

Reading Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention

2020-2021 School Year



Bullying Prevention and Intervention

M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O and the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP) prohibit bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation:

- on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, 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/or
- at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, *if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.*

Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Definitions

Bullying:

- the **repeated** use by one or more students or by 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 of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:
 - causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; or
 - places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; or
 - creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; or
 - infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
 - materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.



Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Definitions, cntd.

- Cyberbullying
 - Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication
 - Also includes:
 - The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; or
 - The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying; or
 - The distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.



The Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Act: Definitions

Perpetrator/Aggressor:

A student or 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 who engages in bullying or retaliation.

Victim/Target:

A student victim of bullying or retaliation.

Hostile Environment:

Where bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to alter the conditions of the student's education.

Retaliation:

Reprisal or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses; has reliable information about bullying.



Bullying – Vulnerable Populations

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
- Disability or
- Or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics.



District-Wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

- **Responsibilities of School Staff**
 - **Any staff member who witnesses or becomes aware of bullying or retaliation must immediately report it to the Principal or to the school official identified in the BPIP as responsible for receiving such reports or both.**
- **Complaints/Reports**
 - May be oral or in writing
 - May be made anonymously although no discipline can be imposed based solely on an anonymous complaint.
- **Principal's Responsibility**
 - The Principal or a designee will promptly commence an investigation.
 - Principal makes preliminary determination regarding the need for referral to law enforcement and need for immediate intervention to protect the victim's safety.
 - Principal or designee conducts investigation.
 - May provide notice of ongoing investigation
 - If the Principal determines, following investigation, that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal shall:
 - notify the local law enforcement agency if the principal believes that criminal charges may be pursued against a perpetrator of bullying.
 - take appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective action;
 - notify the parents or guardians of the victim and aggressor



Reporting of Bullying or Harassment

- If you:
 - Receive a complaint or report of bullying or harassment;
 - Observe bullying or harassment; or
 - Become aware of bullying or harassment;

Report it to your Principal!



Bullying Intervention/Corrective Action

- Provide support services to the target, aggressor, and/or witnesses:
 - Restore a sense of safety for the target and assess the victim's need for protection;
 - Protection of any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about an act of bullying from bullying or retaliation;
 - Counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators and targets and for appropriate family members of said students.



Bullying Investigations: Notice of Findings

- Upon completion of the investigation, Principal/designee will:
 - Send separate written notices of the Principal's finding to the target and perpetrator
 - May not divulge student record information pertaining to student who is not the child of the parent(s) being notified
 - Must develop individualized plan by which to notify the parents of students bullied on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity
 - Notify parents of victim about DESE's Problem Resolution System
 - Notify target of the services and interventions to be provided to restore a non-hostile environment for the victim
 - Conduct parent conferences with parents of victim and parents of perpetrator if appropriate or requested
 - Conduct follow up interview with victim to monitor effectiveness of interventions and retaliatory treatment of victim or witnesses.

Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Law

- Children with Disabilities
 - M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3
 - Whenever the evaluation of the IEP team indicates that the child has a disability that affects social skills development or that the child is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of the child's disability, the IEP shall address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.



» Applies equally to students who are perpetrators of bullying

Reading Public Schools

**Thank you for participating in
our**

**Bullying Prevention and
Intervention module**