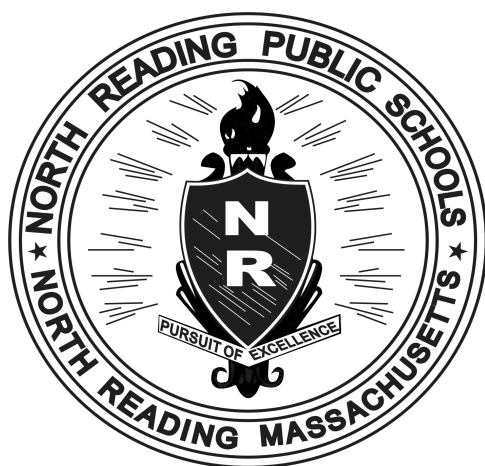


# **NORTH READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



## **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN**

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**This plan was developed by the P.A.U.S.E. committee, representative of the North Reading Public Schools and School Community, and written by the sub-committee members: *Lisa Barnard, Cathy Carmody, Claudia Crocker, Patrick Daly, Kristine Davis, Elizabeth Emnett, Officer Thomas Hatch, Tabitha Heidorn, Desma Kuras, AJ Loprete, Lorraine McBride, Joline Pepper, Diane Vercammen, and Kathleen Willis.***

This Plan is updated to reflect M.G.L. c. 71, 37O as amended by Sections 72 – 74 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of 2013, which changed the definition of “perpetrator” to include “a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional.” The amendment also made the plan applicable to school staff, including but not limited to, the individuals listed in the amended perpetrator definition.

## **I. LEADERSHIP**

The Leadership in the North Reading Public Schools, including the Superintendent of Schools, School Principals, School Committee, Chief of Police, and other local leaders, are actively engaged in conversations concerning the efforts to promote a positive school climate. School leaders have engaged in Bullying Prevention and Intervention trainings, workshops, and conferences addressing all aspects of the law. The goal of the school leadership is to involve all stakeholders at the table in the development and implementation of this plan.

### **A. Public involvement in developing the plan.**

This plan was developed as a part of the P.A.U.S.E. (Public Awareness and Understanding of Social Education) group, which has been proactively meeting for the past year in order to address the concerns about bullying prevention and intervention. This group includes staff members from all schools, parents, administrators, local officials, law enforcement, local community groups, and community members. The plan will be made available to the public for comment both via the North Reading Public schools website and through an open community forum held on November 30, 2010. Parents and community members will have the opportunity to converse with members of the P.A.U.S.E. group during this forum and will have the chance to contribute ideas to the final draft of the plan.

### **B. Assessing needs and resources.**

As a part of the needs assessment the district reviewed the policies in order to enhance the capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. The P.A.U.S.E. group met frequently to create a map of our resources and to discuss the needs, resources, professional development opportunities, and community outreach programs for our district. The resulting policies and procedures, community partnerships, and outreach are included in this plan.

In addition to the My Voice survey which has been administered at the Middle School and High School, every student, staff member, and parent was provided the opportunity to complete the MARC surveys for Bullying Prevention and Intervention. Data from these surveys has been analyzed for both district-wide and school-wide results.

Additionally, the district administration as well as the P.A.U.S.E. group has reviewed and previewed curricular materials, student handbooks, and information collected in order to create a safer and healthier school climate.

During the months of July and August 2010, the Assistant Superintendent began by chairing the P.A.U.S.E. group and reviewing the accomplishments

from the previous year. He worked with the Administrative Council to discuss the timeline for the development of the plan.

During September the P.A.U.S.E. group met after school to conduct a needs assessment and to further develop ideas and suggestions for the development of the plan. A sub-committee was identified to create an initial draft of the plan on October 6<sup>th</sup>. This draft was shared with the larger group and the Administrative Council meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> respectively.

The School Committee had their first reading of the draft on October 25, 2010 and their second reading on November 8, 2010. The School Committee reviewed the draft plan on November 8, 2010 and, upon their approval, the plan was posted on the district website beginning on November 15, 2010 in order to give the public opportunity for comment. A community forum was held on November 30, 2010 in order for the community to come forward to discuss the plan with members of the P.A.U.S.E. group including school and community leaders. The public comment period ended on December 1, 2010.

