

# Bully Prevention and Intervention Plan

## **I. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Mansfield Public Schools prohibits bullying as defined by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O and will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities.

Bullying is 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.

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

District administrators investigate promptly 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. The Mansfield Public Schools supports this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent/guardian involvement. The District is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence.

This plan is based on, and incorporates, the required components of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) created the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan required under, in consultation with state agencies, school personnel, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties.

The Mansfield Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying. This plan provides protection for ALL students regardless of their status under the law. The District recognizes 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, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or

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is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. This Plan identifies specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in our school community, and provides all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

This Plan affords all students the same protection regardless of their status under the law.

### II. DEFINITIONS

To effectively support a comprehensive and collaborative approach to school safety, it is essential for school personnel, students, parents/guardians, law enforcement agencies and other interested parties to use common language. The following definitions, several of which are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, are provided to help facilitate this:

Aggressor is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or of damage to their property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which will include, but will 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 will also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or 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 the clauses inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyberbullying will 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 the definition of bullying. (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O)

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Hostile Environment is 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.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is a decision-making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students. PBIS emphasizes four integrated elements:

- data for decision making,
- measurable outcomes supported and evaluated by data,
- practices with evidence that these outcomes are achievable,
- systems that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices.

Response to Intervention (RTI) integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities. 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.

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

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

**For the purpose of this plan, whenever the term bullying is used, it is to denote either bullying or cyberbullying.**

### III. PUBLICATION AND NOTICE

At the beginning of each school year, staff, parents/guardians, and students are provided with written notice of the district's policies and protocols for reporting bullying and retaliation. Reporting procedures, forms and other resources, including the name and contact information for district and building-level administrators, are provided in student handbooks, in designated locations in each school building, and in information about the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is made available to parents/guardians and community members via the Mansfield Public Schools website.

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Each year, parents/guardians are informed about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used; this notice includes how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school district or school plan, information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. Parents/guardians are provided student-related sections of the Plan and the District's Responsible Use policy.

All notices and information made available to parents or guardians are in hard copy and electronic formats and will be translated and provided to parents as needed. This Plan is reviewed and updated by December 31 every 2 years.

### **IV. LEADERSHIP**

Leadership at all levels plays a critical role in developing, implementing and revising the Mansfield Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Families and schools share the responsibility of teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. It is also the responsibility of district leadership to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing, revising and implementing this plan.

The District will collect, maintain and report bullying incident data as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires.

### **Public Involvement**

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, this plan was developed in 2010 in consultation with Mansfield Public School administrators, faculty and staff; school councils, school volunteers and parent groups; students, parents, guardians and interested community members, the Mansfield Police Department, and the Mansfield School Committee. Notice and public comment period were provided, and community members were encouraged to offer their feedback on the draft plan to school administrators.

As part of the district's ongoing review of policies and procedures that affect school safety, this plan is reviewed every other year annually and updated as needed.

### **Assessing Needs and Resources**

The Superintendent and the Bullying Prevention Committee, with input from faculty, staff, and parents/guardians, revise and develop policies and procedures to continue building a safe bully-free school environment in partnership with community agencies, including law enforcement. The following activities are completed with a focus on data from multiple sources to best guide decisions.

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- Review of current policy and procedures;
- Assessment of available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services for ongoing professional development;
- Analysis of initial and on-going periodic survey results from students, faculty, staff, and parents/guardians on school climate and safety issues;
- Analysis of the surveys and data from the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS);
- Analysis of the data from (X2) which records and tracks incident reports is used to guide decision making to improve climate and reduce bullying;
- Development of resource bank of relevant printed and online materials for parents and students;
- Review of Massachusetts comprehensive Health and Wellness curriculum frameworks to provide context for anti-bullying curriculum.

### **Planning and Oversight**

School Principals implement and oversee this plan in their respective buildings except when a reported bullying incident involves the Principal or the Assistant Principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee investigates the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee or its designee investigates the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

### **Bullying Prevention Committee**

The Bullying Prevention Committee is a subcommittee of the Mansfield Health and Wellness Council and is comprised of school administrators and staff, the School Resource Officer, Mansfield Police Department, and the Nurse Leader. The Bullying Prevention Committee is the group that plans and oversees the Mansfield Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan; it works in consultation with school nurses, guidance staff, health and wellness faculty, outside consultants, school council members, student leaders, and school administrators as needed.

This Committee meets quarterly to complete the following:

- Reviews reports on bullying;
- Collects and analyzes building and school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure effectiveness of improvements;
- Reviews and updates the process for recording and tracking incident reports and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;

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- Plans for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law and schedules ongoing professional development that contains all of the components as defined by the law;
- Plans supports to respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- Recommends amendments to student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct; and
- Reviews and updates the Mansfield Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan by December 31st every other year. of every year.

