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Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The COMPASS School is committed to providing a safe learning environment in which each of our students receives the academic, emotional, and behavioral supports that will support their ability to learn and to grow. The COMPASS School is a Special Education Day School that serves children with emotional disabilities and behavioral disorders, as well as a number of learning and cognitive disabilities. Often, children who attend the COMPASS School have been referred to us because of behaviors that include bullying of both students and staff in their public school districts. Bullying of any type is not tolerated in our school, and is dealt with immediately in the therapeutic milieu. Reports of bullying, cyber bullying, intimidation and/or retaliation are investigated promptly. One of the goals of our work is always to provide a safe and productive school for all of our students and to teach tools and strategies that allow students to maintain personal safety and to participate as members of a community that is committed to violence prevention.

The COMPASS Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy is modeled after the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Plan for dealing with bullying behaviors. It also incorporates the special needs of the population we serve. Policy is written and carried out with consideration given to the emotional, academic, and behavioral nature and needs of our students, and the requirements of their individual IEP's. In this written policy the words "victim" and "aggressor" are used to be consistent with the language used by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. They are not terms that are usually used in the COMPASS milieu.

Summary of the COMPASS School's Anti-Bullying Policy

It is the policy of the COMPASS School to maintain a safe learning environment for its students. Within the therapeutic milieu and throughout programming at COMPASS, students are consistently taught to be respectful of others, regardless of personal differences. As an integral part of our curriculum, students who engage in bullying or retaliation of any nature are required to participate in one or more of the many interventions that promote safety in the school environment. These may include, but are not limited to, speaking with a counselor, mediating with the students involved, and participating in social skills groups that are an important part of the school's comprehensive health curriculum. When bullying occurs, collaterals and local authorities will be notified, as appropriate.

For the purposes of this policy, bullying will be defined as the habitual use of words or actions that target and intimidate one or more students. Retaliation is the use of words or actions to intimidate one or more students who have reported bullying.

Bullying Prevention Plan

Revised: 12/12/14

Leadership

A. Public Involvement and Plan Development

All COMPASS staff: Principal, Directors, Teachers, Caseworkers, Consultants, Student Interns as well as, Students, with the assistance of Parents, and Legal Guardians will be responsible for the implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The plan will be implemented in the context of other school and community efforts. COMPASS staff members promote a positive school climate through various programs in the areas of social skill development, violence prevention, community service, and a behavioral system that is based on student achievement and skill building. Two of the core values of the COMPASS program are respect and cultural competence. Through our various programs, COMPASS teaches students to be respectful of one another and promotes understanding of and respect for diversity and difference.

This policy applies to the school day at COMPASS and to activities that are sponsored and supervised by COMPASS and the COMPASS staff. It does not apply to any situations outside of school that are not planned by and directly under the supervision of COMPASS staff.

B. Assessment of Needs and Resources

This plan will be the school's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, have assessed the adequacy of current programs, reviewed current policies and procedures, reviewed available data on bullying and behavioral incidents, and assessed available resources including curricula and training programs. This plan has been developed with input from teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, and parents/guardians.

C. Planning and Oversight

Reports of bullying will be made to the Principal of the school.

- 1) School-wide data collection is in place for collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide incidents of bullying. This data provides information with which the administration, as well as treatment and clinical teams can assess the present problem and put systems into place with which to measure improved outcomes;
- 2) A process for recording and tracking incident reports is currently in place in the school's data-base. This information can be accessed by all members of the above-mentioned teams. Information specific to targets and aggressors will be maintained on the data-base as well as discussed at weekly roster reviews.
- 3) As required by law, professional development, specific to this policy, will be scheduled during staff orientation in August, and during the year, as necessary.
- 4) The COMPASS School program works with students with varied levels of

need and disability. Supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors are in place; these include, but are not limited to assessment of behaviors, mediation, and skill development. COMPASS will continue to explore evidence-based programs and practices that will support and enhance our ongoing violence and bullying prevention programs.

- 5) The COMPASS administration, along with treatment and clinical teams will investigate resources and programs appropriate to the ages and needs of our students. Programs such as Second Step have been included in our curriculum.
- 6) New or current policies and protocols will be reviewed or devised whenever necessary. An Internet safety policy currently blocks students from internet sites that would give students access to their peers during the school day, The Information Technology Director will be responsible to oversee the implementation of this policy.
- 7) This anti-bullying policy will be included in student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct, and will be reviewed at least annually with the student body, and as part of the intake process with each student who enrolls at COMPASS.