The P.A.U.S.E. the group presented the final version of the plan to the Administrative Council, and the Superintendent submitted the plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by December 31, 2010.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

**Aggressor** is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.

**Bullying**, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff 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.

Cyberbullying shall also include:

- i. the creation of a webpage 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 above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyberbullying 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 above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition bullying. Cyberbullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures, audio recordings, or images of others.

**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.

**School 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.

This plan affords all students the same protection regardless of their status under the law.

### **III. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle

owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and

- 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.

This plan recognizes that certain students may be more 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.

## **IV. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **A. Annual staff training on the Plan.**

The district will set aside time at the beginning of each school year to orient/train staff on the plan and/or any updates or changes to the plan. The goal of the annual training is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of both staff members and administration. All staff will be required to attend this training. During the course of this training, the following will be presented:

- Overview of staff duties under the current plan
- Overview of bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grade levels
- Overview of administrative responsibilities regarding reporting of bullying or retaliation

Staff will receive a written document clearly outlining their specific duties as to the implementation of the plan.

New staff members will be trained as part of the New Teacher Orientation Program.

Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the past two years. Verification of completed professional development will be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent or a district designee.

#### 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:

- 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.

Opportunities for professional development will be offered by the district to address ways to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying or retaliation. Such offerings can be district initiated via a course catalog or teacher initiated via an offering outside of the district. In addition, specific professional development will be offered to support educators in helping students with disabilities. Professional development should also include special considerations 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.

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

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference
- building relationships and communicating with families
- 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
- promoting a positive social climate throughout the school
- adopting a common social competence programs
- constructively managing classroom behaviors.

Staff attending professional development will have the opportunity to share learned knowledge with other staff. Examples may include but are not limited to presenting to grade level educators, staff at the building level, or other committees such as the Administrative Council or PAUSE (Public Awareness & Understanding of Social Education) task force.

High quality professional development and support will further motivate staff to be involved, invested, and inspired.

#### C. Written notice to staff.

The district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information in the school or district employee handbook. Such information will be distributed to all staff on the first day of school.

#### D. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

*Schools and districts need to develop policies and procedures that address how school or district administration will respond to and resolve a report of bullying of a student by school staff. The policies and procedures must address safety planning, notification to parent or guardians and others, investigation, and response – areas that are addressed when a student is alleged to have bullied another student (see Section V. B – E above). Policies and procedures currently in place that address unacceptable conduct by school staff may be a useful starting place. Schools and districts should consider consulting with local counsel. The policy should emphasize the importance of the investigation, the need for the aggressor, target, and witnesses to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.*

## V. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

#### A. Parent education and resources

North Reading Public Schools will offer a variety of 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 include but not be limited to seminars, webinars, online videos and links to bullying websites, notices about bullying policies and procedures, newsletters, and other handouts. Parents will be notified of curriculum with bullying based themes (i.e. art, social studies, literature, etc.) and provided with suggestions for conversation starters, supplemental or additional resources, movies, etc. Policies and procedures will be posted on the district website as well as each individual school's website. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations.

#### B. Notification requirements

The North Reading Public Schools will provide a copy of current Policies and Procedures regarding its Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan annually. This notice will include information about:

- the definition of bullying
- the dynamics of bullying
- how to recognize symptoms of bullying
- how to report bullying to school personnel
- on-line safety and cyberbullying

The notice will be signed and returned by parents indicating receipt and understanding of these policies. Parents will also be informed about the anti-bullying curricula that are used in the classroom. 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.

## VI. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

#### A. Specific bullying prevention approaches

Bullying prevention curricula will be age appropriate and evidence-based, which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- use scripts and role plays to develop skills
- empower 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
- help students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance
- emphasize cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies

- enhance students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications
- engage students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and differences.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan. The plan will include specific information about how and when the school or district will review the Plan with students.

#### 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:

- set clear expectations for students and establish school and classroom routines
- create safe school and classroom environments for all students including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students
- use appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline
- use positive behavioral supports
- encourage adults to develop positive relationships with students
- model, teach, and reward pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors
- use positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development
- use the Internet safely and support students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

For more information about curricula or units of study that address bullying intervention and prevention

## **VII. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION FOR (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.)**

#### **A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation**

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 North Reading Public Schools

employee is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation he or she becomes aware of or witnesses. An incident report form should be completed within 24 hours of the report. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not North Reading Schools employees may be made anonymously.

