Grafton Public Schools

Bullying Prevention/Intervention Plan

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Grafton Public Schools
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
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Introduction

One of the Grafton Public Schools' primary responsibilities is to maintain a safe school environment conducive to teaching and learning. The GPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has been updated to reflect Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which amended G.L. c. 71, §370, the anti-bullying statute, and was signed into law on April 24, 2014. G.L. c. 71, §370, as amended, requires school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools to "recognize" in their bullying prevention and intervention plans that certain enumerated categories of students may be more vulnerable to being targets of bullying based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics. Such districts and schools must also include in the plan the specific steps they will take to support these vulnerable students and provide all students the skills, knowledge, and strategies they need to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment.

Under the new law, school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools must notify parents and guardians of targets of bullying of the availability of the Department's problem resolution system and assist these parents and guardians in understanding the problem resolution process. Chapter 86 also addresses the data reporting and collection obligations of school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools, requiring them to collect and report the following data to the Department: 1) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation; 2) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying and retaliation; 3) the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation, and 4) other information required by the Department.

Additionally, Chapter 86 requires school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools, to administer a Department-developed student survey at least once every four years to assess "school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in schools." The law also authorizes school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools to adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent its commitment to bullying prevention and intervention.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying. The school district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies and the community to prevent issues of violence.

I LEADERSHIP

Leadership at all levels will play a critical role in developing and implementing Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans ("the Plan") in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. Leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the Plan.

A **Public involvement in developing the Plan**. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan has been developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. The draft plan was developed by members of the Administrative Team in consultation with faculty and staff and presented to the School Committee for review and comment on October 18, 2010.

B **Assessing needs and resources.** The Grafton Public Schools assess needs and resources in the following manner.

Annually, the Grafton Public Schools will administer a survey approved by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. This survey has been created and distributed through Grafton's participation in the Worcester Health Alliance. Students take this survey annually and results are shared publicly. Additionally, the district will annually report bullying incident data to DESE.

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.

C **Planning and oversight.** The following matrix identifies those responsible for tasks required under the Plan

Receiving reports on bullying	Building Principals
Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes	Teachers Building Principals Student Support Teams
Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;	Administrative Team
Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law;	Assistant Superintendent Administrative Team Trained Faculty/Staff
Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors	Building Principals Student Support Team School Psychologists School Adjustment Counselors
Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use	Assistant Superintendent
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	School Committee Director Of Technology
Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct	School Committee Building Principals
Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and	Administrative Team School Committee
Reviewing and updating the Plan	Administrative Team

D **Priority statements**. The Grafton Public Schools expect that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. The District 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.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic, status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or 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.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, 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 against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, 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 ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the school or 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 against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. 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 topics 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 against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying.
- and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district.

Training for faculty/staff will be included with the mandated topics currently required by regulation. The training will be conducted within the first month of each school year.

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 districtwide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

(a) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
(b) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
(c) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
(d) 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;
(e) student populations most 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 1 or more of these characteristics.
(f) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
(g) 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. Staff will have opportunities to review specific cases and work with colleagues to discuss best practices for intervention in this area.

The District will provide ongoing opportunities for professional development as appropriate for all staff/faculty.

C **Written notice to staff**. The District will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or District faculty/staff handbook. The Plan will also be published on the District website.

III 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.

Identifying resources. The District will conduct a review of current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services. The district will develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps on an annual basis.

Counseling and other services. The District will continue its practice of connecting students/families with Community Service Agencies as is appropriate. The site based Student Support Team, the building principal, the school psychologist and any other appropriate staff member will be responsible. School Adjustment Counselors and School Psychologists will assist school administration in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Possible interventions may include but not be limited to tools including, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

Students with disabilities. Students with disabilities will have the same access to curriculum and intervention as offered to students in the general education population. 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. This will include determining whether specific accommodations, specially designed instruction or related services are necessary in order to meet the needs of the

child.

IV ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A **Specific bullying prevention approaches**. Bullying prevention curricula for the Grafton Public Schools 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 engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, 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.

