

# NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Voted December 20, 2010  
Newburyport School Committee

Updated June 25, 2025  
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## I. LEADERSHIP

- A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan: During the 2008-2009 school year, a group of stakeholders from the Newburyport School Community was formed that worked to develop a comprehensive anti-bullying policy. This group, the Anti-Bullying Policy Working Committee consisted of administrators, teachers, counselors, psychologists, parents, community organization members, and students.

After eight months of work, an Anti-Bullying Policy that is an integrated approach which incorporates disciplinary action, behavior management, preventative education, and restorative justice (a balanced approach to the needs of the victim, wrongdoer and the community through processes that preserve the safety and dignity of all) was implemented. The Policy identifies a hierarchy of bullying behaviors and their possible interventions.

In the development of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, as required by MGL c. 71 s. 370, we found that the Anti-Bullying Policy Working Committee that had developed the comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy achieved significant groundwork as required by the Plan. Therefore, we brought together a sample population of that group to facilitate incorporating components of the Anti-Bullying Policy in drafting the Plan and then brought it to the full constituency group. This is the group that will be responsible for the review and updating of the Plan as not only required, but as needed.

- B. Accessing Needs and Resources: At least once every four years, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education developed student [survey](#) to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.
- C. Planning and Oversight: The principal at each school is responsible for : 1) receiving reports on bullying; 2) collecting and analyzing building and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes; 3) creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; 4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use; 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; 8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated; 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and 10) reviewing and updating the Plan.

- D. Priority Statement: The Newburyport Public Schools expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

The Newburyport Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or at school-related activities.

The Newburyport Public Schools will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for all students and for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide education to all students around strategies to prevent or respond to bullying. We will investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and the Newburyport Public Schools is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. This plan provides for the same protection of all students regardless of their status under the law.

## **II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan: Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.
- B. 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 will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of schoolwide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:
- i. developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
  - ii. developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;

- iii. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- iv. 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;
- v. information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- vi. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

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. Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development may 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, and
- engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors.

C. Written Notice to Staff: The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

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

A. Identifying Resources: Newburyport Public Schools will offer access to resources and services to students impacted by bullying. The resources may include the following: establishing safety planning teams and identifying other agencies that can provide services. In conjunction with existing school personnel, the principals at each school will identify existing and needed resources, including but not limited those listed below.

B. Counseling and Other Services: The District offers culturally and linguistically appropriate resources for families within the district. In addition, the principal and other school staff will develop safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or

retaliation, provide social skills programs to prevent bullying, and will offer education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Newburyport Public Schools will consider using behavioral intervention plans and social skills groups.

- C. 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 his/her 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.

At least once every four years beginning in 2015/2016 school year, the district will administer a Dept. of Elementary and Secondary developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

- D. Referral to Outside Services: The Superintendent and the principals at each school, in conjunction with other staff, may refer students and families to outside services. Referrals will comply with relevant laws and policies. Additionally, if administration determines that a bullying situation requires responsive services for either the target or the aggressor, school counseling staff, in consultation with other staff members, are responsible for the initial assessment of students' academic progress as well as personal/social concerns. Where necessary, the counselor will make available to the target or the aggressor and appropriate family members responsive services which may include individual and small group counseling, crisis counseling, referral to other agencies or professional resources. The counselor will cooperate and assist other agencies when there is a referral for responsive services. Student information will not be provided to outside agencies until the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) have signed a release of information form. All staff will comply with the state and federal child protection laws in reporting to appropriate protective service agencies.

#### **IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC SERVICES**

A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches: Bullying prevention curricula will be 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 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 [and digital literacy], 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 and supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Each year, District staff will review the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with the students. Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

- B. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts: The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:
- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines,
  - creating safe and supportive school and classroom environments for all students, including students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, students experiencing homelessness, students who are in foster care settings, migrant students and military-connected students.
  - 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 [and social media] 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 bullying 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. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation 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. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district 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, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined

by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, 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, and the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or 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, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report as provided 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 bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor. 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, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor.

**B. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation Allegations of Bullying by a Student:** In response to an allegation report of bullying or retaliation by a student, the following is recommended.

1. **Safety:** Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety 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. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, 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.

2. Obligations to Notify Others: The principal or designee is obligated to notify the following of an allegation.
  - 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 student aggressor of this, the procedures for responding to it, and notice of actions to prevent further incidents. 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 bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

- C. Investigation: The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of 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, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation. No discipline will be taken against an alleged aggressor based solely because of an anonymous report.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations.

- 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 steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. The principal may impose a range of disciplinary actions against an aggressor for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.

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 student 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 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 that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination. In addition, the principal may refer targets, aggressors, and families for counseling.

E. Responses to Bullying: The District will include the following to remediate or prevent further bullying and retaliation.

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 but are not limited to:
  - 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 or district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation 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 as well. One strategy that 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.