### **Report: North Reading Public School Employees**

North Reading Public School employees will report immediately to the principal or designee when they witness or become 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 school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

### **Report: Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others**

The North Reading Public Schools 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. An incident report form should be completed within 24 hours of the 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. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Contact information for each school is as follows:

|                                |  |              |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| L.D.<br>Batchelder School      | Michael Maloney, Principal<br>Elizabeth Weiss<br>Principal's Designee      | 978-664-7814 | <a href="mailto:mmaloney@nrpsk12.org">mmaloney@nrpsk12.org</a><br><a href="mailto:eweiss@nrpsk12.org">eweiss@nrpsk12.org</a>       |
| J. Turner<br>Hood School       | Glen McKay, Principal<br>Christy Gorman,<br>Principal's Designee           | 978-664-7817 | <a href="mailto:gmckay@nrpsk12.org">gmckay@nrpsk12.org</a><br><a href="mailto:cgorman@nrpsk12.org">cgorman@nrpsk12.org</a>         |
| E. Ethel<br>Little School      | Christine Molle, Principal<br>Kerry Fleck,<br>Principal's Designee         | 978-664-7820 | <a href="mailto:cmolle@nrpsk12.org">cmolle@nrpsk12.org</a><br><a href="mailto:kfleck@nrpsk12.org">kfleck@nrpsk12.org</a>           |
| North Reading<br>Middle School | Catherine O'Connell,<br>Principal<br>Laura Oliveto,<br>Assistant Principal | 978-664-7806 | <a href="mailto:coconnell@nrpsk12.org">coconnell@nrpsk12.org</a><br><a href="mailto:loliveto@nrpsk12.org">loliveto@nrpsk12.org</a> |
| North Reading<br>High School   | Anthony Loprete, Principal<br>BarriAnn Alonzo,<br>Assistant Principal      | 978-664-7800 | <a href="mailto:aloprete@nrpsk12.org">aloprete@nrpsk12.org</a><br><a href="mailto:balonzo@nrpsk12.org">balonzo@nrpsk12.org</a>     |

To make anonymous reports please send your letter via U.S. mail to:

Sean Killeen  
Title IX Coordinator  
North Reading Public Schools  
189 Park Street  
North Reading, MA 01864

No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

## **B. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation**

### **Step 1: Safety**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the North Reading Public School 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. The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies to protect 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.

Parent notification: When bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor and the procedures for response. 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.

## **Step 2: Investigation**

The principal or designee will promptly investigate 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. The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The following guidelines may be adapted as necessary to respond appropriately to the complaint.

*Written Statement of complaint:* The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gather information from the complainant, including such matters as: what happened, who committed the alleged acts, who was present or may have information about the events, when the events occurred (date, time of day), and where the events occurred. The investigator will use the Bullying/Cyberbullying Report Form. If age appropriate, the complainant may be asked to put the complaint in writing and to sign and date it. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to write the complaint, the investigator will record the allegations, read them to the complainant to confirm accuracy, and ask the complainant to sign the document. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to sign, the investigator may sign and date the document him/herself.

*Interviews:* Once the allegations of the complainant are established, the investigator will gather other evidence, which often involves interviews of the alleged aggressor and/or other witnesses. If appropriate, the investigator should remind the alleged aggressor and witnesses that retaliation against persons whom they believe might have reported the incidents or cooperated with the investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

*Confidentiality:* The confidentiality of the complainant and the other witnesses will be maintained to the extent practical given the school's obligation to investigate and address the matter.

## **Step 3: Determination**

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. The determination must be based upon all of the facts and circumstances and the perspective of a reasonable person. When applied to children, the "reasonable person" standard is generally "that of a

reasonable person of like age, intelligence, and experience under like circumstances.” See *Ellison v. Brady*, F.2d 872 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1991.)

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 action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students’ 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.

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.

In addition to taking disciplinary action, the following are examples of steps that may be taken to prevent the recurrence of bullying or retaliation:

- limit or deny the aggressor’s access to a part or area of a school
- enhancing adult supervision on school premises
- exclude the aggressor from participation in school sponsored or school-related functions, after-school programs and or extra-curricular activities
- offer individualized skill-building sessions based on the school’s/district’s anti-bullying curricula
- provide relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel
- implement a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
- meet with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- adopt behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills
- make a referral for evaluation.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon

completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

#### **Step 4: Taking Disciplinary Action**

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct as mentioned in the handbooks:

|                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| High School Handbook Pages       | <a href="#">Link</a> |
| Middle School Handbook Pages     | <a href="#">Link</a> |
| Elementary School Handbook Pages | <a href="#">Link</a> |

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 as mentioned in the handbooks.