B **General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts.** The Grafton Public Schools will promote and support 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 school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, low-socioeconomic, and homeless 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 safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and

extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

C **Curriculum Development** The Grafton Public Schools will do the following annually:

- Review existing appropriate evidence-based curriculum vehicles for the delivery of the Bullying Prevention curriculum
- Review new materials where necessary and make recommendations for policy changes to the School Committee
- Develop lessons, referring to the stated objectives and guidelines, for consistent use at each grade level

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

A **Expectations** The Grafton Public Schools will follow the set procedures and guidelines for the implementation of an anti-bullying protocol. This protocol includes:

- A student/parent complaint process
- A staff logging process
- A reporting process for staff
- An investigation process
- A process for communication with parents/guardians/staff
- Record keeping and reporting

It is an expectation of the district that all staff members are required to report any incident of bullying, harassment or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying they see or learn about. The district will promptly and reasonably investigate all allegations of harassment, including bullying and retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. The principal or designee of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints alleging harassment, bullying, or retaliation. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying, is prohibited.

B **Logging Gateway Behaviors** The District believes in the importance of prevention of and early intervention for bullying behaviors.

Gateway Behaviors Isolated, non-repeated, behaviors including but not limited to teasing, name calling, making fun of, exclusion, spreading rumors, talking about, staring, making faces, mimicking, rough housing, physical altercations, cyber issues

To bring focus to isolated behaviors such as teasing, name-calling, rough-housing, staring, excluding district faculty/staff will ‘log’ behaviors observed. The District will use a student information system to track incidents of Gateway Behaviors. This data will inform school personnel of possible patterns of behavior that require investigation or intervention.

Each faculty/staff member will report/ log incidents witnessed. Incidents will be subsequently tracked utilizing the student information system. The expectation is that each incident will also be immediately addressed with the student(s)/person(s) involved. At **any time** a faculty/staff member witnessing an incident may **immediately** refer the incident for investigation.

C **Procedures for reporting acts of bullying** If any employee of the Grafton school district observes, or otherwise becomes aware of a possible act of bullying or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying that person must report the event to a school administrator (Principal or Assistant Principal) within one full school day, using the Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form.

If a student expresses a desire to report or discuss a possible incident of bullying or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying with a staff member, the staff member will, in a timely manner, provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.

Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Forms may be obtained in the school's main office, counselor's office, on the respective school and district websites, and other locations determined by the school. The district will also provide electronic means of submitting a Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form. This form can be utilized anonymously.

All members of the community (students, staff, or family members) may report an act of bullying or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying to a school administrator via the Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form. If a student requires help completing the form, a staff member will provide the necessary assistance.

Each school will devise ways in which the reporting forms may be submitted to school administration.

Information obtained from the bullying/retaliation Incident Report Form shall be recorded in the district as a "complaint" for the reporting student.

D **Procedures for the Prompt Investigation of Acts of Bullying or Retaliation** The Principal or administrative designee must initiate an investigation of a report of bullying or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides

information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying within one school day after being notified of a possible bullying/retaliation incident, consistent with due process rights, using the Bullying/Retaliation Investigation Form.

If the target is injured, medical treatment will be provided without delay, and the student's parents will be notified immediately.

The Principal or administrative designee will conduct an investigation to determine both whether an act of bullying/retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying occurred, and which person(s) were responsible for the act(s) and/or played a role in perpetuating it. The Bullying/Retaliation flowchart will be followed *(see appendix)*

Other related complaints regarding the involved parties, including those from previous schools, will be reviewed as part of the investigative process.

The Principal or administrative designee will make every attempt to contact the parents/guardians of all related parties by the end of the administrator's day in which the investigation was initiated and inform them of the status of the investigation.

Discussions with all parties should be documented by the investigating administrator as soon as possible after the event. When an act of bullying or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying has been determined, the Principal or administrative designee will apply consequences consistent with due process rights using the school Code of Conduct as a guide.

If the aggressor's actions are delinquent acts or criminal in nature, they shall be reported by the Principal or administrative designee promptly to the responsible law enforcement agency according to the laws of the State of Massachusetts.

The Principal or administrative designee will notify parents/guardians of all parties involved of the incident, the outcome of the investigation, and whether disciplinary action was taken.

