Foxborough Public Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

November 2010

(revised May 2014)

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APPENDIX A: Foxborough Public Schools Incident Reporting Process and Incident Report Form

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Foxborough Public Schools' Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed in consultation with a variety of constituency groups, including:

- our Community Task Force to Address Bullying and Harassment (established in May 2010), whose 45 members include parents, teachers, school administrators, community agency representatives (Council on Aging, Board of Health), police officials, town officials, and business representatives;
- the Foxborough School Committee;
- the Foxborough Public Schools' administrative team; and
- the district-wide Crisis Team.

The Community Task Force was the main driving group behind the collection of data to inform our needs assessment and to assess our current efforts in bullying prevention and intervention. Task Force meetings were open to the public and membership was (and remains) open to all members of the Foxborough community.

The Task Force divided into five work groups that met throughout the summer of 2010 to research several issues and make recommendations for future work and action steps.

1. Reporting and Investigating; Data Gathering; Interventions
2. Education and Awareness of Students
3. Education and Awareness of Parents and the Community
4. Education and Awareness of Teachers and Staff
5. Issues Related to Unstructured In-School Time and Unsupervised Out-of-School Time

The Task Force provided periodic updates to the Foxborough School Committee throughout the 2010-2011 school year. These meetings are broadcast to the public. The local newspaper, The Foxboro Reporter, provided media coverage of these updates and partnered with the Task Force to provide monthly articles on the issue of bullying and respect centered around the theme of "How Full is Your Bucket?" (a campaign designed to provide pertinent information to families and the community and to build public support for the community effort).

The recommendations provided by each of these work groups are included in the Assessment of Needs and Resources below.

The initial draft of the plan (2010) was developed by the Assistant Superintendent and building principals, and approved by the Superintendent of Schools. It was also reviewed by the Foxborough Chief of Police.

The local newspaper published a notification of a public comment period in November 2010 regarding Foxborough's Plan. The School Committee adopted the Plan on December 6, 2010. With input from the district's administrative team, the Superintendent reviews and updates this plan biennially in December.

As part of our initial leadership efforts in the fall of 2009, school administrators reviewed current definitions of bullying and harassment that appeared in student handbooks. We discovered that clear definitions of bullying were missing. The administrative team

developed very clear and detailed definitions of harassment and bullying. These definitions were then reviewed and approved by the Community Task Force to Address Bullying and Harassment and were subsequently approved by the Foxborough School Committee in June 2010. These new definitions of bullying and harassment (found in Section VIII Definitions) were published in all student handbooks beginning with the 2010-2011 school year. Updated definitions will be once again published in all student/staff handbooks for the 2014-2015 school year.

The administrative team will annually review the Plan and publicly report progress in implementing the Plan at the end of each school year.

B. Assessing Needs and Resources

1. Programs and curricula currently in place to address bullying prevention and intervention:

Elementary Schools Grades K-4:

- Guidance lessons in grades K-4 are delivered on a regular basis focusing on the mastery of social emotional skills necessary to help students engage in their communities in a pro social manner. Lessons are designed to help students foster self advocacy skills while providing them with the tools needed to positively engage in conflict resolution. Additionally, lessons teach students how to identify and understand various forms of conflict, and to learn strategies that can be applied while engaged in conflict resolution.
- Caring School Communities (RtI Tier 1 core program); all K-4 classrooms
- Collaboration with police department; classroom lessons in Gr. 4
- Annual parent seminars on bullying, cyberbullying, building friendships
- Wellness curriculum addresses positive decisions, problem solving, respect
- Building-based character education programs (i.e. Burrell CARES; Igo HEART)
- Other classroom-based programs that support the development of community and respect
- Disciplinary procedures (parent notification)
- Monitor student reporting of incidents of bullying/harassment

Ahern Middle School Grades 5-8:

- Caring School Communities (RtI Tier 1 core program); all grade 5 classrooms
- Steps to Respect Gr. 5-6; delivered by both guidance counselors and classroom teachers
- Second Step Gr. 7-8; delivered by both guidance counselors and classroom teachers
- Students and Society Gr. 7 & 8 (BCORE period, quarter course; includes Project Alert curriculum)
- Character Education Gr. 8
- Cyberbullying education and prevention lessons in computer education classes
- Peer Mediation Gr. 5-8
- Wellness curriculum addresses positive decisions, problem solving, respect
- Other classroom-based programs that support the development of community and respect
- Disciplinary procedures (parent and police notification)
- Monitor student reporting of incidents of bullying/harassment

Foxborough High School Grades 9-12:

- School values and expectations emphasize respect for self and others
- Health curriculum ; grades 9-10
- Warrior Huddle student advisory program
- Group guidance
- Social skills groups
- Disciplinary procedures (parent and police notification)
- Peer Mediation when needed
- Monitor student reporting of incidents of bullying/harassment

2. Current policies and procedures:

   In the fall of 2010, the School Committee revised *Policy JICFB Bullying Prevention* based on the recommendations from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. The new policy was approved by the Committee on November 1, 2010. This policy was revised and updated in 2014.

   In addition, the Committee revised *Policy IJNDBA Educational Technologies – Employees* to include additional new language that addresses the use of Facebook and other social networking sites as well as communicating with students via email and cell phones. The revised policy was approved by the Committee on December 6, 2010.

3. Data on bullying and behavioral incidents:

   Data on all behavioral incidents are collected at the building level by principals/assistant principals and guidance counselors, and organized records are maintained in each school. While this information is available at the school level, we have not yet developed a comprehensive process for collecting and analyzing the data systematically. Our goal is to develop a more effective process using a technology solution that will allow us to examine the data at the district level to guide our discussions and develop targeted action plans.

4. Available behavioral health services:

   The Foxborough Public Schools' Mental Health Services Team includes school psychologists, guidance counselors, adjustment counselors, social workers, behavior specialists, and school nurses at all levels who provide support services to students in need. This comprehensive model allows the team to provide in-class supports to students in the regular classroom; consultation to teachers; strategic interventions to students not demonstrating gains with in-class support; progress monitoring; and intensive interventions for students with longer-term social, emotional, or behavioral needs. The district collaborates with other public agencies to access services under the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative.

5. Areas of need and future priorities include:

   a. Data-driven reporting and investigation procedures

   The Reporting and Investigating work group, a subcommittee of the Community Task Force to Address Bullying and Harassment, created a flow chart and reporting form that they recommended to the schools, which has since been adopted by the district (2009).

The flow chart begins with the incident being observed by the adult, or reported to the adult by a student. The flow chart continues by bulleting important points of the investigation and steps to follow. The flow chart then identifies the time frame to create action plans, documentation, and consequences if needed.

An Incident Reporting Form was also created to document each incident and subsequent investigation. An Action Plan is part of this form, as is parent communication. Two different forms were created, one for elementary and one for secondary schools.

These reporting forms help the district collect better data about incidents related to bullying and harassment. The previous form included only a record of the alleged aggressor, but not the target. Our updated confidential form includes the name of the target as well, which helps each school track possible patterns of incidents involving a single target, which was not always possible in years past.

School principals trained school staff on the use of these forms, which are reviewed periodically to determine if changes should be made.

b. Collecting accurate data about the extent of the problem in Foxborough.

In the spring of 2011, the district administered a comprehensive survey to all middle and high school students regarding their experience with bullying/harassment and how safe they view their school and community environment. This provided a baseline and established measures which will be used from year to year to document the extent of the problems that we face and to help determine the effectiveness of programs put in place. This survey was administered again in the spring of 2012 and will continue annually. The survey has increased our understanding of the impact of bullying behavior on the students who are targets of bullies. The questionnaire includes multiple questions related to their experience with harassment and bullying in school settings as well as in the community and online cyberbullying.

