRSD 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. All reports and complaints of bullying will be investigated promptly, and the District will take prompt action to end prohibited conduct and restore the target's sense of safety.

B. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, this Plan was developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Community members were provided notice and a public comment period before the Plan was adopted by the School Committee.

DCRSD will engage the following constituencies in ongoing Plan development and review:

- Building principals and assistant principals
- Classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff across all seven schools
- Guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and school nurses
- Special Education staff, including the Director of Student Services
- Student representatives (middle and high school levels)
- Parent and guardian representatives, including the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)
- Local law enforcement (Dudley Police Department, Charlton Police Department)
- School Committee members

C. Assessing Needs and Resources

DCRSD will conduct ongoing needs assessments to identify areas of concern and inform prevention strategies. Assessments will include:

- Administration of the DESE-developed student climate survey at least once every four years, beginning 2015-2016, to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying
- Annual collection and analysis of building-level bullying incident data
- Review of behavioral data disaggregated by school, grade, and student subgroup
- Identification of 'hot spots' in school buildings, on school grounds, and on school buses where bullying is more likely to occur
- Staff and family surveys to assess perceptions of school safety and climate

Findings from needs assessments will inform resource allocation, supervision strategies, professional development priorities, curriculum selections, and in-school support services.

D. Planning and Oversight

The building principal, or their designee, is responsible for the implementation and oversight of this Plan at the school level. District-level oversight is the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning. Responsibilities include:

Responsibility	Assigned To
Receiving all reports of bullying	Building Principal or Designee
Collecting and analyzing building-level bullying data	Building Principal or Designee
Recording and tracking incident reports	Building Principal or Designee
Coordinating annual staff professional development on the Plan	Asst. Superintendent / Building Principals
Planning supports for targets and aggressors	Building Principal, Counselor, or Designee
Selecting and implementing prevention curricula	Asst. Superintendent for Teaching & Learning
Revising policies, handbooks, and codes of conduct	Asst. Superintendent / Building Principals/School Committee
Leading parent and family engagement efforts	Building Principals
Annual review and update of the Plan	Asst. Superintendent for Teaching & Learning
Reporting annual bullying data to DESE	Superintendent / Designee

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DCRSD will provide ongoing professional development for all staff as required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O. Training applies to all school staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan

All school staff will receive annual training on the Plan that includes:

- Staff duties and responsibilities under the Plan
- An overview of the steps the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a bullying report
- An overview of the bullying prevention curricula in use at the school or district
- Reporting procedures and confidentiality requirements

Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to complete school-based training during the year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in a comparable program within the past two years.

B. Ongoing Professional Development Content

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, ongoing professional development will be research-based and will include:

- Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying
- Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses
- Research findings on bullying, including information about categories of students particularly at risk for bullying
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying

Additional locally identified areas for professional development include:

- Promoting and modeling the use of respectful language
- Fostering understanding of and respect for diversity and difference, consistent with DCRSD's Title I equity commitments
- Building relationships and communicating with families, including multilingual families
- Constructively managing classroom behaviors using positive behavioral support (PBIS) strategies
- Applying constructive, restorative disciplinary practices
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy
- Addressing the intersection of disability and bullying, including for students with autism or whose disability affects social skills development (IEP Team considerations per M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3)

- Trauma-informed practices and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) aligned to DCRSD's RULER SEL implementation

C. Written Notice to Staff

The District will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by including it in the employee handbook and code of conduct distributed at the start of each school year.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

DCRSD is committed to ensuring that the underlying emotional and behavioral needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. The Plan describes strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs across all seven schools.

A. Identifying Resources

DCRSD will maintain a current inventory of counseling, behavioral health, and social-emotional supports available within each building and across the district, including:

- School guidance counselors (all seven schools)
- School psychologists
- Licensed clinical social workers / adjustment counselors
- School nurses
- Special Education staff and behavioral specialists
- MTSS intervention teams at each school

Where resource gaps are identified through needs assessments, the district will explore partnerships with community agencies, including Community Service Agencies (CSAs) for Medicaid-eligible students.

B. Counseling and Other Services

Culturally and linguistically appropriate counseling and support services will be made available to:

- Targets of bullying: including safety planning, individual counseling, peer support, and referral to outside services as appropriate
- Aggressors: including individual skill-building, behavioral intervention planning, family engagement, and referral for evaluation or services
- Family members: including access to community resources, parent education programs, and information on local and state support organizations

C. Students with Disabilities

When the IEP Team determines that a student has a disability that affects social skills development, or that a student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of their 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, harassment, or teasing, consistent with M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3.