### **V. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Mansfield Public Schools meets the requirements under MGL c. 71, §37O to provide 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, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

#### **Annual Staff Training**

All MPS employees are required to complete a district-wide training in the first two months of the school year. New employees that have a start date on October 31 or later have one month (30 days) to complete and view the district-wide training, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last year. All district administrators are available for questions or concerns.

#### **Ongoing Professional Development**

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development builds the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. 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:

- Developmentally or age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying and 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/or witnesses to the bullying;
- 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;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying;
- Professional development includes strategies to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities. Focus is given as needed to staff that develop students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This includes a particular focus on

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the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas for training for professional development include:

- Promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- Building relationships and communicating with families;
- Constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- Using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- Applying constructive disciplinary practices.
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- Engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making;
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

### **Written Notice To Staff**

The Superintendent or designee annually provides written information to all District employees about Mansfield Public School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by staff, in the Mansfield Public School staff handbook. Should any changes be made to the written plan during the school year, the most current version is posted on the Mansfield Public Schools website.

## **VI. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

### **Identifying Resources**

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring the underlying emotional needs of targets, student aggressors, families, and others are addressed. Data is collected by PBIS teams, RTI teams and administrators to identify school needs; and the capacity to identify and provide resources, counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families.

- School administrators annually review current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services.
- The annual mapping of resources is the first step toward recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps.
- Annually, MPS reviews resources and materials; reviews staff needs and establishes school-based safety planning teams (Crisis Teams) and identifies other agencies that can provide services.
- The Bullying Prevention Committee designs and updates the local processes for identifying existing and needed resources. Any Mansfield Public School student who reports being bullied or has been reported for bullying, is referred to the appropriate counselor. The counselor assesses the issue(s) and if appropriate provides the student

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with ongoing emotional support and coping strategies. The counselor, in conjunction with the building administration, may refer those students and/or appropriate family members to outside agencies for more intensive services. When necessary, the counselor connects the student with a Principal or Assistant Principal who assumes responsibility for dealing with any administrative needs associated with the issues.

### **Counseling and Other Services**

Culturally and linguistically appropriate resources will be available to all students and their families. These resources may assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skill programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. We consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula for targets, student aggressors and their families.

- Adjustment counselors, guidance counselors and/or school psychologists are available for individual counseling at all school levels. Social skills groups and lessons are developed on an as needed basis for individual students.
- System-wide, the counseling staff works with the ELL teachers if assistance is needed to identify culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the school and district.
- Use of school counselors in conjunction with administrators assist in creating plans for targets/aggressors to cohabitate within the confines of the school to receive their education.
- Research and identify evidence-based programs assist with providing counseling through either groups and/or individual counseling depending on the needs of the students.
- Research/identify appropriate evidence-based prevention programs for high school students to promote prosocial behavior. Implementing these educational/social training programs create an environment of tolerance and acceptance of peers' differences to promote a culture where students do not allow bullying/aggression towards peers or at least empower them to report/speak up about incidents of which they are aware.
- Mansfield Public Schools provide one-on-one counseling and small group counseling to assist students.

### **Students with Disabilities**

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

- SECTION 7 Requirements for Students with Disabilities "For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, the IEP Team *must* consider and specifically address



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the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (See M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010.)

- Whenever the IEP Team evaluation indicates a student's disability affects social skills development, or when the student's disability makes them vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the IEP must address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

### Referral to Outside Services

Referrals to outside service providers are made when deemed appropriate, according to protocols established by the district. Referrals to the Department of Children and Families may be initiated as deemed appropriate, and support from the Mansfield Police Department is initiated as needed.

## VII. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The law requires that Mansfield Public Schools provides age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the school's or district's curricula. Curricula must be evidence-based. Effective instruction includes classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

### Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches

Bullying prevention curricula is informed by current research, which among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- Emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

### Mansfield Public Schools Curriculum by School

**PreK:** PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and support)

**K - 2:** PBIS **3 - 5:** PBIS / Second Step Curriculum / school based lesson plans

**6 - 8:** Second Step Curriculum / Documentary film: *Bully* directed by Lee Hirsch / "Rights, Respect, Responsibility": Sexuality Education Curriculum

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**9 - 12:** Health Classes (empathy, bullying, hazing) / Training is offered to athletes and student leadership teams.