This survey was developed locally, by the Community Task Force work group that addressed Unstructured In-School Time and Unsupervised Out-of-School Time. Results are analyzed by two university sociology professors, expert members of the local community who conduct research in this field. The data is also analyzed by the District Data Team through the collaborative inquiry process to identify issues that need to be addressed. We now have three years' longitudinal data (2011, 2012, 2013) and will soon have data from year four, allowing our research partners to identify trends and track improvements in student behaviors, choices, and incidents reported by both targets and aggressors over time. Their sophisticated analysis includes measuring the effects of our Tier I Caring School Communities Program on bullying behaviors, the most powerful outcome of our data analysis to date. Having local data reported by Foxborough students allows the district to be make sound decisions about the efficacy of our programs and identify future areas to target for attention.

c. Education and awareness of students.

Through our needs assessment, the district determined that we have many research-based programs in place to address this important issue. We also determined that the programs work well together to provide a comprehensive approach to developing social competency and to potentially reduce aggression. However, we believe that we can do

more to leverage existing structures within the district to be more effective.

One goal is to improve student leadership training that empowers students through programs such as Peer Leadership, Athletic Leadership program, teacher mentoring as part of NEASC's goal to provide a student advisory program, and transition matching of students to ease the transition from elementary to middle school, and middle to high school. Using students as role models and mentors is an effective way to reach more students with our message.

We continue efforts to expand the emphasis throughout the district on empowering witnesses, bystanders and "eggers" to use positive peer influence to educate students and reduce incidents. This area remains the most stubborn to influence through Tier I programs and in the coming year will be pursuing interventions specifically targeted to this goal.

d. Education and awareness of parents and the community (ongoing).

The Community Task Force work group that researched this issue utilized the theme presented in the book "How Full is Your Bucket" by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer as a starting point for a series of community education articles in the local newspaper, The Foxboro Reporter.

The Task Force ran monthly articles for a year (2010-2011) that helped to create awareness and to provide timely information to parents and the community as we began our public campaign.

First, a blue and gold "bucket" logo was distributed around town (schools, community, local businesses) with the words "How Can This Bucket Help Our Community?" This was to pique interest and to inform people of the date of the upcoming newspaper article. The first informational article was printed in the Sept. 23, 2010 edition of The Foxboro Reporter: "There's a New Campaign in Town: How Full is Your Bucket?" The focus of the second article was conflict resolution: "The Bucket Campaign: When There Are Conflicts PART 1."

One of the biggest ongoing challenges is increasing awareness of the important role of parents in preventing and reducing bullying. By offering more targeted parent involvement programs, schools and parents can work together to reduce bullying and intervene appropriately when suspected incidents do occur.

e. Education and Awareness of Staff (ongoing)

Initial comprehensive training on bullying prevention and intervention was provided to all school staff on August 31, September 1, and November 2, 2010. Athletic coaches and Foxborough High School student athletes participated in the same training on December 6, 2010. Please refer to specific details described on page 10 (Section II: Training and Professional Development).

In addition to this initial training, school staff will continue to educate students about the importance of reporting any suspected incidents and involving students as part of the solution to bullying prevention. Each school, "house," grade level, or department group has developed an appropriate structure to allow teachers to meet regularly to discuss classroom dynamics among their students.

Ongoing education and awareness of all school staff involves some key points that we will keep on the forefront:

1. Under the new law, teachers and staff are mandatory reporters of any suspected incidents of bullying or harassment ("see something, say something").
2. Teachers and staff should model expected behavior.
3. Teachers and staff will encourage spectators/bystanders/eggers/floaters to report and take an active role in prevention ("telling, not tattling").
4. Staff maintains trust for students to feel comfortable reporting suspected incidents.
5. Staff should make cautious assumptions about student behavior. Don't jump to conclusions about what you see; just report it.

f. Data-gathering and planning for incidents that occur on the school bus.

Acknowledging that unstructured school situations are more vulnerable to bullying, the task force work group determined that suspected incidents that occur on the school bus need further investigation and consideration. We gathered data from our transportation supervisor and principals and analyzed patterns of "bus incident" reports to understand the extent of the problem. We collected data from students themselves through our annual bullying survey that began in the spring of 2011. We learned that while students report that they may feel unsafe on the bus at times, there are relatively few reports of actual incidents of harassment or patterns of bullying on the bus. This data has remained stable over time, with only small numbers of incidents reported to have occurred on the bus.

g. Cyberbullying.

