

**Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
Watertown Public Schools**

November 2014

Introduction

In compliance with MGL.c.71§370, the Watertown Public Schools has created this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

This plan is rooted in the belief that bullying prevention involves a multi-layered approach to 1) create a welcoming community, 2) raise awareness of aspects of community and school culture which support bullying behaviors, 3) provide educational opportunities for the community, for parents, for all school staff, and for students, 4) provide clear policies and guidelines for behavior to all the above groups, and 5) devise protocols and action plans to deal with both the disciplinary and the therapeutic response of the school to bullying behaviors. We believe that involvement of not only community members, but community groups, as well as school personnel, students and parents, in a cohesive and all inclusive effort to raise awareness of the issues contributing to bullying will be the most effective way to create an environment where all students and staff feel welcome and treated with respect and dignity.

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

Watertown Public Schools has involved a wide variety of groups, both school and community-based, in the development of this Plan.

Advisory Committee

The Watertown Public Schools Bullying Prevention Advisory Committee, Peaceful Community, Peaceful Schools Advisory, composed of school and community members, was formed in October 2010. It meets several times each year to review the program components. The Advisory Committee operates under the auspices of Jean Fitzgerald, Ph.D., Superintendent. The group is chaired by Barbara Gortych, Ph.D., Coordinator of Assessment, Guidance & Mental Health, K-12 and by Jason Del Porto, Assist. Principal, Watertown Middle School.

This Advisory Committee has been successful in working with the Superintendent, and Principals in developing a general plan for 1) reporting behaviors in school, 2) supporting evidence-based anti-bullying curriculum in every school, 3) providing on-line staff training, and 4) continuing to reach out to the community (e.g., recreation and sports).

Wayside Youth and Family Support Network, Watertown

In addition to this oversight committee, Watertown Schools has also had a working relationship for many years with Wayside Youth and Family Support Network in the town. The Wayside Youth and Family Support Network also has provided leadership around adolescent issues in Watertown via the annual Report on the Well-Being of Watertown Youth which documents the results of the **2012 Watertown Youth Risk**

Behavior Survey and Youth Needs Assessment. This is the fifteenth year that the survey has been undertaken in conjunction with the Watertown Youth Coalition and Wayside.

B. Assessing Needs and Resource

Watertown Public Schools maintains a wide variety of evidence-based programming which is helpful to students involved in bullying incidents, as either targets or aggressors. These are detailed below.

Elementary

Since the spring of 2010, the three elementary schools have been using the Caring School Community program as their anti-bullying curriculum. It provides for a weekly lesson in each classroom delivered by the teacher, with daily check-ins.

Middle School

In the 2009-2010 school year, the Middle School chose to use the Let's Get Real program as an anti-bullying curriculum. In 2014, the current curriculum was re-evaluated and the school chose to take the strengths of Lets Get Real and integrate them into an Advisory model. Taking the lead from the High School and the Olweus model, WMS has started implementing the WMS Advisory Program as the bullying prevention program.

High School

Watertown High School began using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in the fall of 2011, after training a team of faculty in the spring of that year. The Olweus system is implemented as part of the WHS Advisory Program in which students meet once every 7 school days in small groups with a faculty advisor.

Current Steps in Developing Anti-bullying Resources, Policies, and Procedures

In August 2010, the Watertown School Committee rewrote the Student-To-Student Harassment/Bullying Policy. It was posted and went through a period of public review after which it was approved by the School Committee and remains current.

Since August 2010, all five principals reviewed their Student Handbooks annually to update them in regard to bullying policies.

Review of Available Data on Bullying and Behavioral Incidents

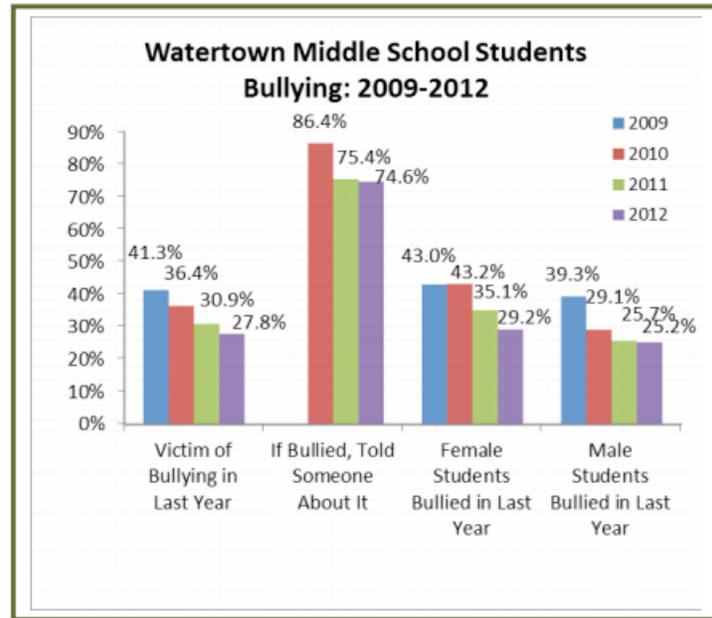
YRBS Data 2012

2012 Highlights

Bullying in general has decreased over the past 3 years, but students who were bullied were still less likely to tell someone about it in 2012 (74.6% vs. 75.4% in 2011).