#### **Step 5: Obligations to Notify Others (If necessary)**

##### 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

##### 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 the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

#### **Step 6: Closing the Complaint and Possible Follow-Up**

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.

Additionally, within a reasonable period of time the principal or designee may contact either the target and/or the aggressor to determine whether there has been any retaliation and whether additional supportive measures are needed.

### **VIII. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

#### **A. Identifying Resources.**

The Assistant Superintendent collects and consolidates building level information regarding the capacity of each school to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This includes staffing, financial, and curricula supports. This information is compiled by individual school principals and provided to the Director annually. Regularly scheduled Administrative Council (comprised of principals and district level administrators) meetings provide opportunities for this information to be updated on an ongoing basis. Professional development opportunities and experiences addressing bullying issues strengthen staff capacity to provide counseling and related services. These experiences are managed by the Director through the My Learning Plan computerized program, which provides a means to collect, organize, and track such staff development experiences.



### **Action Steps:**

- Further assess the effectiveness of current resources at the building level. (For example, principals will evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' classroom management skills to ensure a safe classroom environment; and staff availability for monitoring unstructured setting such as cafeteria, school yard, arrival/dismissal, and hallways will be further assessed by building principals)
- Determine professional development needs of staff at all levels of intervention to ensure ability to provide appropriate services as outlined above. This will be completed primarily by the Assistant Superintendent in coordination with building principals.
- Continue the planning and coordination of district-wide anti-bullying efforts by PAUSE
- Establish school level safety planning teams in each school to work in coordination with district level PAUSE. This will be organized by building principals and include administration, counseling staff, teachers, and parents. Age appropriate student involvement in these groups will be determined at the building level.
- Continue to evaluate the efficacy of current curricula (Open Circle) at elementary level. Continue to implement if this program is considered effective and appropriate. This will be accomplished through surveys, student report, staff observation, and review of discipline data.
- Explore published curricula and/or develop new curricula for use at the middle and high schools. The PAUSE group, under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent, will explore and evaluate curricula.
- Once identified, any new curricula will be reviewed and evaluated by the building principals, central administrators, and school committee.
- Implementation of new curricula will be the responsibility of individual building principals and staff.
- Compile information regarding community agencies and service providers that offer counseling and/or social skills development support.

### **B. Counseling and Other Services.**

#### English as a Second Language:

English is the primary language of the students attending North Reading schools. English is the only language spoken by the current counseling staff in each of the district's schools. For students with English as a second language, agencies offering counseling services will be identified. Primary languages other than English spoken by students in North Reading Schools include: Mandarin Chinese, French, Indonesian, Russian, and Dutch. All documents and information will be made available in students and families primary language upon request or indicated by the student's home language survey.

**The Eliot Center** in Bedford, MA has been identified as an agency offering comprehensive counseling services to students and families who are Medicaid eligible.

Counseling:

At the building level, counseling and administrative staff possess knowledge and experience in preventing and responding to bullying behaviors. In addition, many teachers in each school have focused their staff development efforts in this area. Working collaboratively, staff members possess significant knowledge to work as leadership teams within buildings.

The need for a referral to outside services may arise in instances where the student's level of emotional distress has risen and is significantly impacting school or home functioning, when needs exceed the counseling support appropriate to a school setting, and/or when the parent requests information to support their child at home.

School psychologists at each school will compile and maintain a comprehensive list of community based agencies, counseling, and social skills development programs available.

When private counseling services referrals are provided to parents, a minimum of three providers will be given. Parents will be encouraged to speak first with the child's primary care physician to discuss the issues and to obtain additional referrals. As with all referrals, it will be communicated that this is a parental choice and not a requirement of the school system. School psychologists will often request that parents consider signing a release of information form to allow the private therapist to work collaboratively with school counseling.