The biggest concern related to unsupervised out-of-school time is cyberbullying. The district intends to continue offering cyberbullying curricula at the middle and high school, as well as annual parent training programs about issues related to cyberbullying, online behavior, and use of social networking sites.

C. Planning and Oversight

School leaders responsible for the following tasks under this Plan are:

Task:	**Responsible Parties:**	**Timeline:**
1) receiving reports on bullying	Building Principals or Designees	ongoing
2a) collecting and analyzing *district-wide* data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes (annual student surveys)	Community Task Force, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, District Data Team	Annually – spring
2b) collecting and analyzing *building* data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes (incident reports)	Principals or Designees, Assistant Superintendent	ongoing

3) creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors	Community Task Force, Principals or Designees, Guidance Staff	spring 2011
4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law	Assistant Superintendent, Professional Development Team	ongoing
5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors	Principals or Designees, FPS Mental Health Services Team	ongoing
6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use	Assistant Superintendent, Principals, Teachers, Counselors	completed 2009-2010
7) developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Technology Director, Foxborough School Committee	completed fall 2010
8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct	Assistant Superintendent, Principals	June 2010, June 2011, June 2014
9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials	Community Task Force, Principals, Teachers, Counselors	ongoing
10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principals or Designees, District-Wide Crisis Team	biennially – December

D. Priority Statements

1. The district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

2. This Plan shall apply to students and all members of our school staff. The district is committed to providing all students and staff 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 that can impede the learning process.

3. We understand that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

4. We 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 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. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

5. We will also investigate allegations of bullying which occurs at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related, or occurs through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the 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 the school.

6. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying. The district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan in each school.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Initial Staff Training

Initial training for all staff was provided in 2010 by the Assistant Superintendent and a school adjustment counselor who is also a trainer with the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (M.A.R.C.) at Bridgewater State College.

The training took place on the following dates:
August 31, 2010: All high school faculty and staff; bus drivers; cafeteria staff; nurses; and extended day staff (before and after-school care workers)
September 2, 2010: All elementary and middle school faculty and staff
November 2, 2010: All custodians; technology department staff; any other staff members who were absent on the first two dates of training

The content of the training included:

- Major points of the new law: An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools (May 2010)
- Schools' authority for incidents that occur in school or at school-sponsored activities as well as incidents that occur outside of school that may negatively affect the learning environment
- Age-appropriate programs currently in place in the district, including social competency programs and their relationship to bullying prevention
- Special education provisions for vulnerable children
- Understanding the differences among bullying, harassment, and simple conflict. Newly adopted district-wide definitions of each were provided and discussed with examples. Please refer to information on page 4 under Section IA (Leadership) and definitions in Section VIII.
- Respect for diversity and difference
- The power differential and imbalance in bullying incidents, with examples from the M.A.R.C. training materials; specifically, how and why bullies seek out power differentials; the lack of appropriate affect of bullies; poor social skills often seen in

targets; how students respond to social pressures from peers; how bullies are now frequently the "popular" students; how depression and poor self-concept often play into the power imbalance; how increasing popularity through non-violent ways are harder for students to understand and use; why middle school students are more susceptible to negative peer influences; why witnesses or bystanders may not intervene and how their view of their social status influences their decisions; how witnesses and bystanders can be taught to play an active role in preventing and intervening in bullying situations