Students who have been bullied in the past year report that verbal attacks were the most prevalent (72%), followed by Internet bullying (Facebook, Instant messenger) (25%), physical confrontation (17.4%).

Female students report a higher rate of being bullied in the past year (29.2%) than male (25.2%) classmates.



For Watertown High School students, the three main conclusions from the bullying data in this survey appear below.

1. “26.4 % report peer pressure/bullying as their greatest challenge, up slightly from 24% in 2007.”
2. “33.6% reported ever having been bullied or harassed, up slightly from 31.1% in 2008.”
3. “Students who reported being bullied or harassed also reported more drug use, higher rates of depression and suicidality, having sex, carrying a weapon in the past 30 days, and more use of diet pills to lose weight in the past 30 days.”

As part of their cooperative work with Watertown, Wayside plans to do another survey in the spring of 2015 with a focus on how students, parents and faculty/staff view the climate in schools to provide updated information.

Further, on an annual basis, the Watertown Public Schools will collect and 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).

C. Planning & Oversight

Various aspects of this Plan will be overseen by different individuals or groups. These are listed briefly below. However, their roles and functions will be further described throughout this document.

1. Principal – receives reports on behavioral incidents that could later be determined to be bullying.
2. Principal or designee – collects and analyzes building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes.
3. Advisory Committee in conjunction with the Information Systems Specialist, and Principals – continues to implement a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors.
4. Coordinators of Advisory Committee with the Professional Development Committee (PDC) -- create on-line ongoing professional development that is required by the law for all faculty and staff.
5. Principals and individual school triage groups – plan supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors.
6. Principals with faculty/staff – continue to implement the curricula that the school or district will use.
7. Superintendent, School Committee, Principals, with community –review 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. Superintendent and Principals –review student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to assure compliance with the law.
9. Coordinators of Advisory Committee -- lead the parent or family engagement efforts.
10. Superintendent. in conjunction with the Advisory Committee, with feedback from schools, parents and community -- review and update the Plan each year, or more frequently.

A. Developing Priority Statements

Watertown Public Schools expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

Watertown Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

Watertown Public Schools understands that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, who speak languages other than English or come from different cultures, 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 and staff with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Watertown Public Schools 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.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying. The Watertown Public Schools 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.

II. Training and Professional Development

A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan

Annual training for all Watertown Public Schools staff is now on-line. It focuses on the law, 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 will be 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 the 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§370, the content of school-wide 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. 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. 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 student's Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disabilities affect social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development include:

- Creating meaningful connections within the community
- 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 practice, 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 for all students.

C. Written Notice to Staff

The district will provide all staff with an annual notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the Student Handbook that appears on the Watertown Schools website under each school's tab. Additionally, staff are notified that they must complete online annual training around bullying prevention each September.

D. Training in Watertown

As part of the requirements of the anti-bullying legislation in Massachusetts, Watertown Public Schools has been actively involved in seeking out and providing training to staff since the early summer of 2010. Provided below is a record of previous training.

1. Staff Training

Each September all faculty and staff are required to complete online training in bullying prevention law and the District's Plan.

Additionally, Youth Mental Health First Aid courses (8 hours of training) are being offered to the staff in the District. In the fall of 2014, all administrators (Superintendent, Assist. Superintendent, Principals, Assist. Principals, Coordinators) and all Mental Health staff were trained and certified in this course. Training will continue throughout the year for staff through Professional Development.

2. Community-Parent Training

The District will be offering grant-funded training in Youth Mental Health First Aid for parents and youth leaders in Watertown over a two year period beginning in September 2014.

3. Student Education

Curriculum

Students will participate in specialized curricula that are appropriate to their age and developmental level and are integrated into their school day.

Since September 1, 2010. The elementary staff has been trained in and has implemented the Caring School Community curriculum.

The Middle School initially trained its staff and implemented the Let's Get Real curriculum in the 2009-2010 school year. In 2014, the Middle School moved to an Advisory Program, integrating the strengths of Lets Get Real and the Olweus program, in two meetings per week.

The High School will be using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program as part of its Advisory program which meets once every seven days.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Identifying Resources

Current resources at each level (Elementary, Middle School and High School) are identified below. These resources have been put in place to assist students who are experiencing either emotional or behavioral concerns. This wide variety of services is currently available for use in plans for students involved in bullying incidents, both as aggressors and as targets.