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the DESE's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

The Principal or administrative designee will create a written record of the bullying/retaliation incident and any disciplinary actions taken, as well as the statements of the victim, witnesses, and offender. No material records or evidence will be discarded until all students involved have left the school district.

E Disciplinary Consequences The Grafton Public Schools will investigate reports of bullying, retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying and/or harassment. Should the investigation determine that such bullying retaliation and/or harassment has taken place the following disciplinary consequences may be taken. Consequences may include one or more of the following, taking into consideration the frequency and severity of the incident(s) and the developmental level of the aggressor.

Disciplinary Consequences

- Written Warning
- Parent Conference
- Temporary Removal from Classroom
- Exclusion from Extracurricular Activities
- Detention
- Suspension (in/out of school)
- Referral to Police Department for criminal action
- Expulsion
- Any other action authorized by and consistent with the disciplinary code in each school Student/Parent Handbook.

Remedial Actions

- Restorative Justice
- Awareness Training
- Limited Access to Building
- Behavioral Assessment/Evaluation
- Behavior Management Plan
- Parent Conferences
- Modification of Schedule
- Referral to Family Counseling
- Law Enforcement Involvement
- Modifications to Hallway Traffic
- Professional Development Plans for involved Staff
- Safety Plan
- Disciplinary Action for School Staff

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. For students with special needs, who may be subject to disciplinary action due to acts of bullying, Special Education regulations will be adhered to, up to and including following the Manifestation Determination process.

False Charges Any student who knowingly makes false charges or brings a

malicious complaint regarding bullying, retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, or harassment, and discrimination or hate crimes may be subjected to any of the disciplinary and/or corrective actions detailed above.

F **Procedures for Following Up Acts of Bullying/Retaliation** After the determination that an act of bullying or retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying has occurred and after appropriate discipline has been enforced, the Principal or administrative designee will develop with the target student or witness as appropriate and their parents or guardians a **safety plan**; and with the aggressor student and their parents or guardians a **conduct plan**. Both plans will include notifying the teachers not only of the incident, but also of all the parties involved, specifying their roles.

The safety plan for the target/witness will include, but not be limited by, the following. A staff member (as designated by the administrator, student, and the parents/guardians) will be assigned as a check-in person to regularly meet with the student to ensure the following:

- No acts of retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying have occurred.
- Strategies are provided for dealing with future incidents, emphasizing immediate reporting of any further acts.
- Information regarding outside support services are provided to student and family.
- The frequency and duration of check-ins will be determined on a case- by-case basis, but will not be less than two (2) times per week for a period of four (4) weeks.
- After two weeks, the check-in person will provide a progress report on the emotional well-being of the student to the Principal or administrative designee.
- The safety plan cannot be discontinued without the agreement of the student, the parents/guardians, the designated check-in person, and the Principal or administrative designee.

The conduct plan for the aggressor will include, but not be limited by, the following: The Principal or administrative designee will conduct compulsory conduct meetings to ensure the following:

- No further acts of Bullying have been committed.
- The student has been educated regarding acceptable alternative behaviors.
- The student has received further education of the school's anti-bullying policy, including the potential for more severe school consequences and/or criminal charges being filed.
- The frequency and duration of these meetings will be agreed upon

and will depend upon future actions. However, the minimum requirement should be at least two (2) times per week for a period of four (4) weeks.
- Information regarding outside support resources will be made available to the student and their parents/guardians.
- A progress report identifying student conduct will be provided after two weeks.
- Discontinuation of the conduct plan will be determined by the Principal or administrative designee. All meetings and the ending of the conduct plan should be documented and kept throughout the student's school career. Parents/guardians will be notified of the discontinuance of a conduct plan.

G **Reporting Orientation** Schools will inform staff about the availability of the Logging Process Form and the Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form for their use during opening-of-school meetings and then periodically throughout the school year.

Schools will inform students and parents about the availability of the forms and their use during orientation sessions and periodically throughout the school year.

Samples of the form, as well as a description of the form's availability will be included in the faculty and student/parent handbooks.