### **General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts**

Teachers in the Mansfield Public Schools employ the following approaches that are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment and that underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- Setting clear expectations school and classroom routines;
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or housing status;
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- Using positive behavioral supports;
- Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- Using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- Using the Internet safely; and
- Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

### **VIII. REPORTING BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

Students, parents/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student should report it to the designated school administrator. MPS staff is required to immediately report such incidents that they have witnessed or become aware of to the designated school administrator.

#### **Reports made by Staff**

Oral reports made by or to a staff member are recorded in writing. Staff members report to the building Principal or designee, or to the Superintendent or designee when the Principal or Assistant Principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the School Committee when the Superintendent or designee is the alleged aggressor, or any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. The requirement to report as required does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral and disciplinary incidents consistent with policies and procedures for behavior management or discipline.

#### **Reports made by Students, Parents/Guardians or Others**

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Students, parents/guardians, or others are expected to report any instance of bullying or retaliation they become aware of or witness to the building Principal or designee. Reports should be made to the Superintendent or designee when the Principal or Assistant Principal is the alleged aggressor or to the School Committee when the Superintendent or designee is the alleged aggressor.

Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action is taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students are provided practical, safe, private, and developmentally appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying or retaliation with a staff member. Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying may be subject to disciplinary action.

An Incident Reporting Form should be completed and submitted to the school's main office to an identified school staff member or to the attention of one of the school administrators listed below who investigates the reported bullying incident. Students, parents/guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report.

Incident Reporting Forms can be found in the main office, nurse's office, and guidance office at each school and on the District website ([www.mansfieldschools.com](http://www.mansfieldschools.com)). The Incident Reporting Form also is available in Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese, and Spanish, which are the most prevalent languages besides English spoken in the Mansfield Schools. Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report.

**The address, phone number for the main office and school administrators are provided below to better assist in the filing and handling of any reported bullying incidents.**

### **Roland Green Preschool**

29 Dean Street

Mansfield MA 02048

508-261-1561

Director, Krista DeMello

[krista.demello@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:krista.demello@mansfieldschools.com)

### **Robinson Elementary School**

245 East Street

Mansfield, MA 02048

508-261-7510

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Principal, Kerri Sankey

[kerri.sankey@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:kerri.sankey@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Principal, Ryan Gentile

[ryan.gentile@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:ryan.gentile@mansfieldschools.com)

### **Jordan/Jackson Elementary School**

255 East Street

Mansfield, MA 02048

508-261-7520

Principal, John Nieratko

[john.nieratko@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:john.nieratko@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Principal, Denise DaGraca

[denise.dagraca@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:denise.dagraca@mansfieldschools.com)

[Assistant Principal, Katherine Perreault](mailto:katherine.perreault@mansfieldschools.com)

[katherine.perreault@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:katherine.perreault@mansfieldschools.com)

### **Qualters Middle School**

240 East Street

Mansfield, MA 02048

508-261-7530

Principal, David McGovern

[david.mcgovern@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:david.mcgovern@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Principal, Kevin Hoffman

[kevin.hoffman@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:kevin.hoffman@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Principal, Mary Cotillo

[mary.cotillo@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:mary.cotillo@mansfieldschools.com)

### **Mansfield High School**

250 East Street

Mansfield, MA 02048

508-261-7540

Principal, Mary Watkins

[mary.watkins@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:mary.watkins@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Principal, Abigail Barlas

[abigail.barlas@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:abigail.barlas@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Principal, James Schliecke

[james.schliecke@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:james.schliecke@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Principal, Tim Tichacek

[timothy.tichacek@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:timothy.tichacek@mansfieldschools.com)

Director Evening School, David Farinella

[david.farinella@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:david.farinella@mansfieldschools.com)

### **Special Education Office**

255 East Street Mansfield, MA 02048

508-261-7507

Director, James Leonard

[jim.leonard@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:jim.leonard@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Director Secondary, Zachary Abrams

[zachary.abrams@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:zachary.abrams@mansfieldschools.com)

Assistant Director Elementary, Kelly Kreizinger

[kelly.kreizinger@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:kelly.kreizinger@mansfieldschools.com)

### **Superintendent's Office**

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2 Park Row Mansfield, MA 02048

508-261-7500

Superintendent, Teresa Murphy

Assistant Superintendent, Michael Connolly

Assistant Superintendent, Edward Donoghue

Human Resources Director, Jocelyn LeMaire

[teresa.murphy@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:teresa.murphy@mansfieldschools.com)

[michael.connolly@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:michael.connolly@mansfieldschools.com)

[edward.donoghue@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:edward.donoghue@mansfieldschools.com)

[jocelyn.lemaire@mansfieldschools.com](mailto:jocelyn.lemaire@mansfieldschools.com)