The Director of Student Services will be consulted in investigations and response planning when a student with a disability is involved, either as target or aggressor.

D. Referral to Outside Services

DCRSD building principals and school counselors will maintain referral protocols for connecting students and families to outside services, including:

- Community-based mental health providers
- Dudley and Charlton Police Departments (for law enforcement referrals as required)
- DESE and the Massachusetts Attorney General's office (for civil rights or legal compliance matters)
- Department of Children and Families (DCF) as mandated reporters

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, DCRSD provides age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention in each grade, integrated into school curricula.

A. Bullying Prevention Curricula and Approaches

Bullying prevention curricula across DCRSD schools will be informed by current research and will emphasize:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop practical social skills
- Empowering students as active bystanders — knowing what to do when they witness bullying, including seeking adult assistance
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying, including underlying power imbalances
- Cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies
- Enhancing students' skills for healthy relationships and respectful communications
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment respectful of diversity and difference

The following evidence-based or research-aligned programs are used or being implemented across DCRSD:

Program / Approach	Grade Level / School
RULER Social-Emotional Learning (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence) — Train-the-Trainer Model	All seven schools (PK–12), beginning 2026-2027
HMH Curriculum — Social-Emotional integration	Middle Schools
Intervention and Enrichment blocks (Middle Schools)	All seven schools
MTSS-aligned behavioral supports	All schools

Building-level advisory / classroom meeting structures	As established per building
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B. General Teaching Approaches Supporting Bullying Prevention

The following classroom and school-wide approaches support the goals of this Plan:

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including students with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, and students experiencing homelessness
- Using positive behavioral supports and restorative practices
- Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students
- Modeling, teaching, and reinforcing pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors
- Teaching conflict resolution, collaborative problem-solving, and positive communication skills
- Supporting students' participation in extracurricular activities and areas of strength
- Safe, responsible use of digital tools and the Internet

C. Student Orientation and Awareness

At the start of each school year, students will be informed of the relevant sections of this Plan, including the prohibition against bullying and retaliation and the procedures for reporting incidents. This instruction will be delivered in a developmentally appropriate manner at each grade level.

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

DCRSD has established clear policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These procedures ensure that all members of the school community — students, parents, and staff — understand how to report incidents and what will happen when reports are made.

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

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

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member shall report immediately to the building principal or designee whenever they witness or become aware of conduct that may constitute bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report does not limit a staff member's authority to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies.

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

DCRSD expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously. No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report incidents, including:

- The DCRSD Bullying Incident Reporting Form (available in the main office, counseling office, school nurse's office, and on the district website)
- Verbal report to any trusted adult staff member

Incident Reporting Forms will be included in beginning-of-year packets for students and parents or guardians, and will be available in the most prevalent language(s) of students and families served by DCRSD.

B. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

1. Safety

Before completing an investigation, the principal or designee will assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and protect the alleged target from further incidents. Safety measures may include:

- Creating a personal safety plan for the target
- Pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or aggressor in classrooms, at lunch, or on the bus
- Identifying a trusted staff member to serve as a 'safe person' for the target
- Altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target

The principal or designee will also implement appropriate strategies to protect students who reported bullying, provided information during an investigation, witnessed bullying, or have reliable information about bullying.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to Parents or Guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of both the target and the aggressor, consistent with 603 CMR 49.00. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents prior to the conclusion of an investigation.

b. Notice to Another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify the principal or designee of the other school(s) so that each may take appropriate action. All communications will comply with state and federal privacy laws and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement: At any point, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued, the principal will notify the Dudley Police Department or Charlton Police Department, as appropriate. If an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact local law enforcement if criminal charges may be pursued.

C. Investigation

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation, considering all available information including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the principal or designee will:

- Interview the alleged target, alleged aggressor, witnesses, staff, and parents or guardians as necessary
- Remind all parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action
- Maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable throughout the investigation
- Maintain a written record of the investigation
- Consult with the school counselor, Director of Student Services, or legal counsel as appropriate

If a student with a disability is involved, the Director of Pupil Personnel will be included in the investigative process and any subsequent planning for supports.