Forms will be available in the school's main office, counselor's office, library, and other locations as determined by the individual schools. Electronic versions of the form will be available on the district and individual school websites.

Each school will devise ways in which the reporting form may be submitted to school administration, including means to submit anonymously.

H **Bullying Protocol for Teachers/Staff Members** With the Bullying Protocol in place there may be a question regarding what constitutes an incident, what is a logging incident and what is a bullying incident. The rubric below has been created to assist with this determination. Sample behaviors are included, but not limited to, the following list of transgressions. Teachers are always advised to use their knowledge to determine if immediate action needs to occur.

Incident	Gateway Behaviors Logging Incident	Bullying Incident
Incidents that require a response by an adult to shape/redirect behavior: • Calling out in class	Gateway Behaviors : • Teasing • Name calling	Repeated behaviors, such as: • Repeated logging incident behaviors • Repeated incidents of physical aggression
• Unwanted movement in the classroom • Refusal to do work • Disrespectful behaviors- to self, others, materials • Improper use of materials • Breaking school rules of safety, recess, lunch, etc…	• Making fun of • Exclusion • Spreading rumors • Talking about • Staring • Making faces • Mimicking • Rough-housing • Physical altercations • Cyber issues	• Repeated incidents of intimidation • Repeated incidents of emotional aggression • Repeated disrespectful behaviors

VI COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A **Parent education and resources**. The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTG, School Councils, and Special Education Parent Advisory Council.

B **Notification requirements.** Each year, the school or 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 school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The Grafton Public Schools pledges to prepare all students to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens. The Grafton Public Schools are committed to maintaining a safe school environment free of bullying.

In accordance with the current School Committee Policy JICD, “The Grafton Public Schools are committed to maintaining a school environment free of bullying. Bullying of students by other students will not be tolerated by the Grafton Public Schools.

Bullying shall be prohibited:

On school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned or leased or used by a school district or school or through use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school and

At a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Each student of the Grafton Public Schools is personally responsible for ensuring that his/her conduct is not intimidating to any other student.”

The definition of Bullying is:
“The repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear or harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.”

Cyberbullying is:
“Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v) inclusive of the definition of bullying. “

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of Chapter 71 of the General Laws to include (g) (v): The Plan shall inform parents or guardians of the target about the Department's problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system.

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the DESE Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700.

IX DEFINITIONS

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

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members 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 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, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

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.

Gateway Behaviors Isolated, non-repeated, behaviors including but not limited to teasing, name calling, making fun of, exclusion, spreading rumors, talking about, staring, making faces, mimicking, rough housing, physical altercations, cyber issues

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

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 this Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

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.

GPS Bullying - Action Flowchart

A complaint of bullying is received



Initiation of investigation of a report of bullying or retaliation
Principal or designee will contact parents of all related parties by the end of the day on which the investigation began to inform of the status of the investigation
Discussion related to the investigation are documented
If acts are delinquent/illegal, the police should be notified
Outcome of the investigation communicated to parents of all involved parties - parent or guardian of the target should be made aware of DESE's Problem Resolution System

If a determination of bullying is found



Victim	**Aggressor**
Parents notified	Parents notified
Victim and parents should be made aware of outside support resources. If victim has 504/IEP, special education director should be contacted	Aggressor and parents should be made aware of outside support resources, If victim has 504/IEP, special education director should be contacted
Develop Safety Plan	Develop Conduct Plan
Determine the duration of the plan (minimum four weeks)	Determine the duration of the plan (minimum four weeks)
Establish frequency of check-ins with victim (2x week minimum)	Establish frequency of check-ins with aggressor (2x week minimum)
Strategies for dealing with future events should be discussed with the victim	Strategies for dealing with future events should be discussed with the aggressor
Teachers notified	Teachers notified
A progress report/update will be provided to parent after two weeks	A progress report/update will be provided to parent after two weeks
After four weeks, the victim, parents, and principal (or designee) will determine if the safety plan should be extended or discontinued	After four weeks, the aggressor, parents, and principal (or designee) will determine if the conduct plan should be extended or discontinued



All documentation should be kept for the duration of the involved student's time in the Grafton Public Schools