- Understanding the bully:
    - Hostile misperceptions and cognitive distortions that are characteristic of bullies
    - Students who do *no other* type of bullying engage in cyberbullying
- Understanding the needs of targets, bystanders, and witnesses
- Understanding the importance of identifying specific students who may be at risk or vulnerable to harassment, bullying, or retaliation based on their social skills, self-concept, social-emotional characteristics, peer status or disabilities
- Subtleties of bullying that may not be visible to adults in the home or school environment
- Data on the frequency of bullying from several research sources, including M.A.R.C. research findings, including gender differences in bullying, frequency and motivation
- Developmental characteristics of 11- to 13-year-olds that help to explain why bullying occurs more frequently in middle schools
- Train students to use abstract ("no-name") reporting to help counteract social/peer pressure to not tell adults who may be able to help
- How ignorance, indifference, and absence create climates that allow bullying and cyberbullying to occur
- Types of cyberbullying behaviors and Internet safety issues
- Why teachers and other adults must model expected behavior that promotes students' self-esteem and social skill development (behavior, words, body language)
- Staff responsibility in prevention and intervention:
    - Staff as mandatory reporters: "See something, say something" – all reports go to the building principal or designee.
    - When witnessing an incident of bullying or harassment, separate the aggressor from the target. The target will not disclose in the bully's presence.
- Key principles for the ongoing education of students:
    - "Telling not tattling" – tattling is designed to get someone in trouble; telling is designed to keep someone safe, either yourself or others. Telling is good.
    - Listen and talk to students.
    - It's not "just a joke."

B. Annual Staff Training on the Plan

At the beginning of each school year, principals provide annual training on the Plan, focusing on staff responsibilities in reporting and intervening in suspected incidents of bullying or harassment. This will include a review of reporting forms; staff responsibility as mandatory reporters ("See something, say something"); the characteristics of aggressors, targets, and bystanders; and an overview of bullying prevention curricula in place in the school.

Full review of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan also occurs for new staff as part of the formal Mentoring Program and New Teacher Orientation.

C. Ongoing Professional Development

Principals have planned ongoing professional development through faculty meetings that

address and revisit topics related to bullying prevention and intervention, including the use of incident reporting forms. Ongoing training will reinforce the key points of the initial training (describe above) as well. Grade level and department meetings will continue to be used to discuss student dynamics and behaviors.

Professional development will also 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). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

D. Written Notice to Staff

The district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about its key points and staff responsibilities in the district's employee handbook and the code of conduct.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Identifying Resources

Through its Mental Health Services Team, the district has a clearly defined process for identifying students who may need counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. The district reviews staffing needs annually and has not identified significant service gaps. Resources are also allocated on an annual basis.

B. Counseling and Other Services

Students identified as targets of harassment, bullying, or retaliation, or as aggressors in any of those areas will be referred to the Mental Health Services Team. The team will identify the specific issues involved in the student's behavior and experiences and outline a plan to support the student to ensure a safe school environment. Counseling and supports may take the form of individual counseling, group counseling, and/or follow-up support with families. Referrals may also be made to outside agencies when appropriate. Principals are responsible for ensuring that proper supports are put in place and will monitor subsequent progress by meeting with the mental health services staff and by working through each school's Teacher Assistance Team (TAT).

As a low incidence district with fewer than twenty ELL students, the district does not provide counseling services in a student's native language. However, through its ELL program, the district has processes in place to provide appropriate supports to ELL students and families.

Through the special education department, the needs of students with disabilities who may be vulnerable to bullying and harassment will be reviewed by teachers and administrators. Social skills programs are provided by classroom teachers and counseling staff through research-based programs such as Second Step, Steps to Respect, and Caring School Communities, a social competency program used in all classrooms in grades K-5. These provide the foundation for a common language about the development of social competency skills and problem-solving techniques. In addition, the Mental Health Services Team provides consultation and more intensive services to those in need, including behavioral intervention plans and individualized therapeutic classroom programs, as previously described in Section B4, found on page 5.

C. Students with Disabilities

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, and as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, each student's IEP team considers whether a student's disability affects social skills development or may make him/her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of that 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.

E. Referral to Outside Services

The guidance office in each school has a listing of agencies to refer students and families either individually or as a group to support their needs. Though these agencies are not sponsored by the school district, we have a close professional working relationship that allows us to provide direction to students or parents seeking support. These agencies include mental health agencies, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, counseling services, and hospitals. Referrals may be made by school counselors, nurses, principals, and other school personnel.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches

The district uses several research-based programs to develop social competency and to educate students about healthy relationships, problem-solving skills, and the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying. These include:

- Caring School Communities
- Second Step
- Steps to Respect
- others as outlined previously in section B1 found on page 4

Foxborough's bullying prevention curricula is informed by current research which emphasizes the following approaches which are embedded into our current programs:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do if they witness other students or school staff engaged 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 cybersafety, 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.
- Internet safety is taught as part of the Technology Skills Curriculum across the district.