### **IX. RESPONDING TO A REPORT OF BULLYING OR RETALIATION- ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING BY A STUDENT**

The building Principal or designee first assesses the safety needs of the alleged target and/or protects the alleged target from possible further incidents. The building Principal or designee work with staff to create a personal safety plan; assign seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identify a staff member (in most cases the guidance counselor) who acts as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule so there is no access to the target. The administrator alerts the parents/guardians about the safety plan as needed. When a safety plan is set up, the administrator begins a full investigation into the allegations of bullying or retaliation. The building Principal or designee takes additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary to protect a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

#### **Obligations to Notify Others**

All communications in notifying others is in accordance with local, state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

#### **Notice to Parents/Guardians**

Upon determining bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or designee promptly notifies the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to an investigation. Notice is consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice about an incident or report of bullying or retaliation will comply with confidentiality requirements in Massachusetts student records regulations and FERPA. The parents or guardians of a victim shall also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.

#### **Notice to Another School or District**

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If the reported incident involves student from more than one 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 promptly notifies by telephone the Principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so each school may take appropriate action. All communications in notifying others are in accordance with local, state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

### **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 criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal notifies the School Resource Officer (SRO), who coordinates the notification to the Mansfield Police Department. In making this determination, the building Principal, consistent with the plan and with applicable MPS policies and procedures, consults with the School Resource Officer and as necessary with the Superintendent or designee. The Principal will document their decision in writing. Reporting of any such incident will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in Mansfield Public Schools, Mansfield shall contact law enforcement.

### **Investigation**

The Principal or designee investigates promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, considers all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the Principal or designee, among other things, interviews students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) reminds the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and results 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 maintains confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or designee maintains a written record of the investigation. At a minimum the Principal or their designee will contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

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Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation are consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or designee consults with legal counsel about the investigation. The procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation align with the disciplinary guidelines and procedures as outlined in the student handbooks.

The investigation will be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report unless there are extenuating circumstances that prevent access to the students who are involved.

A staff member who is the subject of a complaint of a serious nature is informed promptly and afforded the opportunity to present the facts as they see them, in accordance with district policies and procedures, including any applicable collective bargaining agreements

### **Determinations**

The Principal or designee makes a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal or designee takes reasonably calculated steps to prevent recurrence and to ensure the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The Principal or designee determines what remedial action is required, if any, and determines what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

The building 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 promptly notifies the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor 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 notice 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 unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The Principal or designee informs 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.

## Bully Prevention and Intervention Plan

### **Responses to Bullying**

Upon the Principal or designee determining bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Mansfield Public School uses a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to review and teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches 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 nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand prosocial ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home; and
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills;
- making a referral for evaluation.

### **Taking Disciplinary Action**

If the Principal or designee decides disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action is determined on the basis of facts found by the Principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline is consistent with the school's or district's Code of Conduct. Discipline and disciplinary actions used in the Mansfield Public Schools are provided in the most current Student Handbooks for each school. Such action may range from counseling and/or discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion from school. All employees, including supervisors and managers, who engage in bullying are subject to immediate disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

In the event disciplinary action against an employee is under consideration, appropriate due process is provided. Any disciplinary action imposed is based upon facts found by the designated school official and appropriate standards and expectations in light of the employee's role and responsibilities. School officials have a method to record confirmed acts of bullying by staff.

### **Promoting Safety for the Target and Others**

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



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Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal or designee contacts the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Principal or designee works with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

### **XI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

#### **Parent Education And Resources**

Mansfield has a strong tradition of active and engaged parent involvement in our schools, and parent/guardian participation is a crucial element in the success of this Plan.

The Mansfield Public Schools offers programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. These programs will communicate how to reinforce the school bullying prevention curricula at home. Such parent education programs are offered in collaboration with parent organizations such as the Mansfield Elementary Schools Association (MESA) and the QMS Parent Advisory Council (QMS PAC), the School Councils, and the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), and are publicized through the district website and through the various parent organizations. The Bully Prevention Committee supports the school efforts to provide parent education and all available resources. Roland Green provides parent training to families in the home setting to help develop parenting skills.

#### **Information on Bullying Prevention and Intervention**

- The Mansfield Public Schools' website includes bullying prevention and intervention resources.
- Bullying-related printed materials are available in all schools for families to access.
- Principal newsletters will regularly provide bullying resources.

### **XII. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM**

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's Office, 2 Park Row; 508-261-7500

### **XIII. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Mansfield Public School District, no person is discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the

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advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, gender identity, disability, housing status, or sexual orientation. Nothing in this Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

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.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, or 37<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Mansfield Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan covers the behavior.

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December 8, 2020

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