

Foxborough Public Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

2021



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The Foxborough Public Schools plan format is parallels the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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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. This involvement originally began with the Community Task Force to Address Bullying and Harassment (originally established in May 2010) and included a 45 member team including 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. Consultation will include, at a minimum, notice and a public comment period before the Foxborough School Committee adopts the plan. In addition, each building principal will work with their respective School Site Councils and/or Parent-Teacher Organization/ Parent-Advisory Council to review the draft plan and solicit feedback.

Each respective School Council (5 schools) shall annually review the objectives under the District's Strategic Plan for Success and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to provide feedback and suggestions for revision to the Administrative Team.

The Foxborough Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is posted on the district web site as well as each school's website. Suggestions from parents and the greater community have been and will continue to be solicited.

B. Assessing Needs and Resources

The Plan will be the schools' and district's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff (through web site responses, e-mail requests, School Councils, PAC meetings, and staff meetings), will continue to assess the adequacy of current programs; review current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services for designing ongoing professional development. This "mapping" process will assist schools and the district in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. These gaps and areas of need will be addressed by the Administrative Team and carefully analyzed during the budget development process. Based on these findings, the district will develop or revise relevant policies and procedures; sustain partnerships with community agencies, such as the Health Department, the Coalition for Alcohol Awareness, the Foxborough Recreation Department, the Foxborough Public Library, and Public Safety agencies; and establish priorities.

As part of our periodic needs assessments:

- Each school will provide the opportunity for student, parent and staff response in an annual electronic survey provided through K12 Insight to assess school climate and school safety. Students in grades 5-12 participate in the K12 Insight Survey. Other surveys will be administered periodically for the purpose of identifying needs at each level.
- At least once every four years, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education developed survey to assess school climate and the

prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. The district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

Each school administrator (in conjunction with school counselors or designees) will assume responsibility for data collection and will analyze building-specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying (e.g., focusing on identifying vulnerable populations and “hot spots” in school buildings, on school grounds, or on school buses).

This information will help to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services.

The Administrative Team, with input from other stakeholders as appropriate, will be responsible for reviewing and updating the plan biennially or more frequently if needed.

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 <i>district-wide</i> data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes (annual student surveys)	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, District Data Team	annually
2b) collecting and analyzing <i>building</i> 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	Principals or Designees, Guidance Staff	ongoing
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	ongoing
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	ongoing
8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct	Assistant Superintendent, Principals	annually
9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials	Principals, Teachers, Counselors	ongoing
10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principals or Designees,	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 based on actual or perceived characteristics. This includes 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 the characteristics. 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. 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, § 370*, 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, and Internet postings. See *M.G.L. c. 71, § 370* 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.

III. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Foxborough Public Schools will meet 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 nurse, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and educational assistants.

A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan

At the beginning of each school year, principals provide annual training on the Plan in conjunction with other annual mandated training requirements, including training on: *School Safety, Civil Rights, Restraint, Ethics, and Confidentiality*.

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.

B. 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. Grade level and department meetings will continue to be used to discuss student dynamics and behaviors.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent, identify 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.

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:

- Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying and retaliation;
- Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying and retaliation incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among aggressors, targets and witnesses to bullying;
- Research findings on bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment based on actual or perceived characteristics;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying;
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying;
- Best practices in the field of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation prevention;
- 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;
- Legal issues and responsibilities related to bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation; and
- Community concerns about bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation as expressed through School Committee meetings, parent surveys, student surveys and through other means.

C. 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.

IV. **ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. The Plan describes the strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services should reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. The Plan includes strategies for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

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. Recommendations will be developed to fill resource and service gaps. This may include adopting new curricula, reorganizing staff, establishing safety planning team, and identifying other agencies that can provide services. 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 one hundred 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. The district employs two full time ESL teachers to assist students.

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. 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. Students are provided with differentiated tiers of support that include resources for all students, social skills groups, behavior intervention plans, individualized curricula, and group sessions directly related to bullying behavior. Parents are encouraged to review the resources provided by the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State University (<https://www.marccenter.org/>). A list of community service agencies is included on our district website.

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.

D. 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.

V. **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:

- Responsive Classroom
- Zones of Regulation
- Second Step
- WEB
- LINK
- Challenge Day
- Advisory, Group Guidance and Health Curriculum

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

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other

- students 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, LGBTQBU, S.A.D.D., Student Council, Be the Change, 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, students with actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socio-economic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, physical appearance, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.
- 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.

VI. 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 Faculty and 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. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

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. As stated previously, while M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, requires the Principal or designee to contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying, the actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed with all parties within the boundaries of all applicable state and federal laws related to student confidentiality.
- 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.

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.