Special Education:

At the IEP meeting, the team will address the potential for the student's identified disability to affect social skills and subsequently, his/her vulnerability to participate in or become a target of bullying, harassment, or teasing. In conjunction with a diagnosis, individual student personality, functional behaviors, parent support, and skill sets would mediate his/her needs for intervention. As determined by the team, goals directed at developing skills to reduce the likelihood of involvement in bullying situations would be developed, and bench-mark objectives would be determined. The staff responsible for providing services and the amount of services provided would be reflected in the service delivery grid.

When the team determines that a potential exists but no specific remedial or developmental needs are identified, the Additional Information portion of the IEP may be utilized to reflect concern and make provisions for the student to

have a “check-in” staff member, such as the school psychologist, to meet with on a regular basis to monitor the student’s status relative to bullying issues.

#### Other Service Providers and Resources:

**Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC)** provides significant support via professional development trainings, a well-developed web-site, on-site staff, parent, and student presentations. Several staff members of the North Reading School District have attended training sessions, including “train-the-trainer” presentations, resulting in further dissemination of information.

**The Middlesex Partnership for Youth and Project Alliance**, in coordination with the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office, provides ongoing support by presenting information on school safety and anti-bullying to staff and parents.

**K-12 Community Impact Team:** In 2021 the district restructured the P.A.U.S.E. Committee to support the district initiatives in NRPS 2025. under the leadership of the Assistant Superintendent, is a district-wide committee composed of teachers, counselors, administration, community members, police, and parents. The role of the committee is to develop and coordinate schools’ efforts to reduce bullying by developing safety plans, providing social skills training, and educating students, parents, and staff.

## **IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school 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, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

# North Reading Public Schools

## *Bullying Incident Report Form*

Please complete this form within 24 hours of your oral or written report to the principal or designee after taking all steps practical to assure the immediate safety of the student(s). 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 school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing this Report: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Check whether you are the: Target of the behavior ▲ Reporter (not the target) ▲

3. Check whether you are a: ▲ Student ▲ Staff member (specify role) \_\_\_\_\_

▲ Parent ▲ Administrator ▲ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Your telephone number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

4. If student, state your school: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

5. If staff member, state your school or work site: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Alleged Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ▲ Student ▲ Staff ▲ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ▲ Student ▲ Staff ▲ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ▲ Student ▲ Staff ▲ Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional paper and attach to this document.

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Form Given to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Building Principal/Designee

Office Stamp/Administrator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Reports may be filed anonymously by sending a letter to Patrick Daly, Title IX Coordinator, 189 Park Street, North Reading, MA, 01864. No Disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

# North Reading Public Schools

## *Bullying Incident Investigation Form*

## I. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Interviews:

☐ **Interviewed alleged aggressor**      **Name:** \_\_\_\_\_      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Interviewed alleged target**      **Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Interviewed alleged witnesses**      **Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the alleged aggressor? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION** ☐ Yes ☐ No

### Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

## II. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

**1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:**

☐ YES

☐ NO

- **Bullying**

☐ Incident documented as \_\_\_\_\_

## ❑ Retaliation

☐ **Discipline referral only**

## 2. Contacts:

☐ **Target's parent/guardian**    **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_    ☐ **Aggressor's parent/guardian**    **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **District Title IX Coordinator Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ **Law Enforcement Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Action Taken:

☐ **Loss of Privileges**      ☐ **Detention**      ☐ **Suspension**

☐ **Community Service**    ☐ **Education**    ☐ **Other**

#### 4. Describe Safety Planning:

*Remember to follow-up with both the alleged target and aggressor and complete the Incident Follow-Up Report Form.*

**Report forwarded to Principal: Date \_\_\_\_\_** **Report forwarded to Assistant Superintendent.: Date \_\_\_\_\_**  
(If principal was not the investigator)

**Signature and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**North Reading Public Schools**  
*Bullying Incident Follow-Up Report Form*

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.

Additionally, within a reasonable period of time the principal or designee may contact either the target and/or the aggressor to determine whether there has been any retaliation and whether additional supportive measures are needed.

|   |     |       |
|---|-----|-------|
| Target Name (last, first, middle)       | Sex | Grade |
| Alleged Aggressor (last, first, middle) | Sex | Grade |

- ☐ Matter has been resolved and the problem has not continued.
- ☐ Matter has not been resolved and the problem continues.

Comments:

Immediate Concerns:

**Report forwarded to Principal: Date**\_\_\_\_\_ **Report forwarded to Asst. Superintendent: Date**\_\_\_\_\_  
(If principal was not the investigator)

**Signature and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_