D. Priority Statements

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

COMPASS 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.

COMPASS recognizes and understands that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on action or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sensory disability, or any other disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

COMPASS 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. Behaviors of this nature will be dealt with in accordance with our school policies and procedures within our therapeutic milieu. 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 is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. COMPASS 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. Annual staff training for all school staff teaches the methods and tenets of CPI, a specific nonviolent crisis intervention program. In addition, this training provides staff with the COMPASS protocols for dealing with student behaviors within the milieu. As previously mentioned, many of our students are referred to COMPASS because of bullying behaviors that they exhibited in public school settings.

This training for all school staff on the Anti Bullying 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, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school. 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.

Teaching students to interact appropriately, and to avoid bullying and retaliatory behaviors are skills that are consistently taught. Reflecting the core values of COMPASS, other areas in which staff are trained include the following :

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

- 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 school-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. information regarding 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. information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- vi. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Because COMPASS is a Special Education Day School, professional development always addresses 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 disabilities affect social skills development.

- C. Written notice to staff. COMPASS 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 employee handbook and the code of conduct.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

- A. Identifying resources. School clinicians, teachers, directors, interns, caseworkers and administration will work together in identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This will include a review of current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services. Once this mapping of resources is complete, COMPASS will develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. This may include adopting new curricula, reorganizing staff, establishing safety planning teams, and identifying other agencies that can provide services. The COMPASS Plan will outline the local processes for identifying existing and needed resources.
- B. Counseling and other services. When additional services for students are required, COMPASS works with several collaterals in the community to meet their needs. If resources need to be developed, COMPASS will identify linkages with community-based organizations, including Community Service Agencies (CSAs) for Medicaid eligible students. In addition, when needed, the principal and clinical director will work with staff and service providers who assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors.

COMPASS may consider current tools including, but not limited to, counseling, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

- 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 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.
- D. Referral to outside services. COMPASS has an established referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services. Clinicians help students and families access appropriate and timely services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and policies, and take into consideration each student's IEP. Current referral protocols will be evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and revised as needed.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

COMPASS provides age-appropriate instruction on the development of social skills, including bullying prevention in each grade. This instruction is incorporated into the school's curricula and includes classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

- A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula 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, 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 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, 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.

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

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation COMPASS has established policies and procedures that will ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. At COMPASS, reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school 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. COMPASS will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

An Incident Reporting Form will be available, but not required as a condition of making a report. COMPASS will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, COMPASS will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the COMPASS school website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

COMPASS staff members will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with COMPASS policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

COMPASS expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

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-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, 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 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. It is the policy of COMPASS to take all reports of bullying or retaliation seriously and to deal immediately with all those involved, notifying parents, school districts, and local authorities, as appropriate. Actions may include, but are not limited to, meetings with students, mediations, counseling, development of individualized treatment and behavior plans, and teaching within the therapeutic milieu. Physical and emotional safety for all students and staff is of primary importance.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this behavior, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- 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 will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

C. Investigation.

The principal or designee will 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 school clinicians, 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 school policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

D. Determinations.

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in 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 actions are necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the clinical director, students' teacher(s) and/or clinician, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All 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 parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

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

E. Responses to Bullying.

The COMPASS School will work within its established policies and procedures to insure the safety of students, and to:

1. Teach Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized and group skill-building sessions based on the school's social skills and anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with clinicians and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing the available range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports, as well as individualized behavioral plans to help COMPASS students to understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- reconvening the evaluation team, as necessary.

2. Take Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Behavior Management system of COMPASS, the therapeutic milieu, and with each student's IEP.

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.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Promote 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 the principal or designee 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.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

COMPASS maintains close contact with parents/guardians, caregivers, and collaterals of students. Frequent communication between these parties is essential to student success. All school parents are invited to participate in the Parent Advisory Council, which meets several times during the school year.

- A. Parent education and resources. COMPASS will provide information to parents and guardians with regard to the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and with any social competency curricula used by the school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Parent Advisory Council, or on an individual basis.
- B. Notification requirements. Each year COMPASS 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. COMPASS will provide parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school'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 will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) 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, on a school van 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 the school, and

- (ii) 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, § 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. This information will be made available in both hard copy and electronic formats:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent’s office.

IX. DEFINITIONS

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below.

Aggressor is a student 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 of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;

- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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.

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, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

APPENDIX A: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form