Elementary

1) Guidance Counselors

All Elementary Schools are served by Guidance Counselors who work with students, teachers and parents around developmental and school adjustment issues.

2) Extra Support for Students

Extra support for students is available at all Elementary Schools in the form of an “Opportunity Room”.

3) Supplementary Services

In all elementary schools, the Academy of Physical and Social Development oversee student groups which deal with social skills and with anger and behavior management.

4) Monitoring Group

Each week a Wrap-Around Team in each Elementary School meets to review students who may appear to be encountering difficulty coping, with the purpose of making recommendations for additional supports.

Middle School

1) Guidance Counselors

There are three full-time Guidance Counselors at the Middle School.

They offer individual academic, social and emotional support services, conflict resolution, and social skills groups. They also assist with the Middle School anti-bullying curriculum, Let's Get Real and the Advisory curriculum. Guidance Counselors also are a key link in the communication network between school and home.

2) Integrated Services Program (ISP)

The Middle School also provides the Integrated Services Program. This program maintains a classroom for scheduled and unscheduled “respite services” for students experiencing difficulty coping.

Services offered as part of ISP include individual school adjustment counseling, respite, and specialized group work (focusing on dealing with anger management, anxiety, and social skills).

3) Student Groups

Student Leadership Enrichment

This year-long class is designed to teach leadership skills through community services in and out of school. Each year students also take on a bullying prevention activity to research and educate the community on the latest trends at WMS and teach ways to respect differences and intervene when bullying occurs.

Best Buddies

This enrichment class combines students with disabilities with “typical” peers to create a more inclusive community and increase awareness and bonds between diverse students.

5) Antibullying Curriculum

In addition to the bullying prevention curriculum, each grade also targets issues related to bullying. For example, in sixth grade the Health curriculum functions in this way. In seventh grade, there is a collaborative program with the Brown Center, and in eighth grade, the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum is used.

6) Monitoring Group

Each week at the Middle School the Student Services Team (SST) meets to review students who may appear to be encountering difficulty coping with the purpose of making recommendations for additional supports. This

group is led by the Asst. Principal and includes Guidance staff, counseling staff, and the school nurse.

7) Supplementary Services

The Academy of Physical and Social Development oversee student groups which deal with social skills and anger and behavior management.

High School

1) Guidance Counselors

The High School has two part-time and three full-time Guidance Counselors at the High School. They offer individual drop-in counseling services and college selection support. Additionally, they meet with students around the Naviance computer-based program which offers not only support for college planning, but resources for personality and vocational assessment.

2) ISP (Integrated Services Program)

The ISP program at the High School is similar to that at the Middle School. An important part of this program is the Counseling and Academic Program (CAP) which is available for students for one period a day (and when necessary, more) of counseling and academic support. Also part of ISP are sub-separate classes for students with internalizing (anxiety and depression) and externalizing (behavioral issues) symptoms.

3) Additional Counseling

Additional counseling is being offered at the High School by the mental health staff.

4) Student Groups

Watertown Youth Coalition Peer Leaders

The Watertown Youth Coalition Peer Leaders are a group of around 20 Watertown high school students who earn community service hours working with Coalition and community members to improve the health and well being of Watertown's young people. Peer leadership is a key part of the Watertown Youth Coalition and is based on a youth empowerment model in which students are trained as leaders and encouraged to become active, vocal partners in the work of the Youth Coalition.

iCare Mentoring

iCare mentoring provides students with the ability to interact and provide mentorship to specific students within the school. The mentor can learn about people with different abilities while providing assistance in both academics and life skills. Providing opportunities for practicing social and communication skills is a major part of what the mentor is responsible for.

Harvard University Peer Leadership Training

This training through Harvard University meets once or twice a month for development of peer leadership skills with students at WHS.

6) Student Monitoring Groups

Each week at the High School the SST (Student Services Team) meets to review regular education students who may be encountering difficulty coping and makes recommendations for additional supports.

Also meeting at the High School is the Student Services Network which each week reviews students who are on IEPs who appear to need further support for emotional/behavioral issues.

Community Resources

- a) Academy of Physical and Social Development
(Private clinic for youth, offering group and individual counseling and school consultation)
- b) Wayside Youth and Family Support Network
(Clinic for youth and families offering group and individual counseling)
- c) Watertown Boys and Girls Club
(Organization which offers recreational activities for students after school and on weekends)
- d) Juvenile Justice System
(Courts which oversee CRA petitions and other issues)
- e) EDCO (Education Collaborative)
(Agency which offers workshops for educators and programs for students with a variety of issues)

- f) Project Alliance
(A program sponsored by the District Attorney's office which offers workshops for educators)
- g) Advocates Program
(A clinical service which will come to schools for crisis intervention in severe student mental health matters)
- h) Watertown Police Department
(The Watertown Police Department has a Memo of Understanding with the Watertown Schools which provides for cooperation and support. There is also a School Resource Officer (SRO) at the High School full time.)
- i) Government Agencies:
DCF (Department of Children and Families)
DMR (Department of Mental Retardation)
DMH (Department of Mental Health)
Mass. Rehabilitation Services

B. Identifying Needs

There are over thirty languages spoken in Watertown. As a result of this diversity, there is a need to reach out to the families of children whose first language is not English. The District will continue to explore and implement effective ways of reaching our diverse population.