Staff members teach related skills through the guidance curriculum, the health curriculum, and small group instruction. Key components of the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan are reviewed annually with students. All co-curricular advisors/coaches at

the high school also review the Plan with participating students.

School-based programs and after-school clubs create school-wide awareness of important issues that support a safe school environment (i.e. Gay/Straight Alliance, S.A.D.D., Student Council, etc.).

B. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts

The district supports approaches that are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. The following best practices underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop appropriate 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.

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

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

Reports of suspected bullying, harassment, or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing using the district's formal reporting form for any suspected incident. A school or district staff member must report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying, harassment, or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.

Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously.

Each school will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office and the school guidance office; and 3) post it on the school's website as well as the district web site.

At the beginning of each school year, the district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its

policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, are incorporated into student and staff handbooks, on the school/district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff:

   A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may constitute suspected bullying, harassment, or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

   The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of suspected bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided 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.

3. This process applies only to situations where bullying is alleged. Disciplinary incidents involving student aggressors will be reported using the school disciplinary action process. Disciplinary incidents involving staff will be reported in alignment with the Collective Bargaining Agreement and Staff Code of Conduct.

B. <u>Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation</u>

1. Safety:

   Before fully investigating the allegations of suspected bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to: creating a personal safety 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; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target in circumstances that may warrant such action. 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 to protect a student who reports bullying or retaliation, witnesses bullying or retaliation, or provides information during an investigation.

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 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 any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

b. Notice to Another School or District - If the reported incident involves students 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 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 suspected bullying or retaliation if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be warranted 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 he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be warranted against the aggressor.

C. Investigation

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of suspected bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider 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 will interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation 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, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality as well as a written record of the investigation.

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

D. Determinations

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take reasonable steps to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is

not restricted in participating in any and all 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 action is 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 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 unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

E. Responses to Bullying

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building:

   Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, 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). 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 nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social 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.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action:

   If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be 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 will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's code of conduct. Disciplinary actions for harassment, bullying, or retaliation depend on the nature of the offense and may include: in-school detention; or out-of school suspension of up to ten days; and police notification.

   Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), in concert with state

laws regarding 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 what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact 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 will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent Education and Resources

The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of Foxborough's anti-bullying curricula and social competency programs used across the district. The programs may be offered in collaboration with the PTOs, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or other parent or community organizations.

B. Notification Requirements

At the start of each school 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. The district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats. The district will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, on a school bus, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned by the school district.
- at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned by the school district, 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 of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

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.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

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

Bullying is systematically or chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees.

Bullying, as defined in *M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O*, is the repeated use by one or more students or 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:

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 his or 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.

Bullying may involve but is not limited to:

1. unwanted teasing
2. threatening/intimidating behavior
3. stalking or cyberstalking
4. cyberbullying
5. physical violence
6. theft or destruction of school or personal property
7. sexual, religious, or racial harassment
8. public humiliation
9. social exclusion, including incitement and or coercion
10. spreading of falsehoods or rumors

Behavior must meet three criteria to be considered bullying:

1. The behavior is repetitive. If a behavior occurs only once, it may constitute harassment, but it is not bullying.
2. The behavior is either unwanted, offensive, threatening, insulting, or humiliating; or the behavior causes the target to feel stressed, injured or threatened to the point that it impacts his/her educational experience or affects the school environment.
3. There is an imbalance of power between the target and the aggressor. Children who engage in peer aggression have more power than the target. The power advantage may be due to social status, age, size, and/or popularity.

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, Internet postings, or any other forms of social media. See *M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O* for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Harassment is annoying, threatening, or unwanted behavior causing fear and/or limiting another's behavior and actions. Harassment can include:

Verbal harassment involves words that hurt and/or humiliate, including, but not limited to, teasing, name calling, and/or insults. The following are categories of verbal harassment:

1. Careless hurtful remarks appear to be thoughtless rather than malicious; repetitive "careless hurtful remarks" are probably not thoughtless, but in fact may be "verbal or written teasing/taunting" (see below).

