

New Milford Public Schools

District-Wide Safe School Climate Plan



2024-2025

New Milford Public Schools Safe Climate Purpose Statement

The New Milford Public School Safe Climate Committee's purpose is to ensure a safe school environment in which all members take the necessary actions needed to achieve positive academic, social, and emotional growth. Our schools are warm, welcoming destinations for students, families, and staff who are treated with respect and dignity.

The New Milford Public Schools District-Wide Safe School Climate Council aims to ensure students and faculty are provided with the safe environment needed to support teaching and learning. For this to occur, we must work collaboratively as a community. According to the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, positive school climates involve strong relationships between students, teachers, families, and schools, safe school environments, and supportive environments that address a child's academic, social/social/emotional, and physical wellness.

For the 2024-2025 school year, our district committee will formally meet twice. Our first meeting will allow us to review data collected from the spring Panorama Survey and make recommendations to support school climate improvement. This will also include:

- Reviewing and making changes, as necessary, the District School Climate Plan;
- Discussing school school climate improvement plans;
- Discussing the potential need to make recommendations to the Superintendent regarding necessary changes to Board of Education Policy;
- Gathering and disseminate best practice information on the prevention, intervention, and response to bullying and youth suicide to school climate committees.

Each building will continue to maintain a school-based climate committee. The building based teams will continue to meet regularly to support the school's climate and culture by reviewing relevant data and annually self-assessing the school's safe climate through School Climate Standards. Through this self-reflection, the building based committees will develop or revise

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goals and include articulated action steps to ensure the school climate needed for learning to occur firmly in place.

For the 2024-2025 school year, the District Wide Committee discussed and decided to continue our work on the following goals:

1. The New Milford Public School will develop a clearly articulated statement that describes what a positive climate looks, feels, and sounds like so all members will have a shared understanding.
2. The New Milford Public Schools will develop meaningful experiences to promote social and civic responsibilities.
3. The New Milford Public Schools will create meaningful conversations around supporting students, staff and families' sense of belonging to the district as a community.
4. The New Milford Public Schools will increase students' sense of belonging.

We are adding a fifth goal for the 2024-2025 school year to ensure our practices support engagement in teaching, learning and school-wide activities.

5. Through our efforts, we will identify, prioritize and support best practices that enhance student engagement. This aligns directly with Standard 3.2

Our final district meeting in May allowed us to share and celebrate our work from the year aligned with the district goals.

Specific school accomplishment are listed below:

School	Highlights and Accomplishments
Northville Elementary School	Link to accomplishments and goals
Hill and Plain Elementary School	Link to accomplishments and goals
Sarah Noble Intermediate School	 SNIS 2023-2024 Safe School Climate Building ...
Schaghticoke Middle School	Link to accomplishments and goals
New Milford High School	Link to accomplishments and goals

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The district recognizes the correlation between academic growth and a positive school climate.

Positive school climate and the conditions for learning support effective implementation of MTSS. Similarly, when implemented with fidelity, MTSS helps districts and schools create positive environments and the conditions for learning for all students, which in turn, can improve and maintain positive school culture and climate.

~American Institutes for Research

District Policy and Procedures

Policy and Procedures

In March 2023, our district Board of Education policy committee met to review policy [5131.911](#). As a result, the policy was updated and forms were included to create consistency for all schools. This information has since been placed on our district's website and can be found on the homepage under [School Climate Information](#).

Reporting Procedures

Students and parents (or guardians of students) may file written reports of bullying. Written reports of bullying shall be reasonably specific as to the basis for the report, including the time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of incidents, the target of the suspected bullying, and the names of potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any building administrator and/or the Safe School Climate Specialist (i.e., building principal or designee), and all reports shall be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with this Plan.

Students may make anonymous reports of bullying to any school employee. Students may also request anonymity when making a report, even if the student's identity is known to the school employee. In cases where a student requests anonymity, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall meet with the student (if the student's identity is known) to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact that maintaining the anonymity of the complainant may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action. All anonymous reports shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action

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may be taken that does not disclose the source of the report, and is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying shall orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist, or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one (1) school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The school employee shall then file a written report not later than two (2) school days after making such oral report.

Investigation

The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of bullying and shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall also be responsible for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying, and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed, that an investigation has commenced. In order to allow the district to adequately investigate complaints filed by a student or parent/guardian, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied should be asked to provide consent to permit the release of that student's name in connection with the investigation process, unless the student and/or parent has requested anonymity.

In investigating reports of bullying, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The Safe School Climate Specialist will interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Response to Verified Acts of Bullying

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Following investigation, if acts of bullying are verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the students against whom such acts were directed as well as the parents or guardians of the students who commit such acts of bullying of the finding not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the investigation is completed. This notification shall include a description of the school's response to the acts of bullying; the results of such investigation; and verbally or by electronic mail, if such parents' or guardians' electronic mail addresses are known, that such parents or guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under Conn. Gen. Stat. Sections 10-4a and 10-4b once such explanation has been provided to the Board by the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative and published on the Internet website of the Board. In providing such notification, however, New Milford Public Schools will take care to respect the statutory privacy rights of other students, including the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian's own child, may not be disclosed except as provided by law.

In any instance in which bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student/victim and policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying. The Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the previously described meeting, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying. The invitations may be made simultaneous with the notification described above in Section VII.A.

If bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an act of bullying was directed. Such a support plan will include safety measures to protect against further acts of bullying.

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A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. The written intervention plan may include counseling, discipline and other appropriate remedial actions as determined by the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee and may also incorporate a student safety support plan, as appropriate

Professional Learning

New Milford Public Schools will ensure that the faculty will engage in annual professional learning to address prevention, identification and response to bullying. As part of the prevention and intervention strategies, schools may also implement school-wide training related to safe school climate and support.

At the beginning of each school year, each school shall provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan and require that all school employees annually complete training on the identification, prevention and response to bullying as required by law.

For more information on the Safe School Climate Committee, please visit our website at <https://sites.google.com/newmilfordps.org/climate-district-wide/home>

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District Wide Safe School Climate Committee Members

Holly Hollander , Assistant Superintendent
Gwen Gallagher, NES Principal
Michelli Anatolio, NES Social Worker
Stephanie Pilla, NES Grade 2 Teacher
Stacie Kabasakalian, Community Partner Youth Agency
Cathy Calabrese, HPS Principal
Nicole Heering, HPS Interventionist
Jennifer Meyers, SNIS Assistant Principal
Tara Gee, SNIS Grade 4 Teacher
Doranne Koval, HPS Grade 2 Teacher
Anna Pelillo, Special Education Teacher
Michael Boucher, SMS Assistant Principal
NMHS Colleagues - Corrine Palmer Social SS Teacher
Kevin Best, NMHS Assistant Principal
NMHS Student: Katharine Bouzakis

Meeting Dates - October and May
Meetings will take place virtually.

Safe School Building Coordinator

District - Holly Hollander (hollanderh@newmilfordps.org)

NES - Gwen Gallagher (gallagherg@newmilfordps.org)

HPS -Catherine Calabrese (calabresec@newmilfordps.org)

SNIS - Jennifer Meyers (meyersj@newmilfordps.org)

SMS - Michael Bourcher (Boucherm@newmilfordps.org)

NMHS - Kevin Best (bestk@newmilfordps.org)

Link for rubric 2024-2025 [HERE](#)

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