D. Determinations

After completing the investigation, the principal or designee will make a determination based on all facts and circumstances. If bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will:

- Determine what remedial action is required to prevent recurrence
- Determine what responsive and/or disciplinary action is necessary
- Ensure the target is not restricted from participating in school or benefiting from school activities
- Promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of the investigation results and actions being taken

All notices to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. The principal or designee cannot report specific information about disciplinary action to the target's parent or guardian unless it involves a directive (such as a stay-away order) of which the target must be aware.

E. Responses to Bullying

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building

When bullying or retaliation has been substantiated, DCRSD will use a range of responses that balance accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v)). Skills-building responses may include:

- Individualized skill-building sessions based on anti-bullying curricula
- Educational activities for individual students or groups, in consultation with guidance counselors
- Positive behavioral supports to help students develop pro-social ways to achieve their goals
- Meetings with parents or guardians to engage parental support and reinforce anti-bullying and social skills curricula at home
- Behavioral plans with a focus on developing specific social skills
- Referral for evaluation or additional services as appropriate

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

Where disciplinary action is warranted, it will be determined based on the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s), and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the school's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and must be read in conjunction with Massachusetts state law on student discipline.

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

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider adjustments needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety. Strategies may include increasing adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying has occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period following the determination and any remedial or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether bullying has recurred and whether additional supportive measures are needed.

F. Reporting and Data

DCRSD will comply with all DESE data reporting requirements, including:

- Annual reporting of bullying incident data to DESE in the form and manner established by the Department
- Reported data will include: number of reported allegations, number and nature of substantiated incidents, and actions taken
- District administration will use annual data to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention efforts and identify areas for improvement

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

DCRSD recognizes that effective bullying prevention requires meaningful collaboration with families. The district will engage and inform parents and guardians through multiple channels throughout the school year.

A. Parent Education and Resources

DCRSD will offer education programs for parents and guardians focused on:

- The parental components of the anti-bullying curricula in use
- The dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety
- How to reinforce bullying prevention and social competency skills at home
- How to report a bullying concern to the school and what to expect from the process

Programs will be offered in collaboration with School Councils, PTOs, and the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), and will reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of DCRSD families.

B. Annual Notification Requirements

Each year, DCRSD will:

- Inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula being used
- Provide written notice of the student-related sections of this Plan, including information on cyberbullying and online safety
- Publish the Plan on the district website
- Include information about reporting procedures in beginning-of-year materials

All notices and materials will be provided in hard copy and electronic formats, and in the most prevalent language(s) of DCRSD families. The Incident Reporting Form will also be made available in these languages.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Consistent with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(b), acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) 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 DCRSD; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the District; and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device not owned, leased, or used by DCRSD, 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, provides information during an investigation, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also strictly prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires DCRSD to staff any non-school-related activities, functions, or programs.

This prohibition applies to all students and shall be included in the student code of conduct, the student handbook, and the staff handbook.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are drawn from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O. Schools and districts may add clarifying language but may not alter the legal meaning or scope of these definitions.

Term	Definition
Aggressor	A student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.
Bullying	The repeated use by one or more students 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 himself or herself or of damage to their 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.
Cyberbullying	Bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. Includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the full legal definition.
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 a student's education.
Retaliation	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.
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.
Target	A student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal law and DCRSD policies, 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, or sexual orientation.

Nothing in this Plan prevents DCRSD 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 district policies.

Nothing in this Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of DCRSD to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether such behavior is covered by this Plan.

Related laws and regulations include:

- M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O — An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools (as amended by Ch. 86, Acts of 2014)
- 603 CMR 49.00 — Regulations Pertaining to Bullying in Schools
- M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3 — IEP Team considerations for students with disabilities
- M.G.L. c. 76, § 5 — Non-discrimination in public schools
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

APPENDIX A: BULLYING INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Use this form to report suspected bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation. You may submit this form to the principal's office, the guidance office, or the school nurse's office. Reports may also be submitted anonymously. No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

This form is available in the main office, guidance office, nurse's office, and on the DCRSD website. It is available in the most prevalent languages of DCRSD families upon request.

Dudley-Charlton Regional School District

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. **Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:** _____
(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:** _____
5. **If staff member, state your school or work site:** _____
6. **Information about the Incident:**
 Name of Target (of behavior): _____
 Name of 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 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:**_____