2. *Verbal or written teasing/taunting* is the expression of language which is deliberately hurtful to a target's feelings, and can either be made directly to the target or within his/her or other children's hearing or sight.

3. *Verbal or written threats or taunts* are explicit remarks threatening future harmful behavior.

4. *Encouraging such harassment* is also a type of verbal harassment.

Physical harassment involves physical actions that are hurtful. The following are categories of physical harassment:

1. *Physical threats* include physical gestures used to convey to a target that s/he will be hurt, such as but not limited to raising a clenched fist or drawing a finger across the throat.

2. *Physical aggression* involves physically touching a target in a hurtful way that is unlikely to cause injury, including, but not limited to, pinching, pulling off hats, grabbing books, and/or blocking one's way. Taking or damaging someone's property is another form of physical aggression.

3. *Physical attacks* include, but are not limited to, pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting, punching, or pinning down.

Relational harassment involves convincing one's peers to exclude or reject certain persons and cut them off from their social connections.

Verbal, physical, and relational harassment is bullying if it also meets the three criteria identified in the definition of bullying (above).

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.

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

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, and paraprofessionals.

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

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. 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, or school 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 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 the Plan covers the behavior.

APPENDIX A

Foxborough Public Schools

Incident Reporting Process
and
Incident Report Form

Foxborough Public Schools
INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS

Step One: Complete Incident Report Form

If an adult witnesses or reports incident:

- Staff member completes incident report and gives to designated administrative staff member

If a student reports incident to staff member:

- Acknowledge student's feelings
- Determine if there are safety issues that must be addressed immediately
- Student or staff member completes incident report and gives to designated administrative staff member

Step Two: Conduct Investigation

Interview target of incident:

- Target and alleged aggressor should be separated
- Ask target to describe the event
- Encourage target to report any additional incidents with the alleged aggressor
- Interview the target first, then the alleged aggressor
- Target and alleged aggressor should be separated
- Do not ask to see target in the alleged aggressor's presence
- If a judgment is made that bullying did not occur, the parties may be brought together for mediation. Mediation is not appropriate for bullying situations unless requested by the target.
- Review and confirm report with interviewee.

Interview the student accused of incident:

- Identify the problem
- Focus more on the alleged aggressor's behavior, protecting the target's confidentiality
- In case of denial or if further information is needed, interview witnesses
- Document the witness account
- Make the alleged aggressor aware of consequences of retaliation against the target and reporter
- Review and confirm report with interviewee

Interview witness(es)

- Document the witness account
- Advise the witness that any information related to the incident is confidential and should only be discussed with parents and staff members
- Review and confirm report with the interviewee