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 that a student has a disability that affects social skills development or that 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.

D. Referral to Outside Services

A guide to resources to resources in Watertown and surrounding areas has been distributed to the mental health and administrative staff.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches

Watertown Public Schools will be using curricula designed for specific age groups:

Elementary: Caring School Community

Middle School: Let's Get Real & the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program delivered through the Advisory Program

High School: Olweus Bullying Prevention Program delivered through the Advisory Program

These curricula are 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 engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeing 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

Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference

V. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by parents or guardians, students, staff members or other members of the community, and may be made orally or in writing. Oral reports made by or to staff members shall be recorded in writing on the specified district reporting forms. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee 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 using the districts community reporting mechanism located on the Watertown Public Schools website, or by mailing a letter to the Central Office (30 Common Street). There is also a Student Hotline to report any incidents that is published in the Student Handbook.

To support the community in reporting incidents the Watertown Public School will:

1. include a copy of the District's reporting form in beginning of the year packets to students, parents or guardians.
2. make the forms available in the school's main office, the guidance office, nurses office, central office and other locations determined necessary by the administration.
3. post the Incident Report Form on the district's website
4. make the Incident Report Forms available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians

At the beginning of each school year, The Watertown Public Schools will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with online 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, will be incorporated into each of the schools student/parent handbooks, on the Watertown Public Schools website, and in the information about the plan that is made available to parents or guardians. Such information will also be provided in languages other than English.

1. Reporting by Watertown Public School Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. Staff members are expected to use the district's reporting form as a means of communication but are not limited to this vehicle. Staff can use other means of communicating the report if necessary. 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 Watertown Public School policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

The Watertown Public Schools expects students, parents or guardians, and other who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee of that student's school. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against the 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 or retaliation with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

B Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

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-determined 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 a student 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. Obligation 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 contact the 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 communication 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 or designee

will notify the Watertown Police Department. 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 Watertown Police Department if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal or designee 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 promptly 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 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 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 schools 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 investigation process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

D. Determinations

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all the facts and circumstances. If, after the 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 benefitting from school activities. The principal or designee will:

- a. determine what remedial action is required, if any
- b. determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the student's teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or the 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 parents or guardian about the disciplinary action take unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directives that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

E. Responses to Bullying.

District plan to build student skills or strategy to remediate or prevent further bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skill-building

Upon the principal's or designee's 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. A Safety Intervention Plan is developed with administration, parents and school guidance counselors. Some of the skill building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- i. Regular check-ins with guidance or counselor
- ii. Remedial school-based classes/counseling
- iii. Evaluations (as needed)
- iv. Change of schedule to insulate from further aggression
- v. Provide relevant educational projects/activities
- vi. Implement a range of behavioral support/modification plans to promote appropriate behavior
- vii. Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- viii. Referrals to outside agencies of support and counseling

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 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 Improvements 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 false allegations 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 principals or designees 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.

Watertown Public Schools
BEHAVIORAL REFERRAL
REPORTING FLOW CHART

BEHAVIORAL INCIDENT



REPORT ORIGIN
ONLINE FORM/POLICE/PARENTS/STUDENT
ANONYMOUS/STAFF/OTHER



DATABASE

REPORTED TO
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/DESIGNEE



INVESTIGATION
(PARENT NOTIFICATION)



BULLYING DECISION/ACTION



DATABASE

INTERVENTION/DISCIPLINE
PARENT/STAFF/STUDENT(S)/POLICE



SAFETY/INTERVENTION PLANS
AGRESSOR&TARGET
STUDENT/PARENTS/GUIDANCE/ADMIN

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent Education and Resources

The district will offer education programs for parents and guardians as needed.

When assessing both aggressor and target needs after an incident, the school's team may offer school-based counseling or referral services to outside agencies for appropriate family members of the involved students.

B. Notification Requirements

Each year, the Student Handbook at each school is updated in regard to bullying prevention and made available to parents/guardians on the school website. Additionally, the Bullying Prevention Plan will be made available to parents or guardians via a posting of the Plan and related information on the District website.

VI. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- 1) 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 or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- 2) 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 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§370, 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 who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71§370, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- 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

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.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G. L. c. 71 § 370, 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 or 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. 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 in 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 37H1/2,

other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in responses to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.