

Prompt Investigation into Bullying

Investigation. The principal or designee, will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and will consider all available information including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the principal or designee will, among other things, interview a number of witnesses that could include students, staff, 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 school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with the school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

Determinations. The Principal or designee, will make a determination based upon the available facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted from participating in school or benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

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 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.

Upon investigation and determination that bullying has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation. The principal shall inform the target's parents/guardians what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notices to parents/guardians must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action

taken unless it involves a “stay away” order or other directive that the target must be aware of to report violations.

The bullying determination notice to the parents or guardians of the target must include information about the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (“DESE”) problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. The parents or guardians of the victim must be provided with the following contact information: Program Resolution System Office, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149

Voice: (781) 338-3000 TTY: (800) 439-2370

The principal or designee will collaborate with special educators, guidance counselors, counselors, and/or school adjustment counselors to provide counseling or appropriate referrals for services for targets, aggressors, and families.