Contact parent of target, alleged aggressor, and interviewed witnesses

Step Three: Assign Consequences if Needed

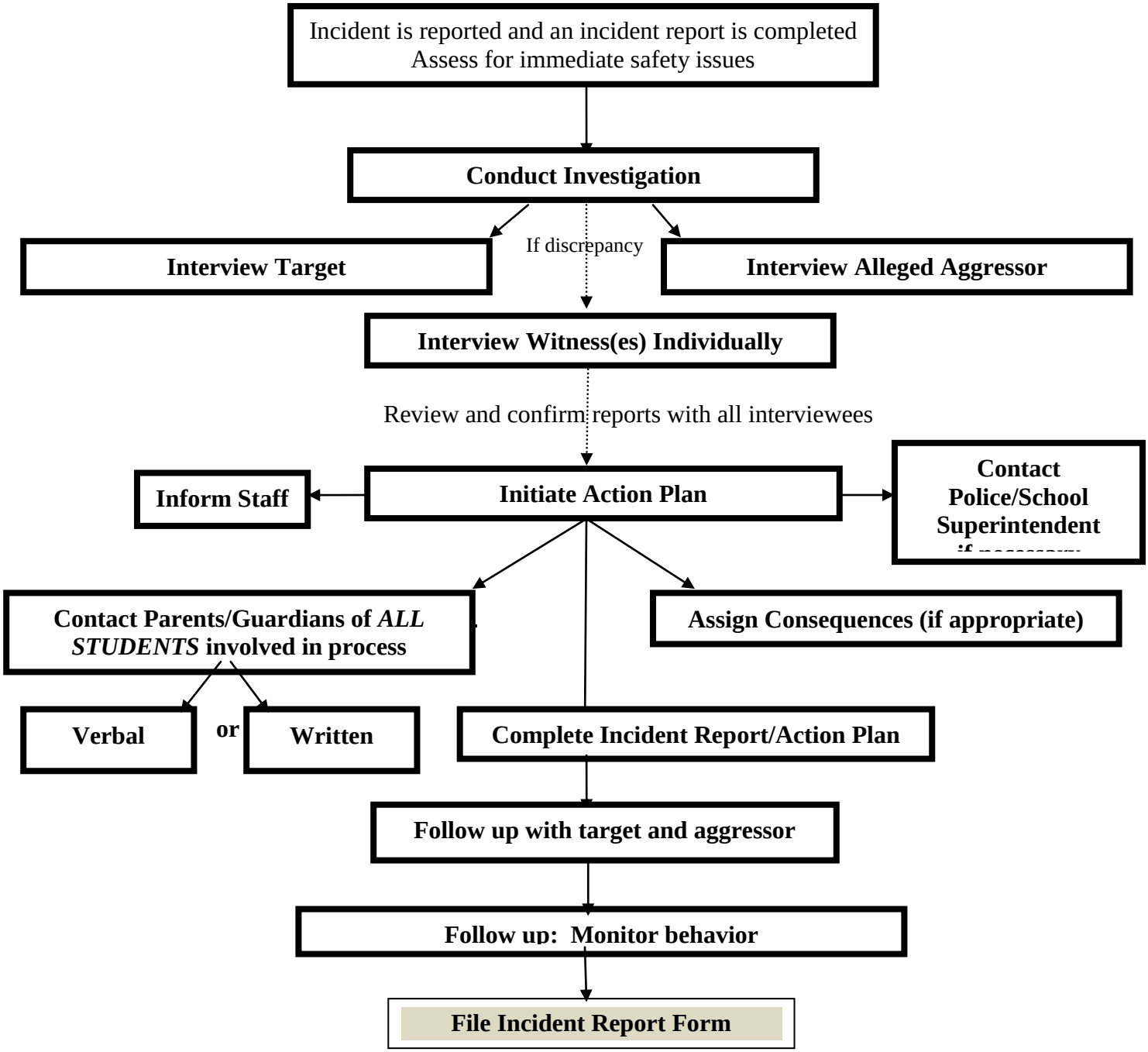
- Assign appropriate consequences
- If the alleged aggressor denies the incident and there is insufficient evidence, tell the alleged aggressor that you hope s/he is right and that nothing happened, but you will continue to monitor behavior
- Monitor safety of target
- If the target is found to have fabricated the incident, the false report is documented and consequences are determined

Step Four: Document Incident and Consequences

- Document outcome of investigation
- Target will be notified of action taken or not taken
- Provide update to staff member who reported incident
- Monitor students' behavior
- Notify teachers who have contact with target and aggressor

Foxborough Public Schools

INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS
FLOW CHART



Bullying is defined as a verbal, physical, written, or electronic action, or incident or other direct or indirect behavior that is cruel and repetitive. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological or emotional power.

Foxborough Public Schools
INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Person Completing Form	
Date and Time of Incident	
Who Reported Incident	
Child/Children Involved	

Details of Incident	

To your knowledge, has this occurred before? **Yes_____ No_____**	**Are there immediate safety or transportation concerns?** **Yes_____ No_____**

If needed, describe incident or concerns in more detail:

Action Plan

To be completed by principal/assistant principal/designated staff

Date	
Interviewed Target	
Interviewed Child Accused of Aggression	
Interviewed Witness	
Summary of Findings	
Action Taken	
Parent Notified	
Signature of Principal/Designee	