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.

- F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff: The Newburyport Public Schools will respond to and resolve a report of bullying of a student by school staff in accordance with district policy and procedures. This includes safety planning, notification to parent or guardians and others, investigation, and response similar to when a student is alleged to have bullied another student (see Sections B, C, D & E above). The district emphasizes the importance of an investigation, the need for the aggressor, target, and witnesses to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

## **VI. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

The law requires the Plan to include a statement prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The statement is included in the Plan, in the student handbook, and the staff handbook. The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibitions of bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district of schools; 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 through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create event 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 Newburyport Public Schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## **VII. 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/prs>, emails can be sent to [DESECompliance@mass.gov](mailto:DESECompliance@mass.gov) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Problem Resolution System. Hard copies of this information will also be available at each school or district's Superintendent's office.

## VIII. DEFINITIONS

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bystander/Witness a person who observes bullying behavior that he/she has witnessed and may or may not assist in the situation

CMR Code of Massachusetts Regulations

MGL Massachusetts General Law

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 including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
2. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
3. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
4. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
5. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

The Newburyport Public Schools also defines bullying as unfair and one-sided and involves an imbalance of power. It happens when someone is repeatedly hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, photographs, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, text messages, and Internet postings, and social media.

Cyberbullying shall 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. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one persons 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 of bullying.

Hostile environment as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, 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 bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

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

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

## **IX. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Newburyport's Plan reflects the requirements under M.G.L. 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, and paraprofessionals.

M.G.L. 71, § 37O lists six topics that must be included in professional development. The law defines two levels of professional development that school systems must provide for all staff:

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan: Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years. The principal of the building is responsible to ensure this training occurs for any new staff member. The annual training will be conducted at the beginning of the school year. Most training will occur under the direction of the principal at each school. Any Newburyport Public School employee with training in recognized training programs may also lead trainings in each school building. Use of law enforcement to assist in training components of M.G.L. 71, § 37O will also be utilized.

The Superintendent shall ensure that:

1. Training is provided to all school staff, including teachers and para-educators; secretaries, cafeteria workers, administrators, nurses, guidance counselors; maintenance staff; coaches; advisors, and bus drivers on an annual basis as required by state law.
2. Bullying prevention programs and anti-bullying curriculum is formulated and regularly reviewed, as well as training provided for staff in implementing the curriculum.
3. The professional development plan is published annually and provided to every staff member.
4. We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic, status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will

take 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.

B. 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 will build 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 will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying
- Developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses 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
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying

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.

Each school leadership team may design professional development in-service based on a determination of staff needs. Additional objectives of professional development may 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 and maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom environment for all students

The district will work with the bus company that serves the Newburyport Public Schools to ensure that professional development provided to bus drivers on an annual basis and meets the district's expectations for quality professional development.

- C. Written notice to staff: The Newburyport Public Schools will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff responsibilities in each school's Staff Handbook.

## **X. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

The law requires the district or school Plan to include provisions for informing parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district or school including: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyberbullying. Parents and guardians must also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. School- or district-specific approaches to collaboration should take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and the parents.

The Newburyport Public Schools has developed a comprehensive anti-bullying curriculum most appropriate for each school and grade in which they are implemented. The curriculum incorporates bullying prevention, conflict resolution and asset building. Collaborative decisions were made about the curricula taking into account students' developmental stages, school culture, community contexts, and district goals.

- A. Parent education and resources: The school or district offers education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the bullying prevention curricula, anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs may be offered in collaboration with the home and school organizations, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, athletics, Guidance Departments at the middle and high schools, Beacon Coalition and Youth Services organizations. Newburyport will host speakers, conduct parent forums on bullying and cyberbullying prevention on an ongoing basis. We provide parents with opportunities to participate in workshops held by agencies such as the Essex County District Attorney's Office and, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC).
- B. Notification requirements: Every year, the Newburyport Public Schools inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the bullying prevention and anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice includes information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district provides parents information about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy through the schools' student handbooks. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic format and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district posts the Plan and related information on its website.

**XI. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS OR DISTRICT POLICIES**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Newburyport Public Schools no person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Nothing in the Plan prevents the Newburyport Public Schools 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 Newburyport Public Schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H ½, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L.c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

**REFERENCES:**

United State Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Letter on Harassment and Bullying - October 26, 2010

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

**LEGAL REFERENCES:**

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

603 CMR 26.00	Mandatory Reporting
MGL 37H, 37H1/2	Policies relative to conduct of teachers or students; student handbook
MGL 71:370	School bullying prohibited; bullying prevention plans
MGL 265:43, 43A	Crimes against a person
MGL 268:13B	Intimidation of witnesses and jurors
MGL 269:14A	Annoying telephone calls

**CROSS REFERENCE POLICIES:**

JICD Anti-Bullying Policy and Hierarchy of Interventions

ACAB-1 Policy against Harassment