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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

VII. 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.

VIII. 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.

IX. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seek 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 [Office of Public School Monitoring - Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#), emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are available at the schools and the superintendent's office.

X. 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

Foxborough Public Schools

Incident Reporting Process
and
Incident Report Forms

**Foxborough Public Schools
INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS**

Step One:	Complete Incident Report Form
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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
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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

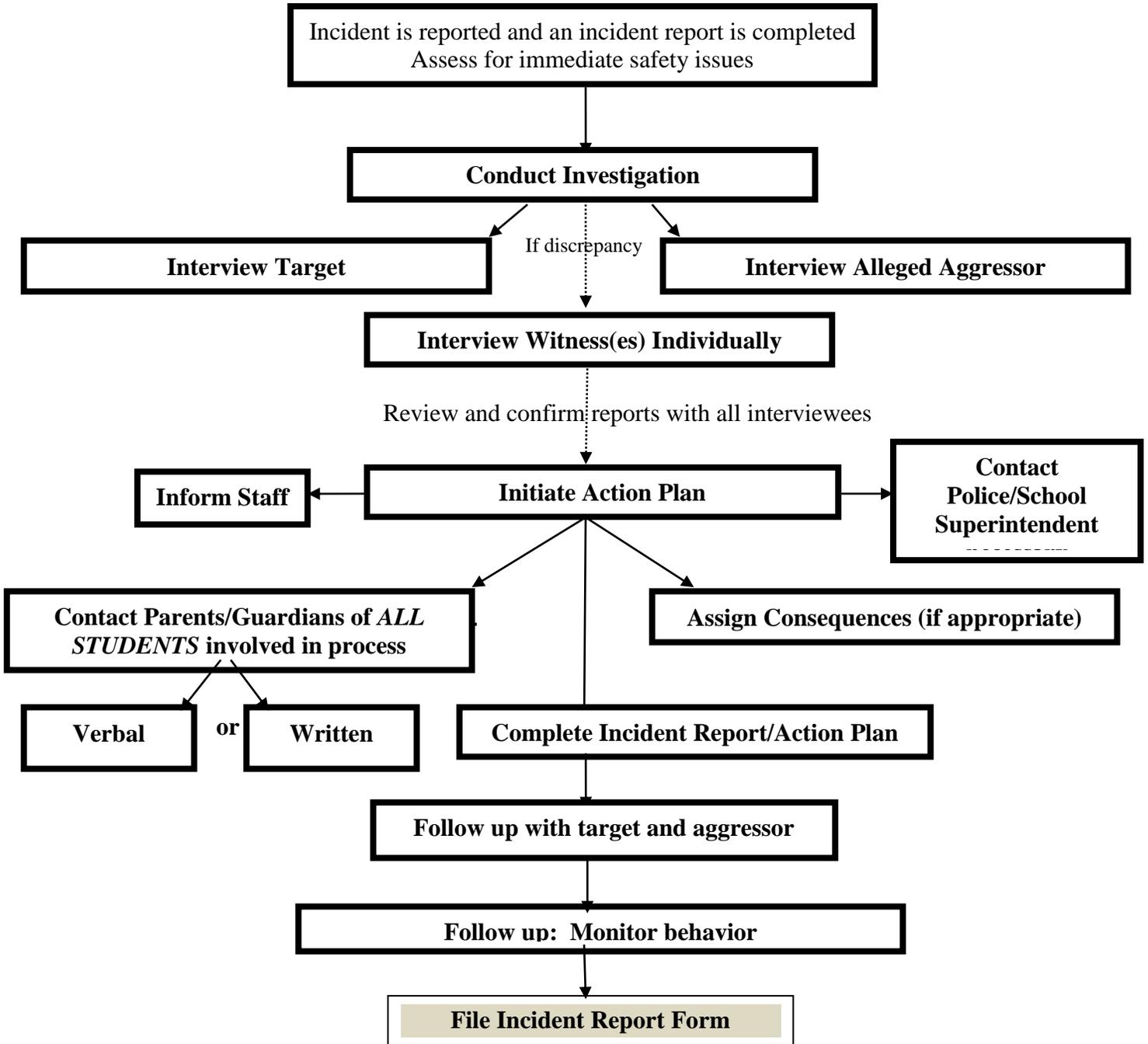
Step Three: Assign Consequences if Needed

- 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	
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To your knowledge, has this occurred before? Yes _____ No _____	Are there immediate safety or transportation concerns? Yes _____ No _____
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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	

Website Anonymous Bullying Report

Date of incident:

Location of incident:

(Specify school name and room/area if possible)

Names of those involved:

Description of incident:

This form may be delivered or mailed to:

Bullying Report

Foxborough Public Schools

60 South Street

Foxborough, MA 02035