

**South Shore Educational
Collaborative
Bullying Prevention and
Intervention Plan
2010-2011**

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BULLYING LEGISLATION SUMMARY

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed a new bullying legislation designed to expand a school district's obligations in terms of monitoring, reporting, and investigating all types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. This legislation contains an educational component for all staff and curriculum requirements for all students in grades K-12. This law applies to both public and private schools. (Please reference M.G.L. c.71, § 370)

All schools are required to create a bullying prevention and intervention plan. The following key components are required by law and are, therefore, contained within the South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan:

1. A professional development plan must be established for all staff
2. Each district must establish a bullying prevention and intervention plan
3. A K-12 curriculum on bullying must be adopted for all K-12 students
4. Reporting requirements for all staff who witness or have knowledge of any bullying incident must be implemented
5. Investigation and disciplinary policies must be instituted for the act of bullying
6. When criminal charges may be appropriate, notification of law enforcement is needed
7. Resources and information will be available to parents and guardians including curricula, the dynamics of bullying, online safety, and cyberbullying.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Source: Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, Massachusetts DESE, August 2010

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, 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.

ASSESSING NEEDS AND IDENTIFYING RESOURCES

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be developed through a collaborative school community process. Representatives from the following groups will be part of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention procedures.

- Administration: Executive Director, Program Directors, Assistant Directors, Clinical Director
- Parents, Guardians and Students
- Facility, Technology, Office and Food Service Personnel

Additional Groups and/or Organizations may provide information and data to assist in identifying the needs of the district as it relates to bullying prevention and intervention. These groups and organizations may include, but are not limited to the following:

- South Shore Mental Health
- Member School Districts
- Massasoit Community College
- Community sites of employment

Additionally, Program Directors will meet with student groups to further assess SSEC needs related to bullying prevention and intervention. There will be ample time for students, staff, and administrators to assess the collaborative needs.

In addition, a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy will be submitted to the Board of Directors for review in December, with approval by January, 2011.

PRIORITY STATEMENT

The South Shore Educational Collaborative Values:

- Safety
- Respect
- Relationships
- Growth

The South Shore Educational Collaborative expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a manner that demonstrates respect for individuality and diversity. All types of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation are prohibited. Any confirmed instances of bullying will be subject to actions and consequences as outlined in the South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Policy.

The South Shore Educational Collaborative is committed to working with students, staff, families, the community, and law enforcement in preventing all types of bullying. This *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* has been established for the prevention, intervention, and timely response to reported incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.

DEFINITIONS

As cited in *An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*, Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 and *A Summary for Parents and Guardians, and Student Handbooks* as prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Definition of Bullying

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:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Definition of Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying, 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 cyber-bullying.

Scope of Definition of Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- 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.

Bullying extends to occurrences:

- 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 victim,
 - infringes on the rights of the victim at school or
 - materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

The legislation broadly defines bullying both on and off school grounds. The South Shore Educational Collaborative interprets this to mean that the school is required to investigate alleged instances of bullying that may occur off school grounds if a connection can be found between the conduct and a hostile environment at school or how the alleged conduct disrupts the “educational process” at school.

Related Bullying Terminology and Definitions

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Hostile environment 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 the student’s education.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is directed.

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.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All staff will be required to participate in annual professional development training for the prevention of bullying. This training will include both educational and non-educational staff, including but not limited to administrators, teachers, clinicians, building maintenance, office staff, club/activity advisors, and all paraprofessionals.

To expedite the training process, the South Shore Educational Collaborative will implement a train-the-trainer model to ensure that all staff is trained in a timely manner. Many of our educators and administrators have received instruction in conducting bullying prevention and intervention training through the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC)*.

Standards - All staff will receive training that includes the following standards:

1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents
2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
3. Information regarding power differentials and the often complex interactions that occur between and among an aggressor, a target, and witnesses to a bullying incident
4. Current research on bullying, including
 - a. Students at risk for bullying
 - b. Indicators of bullying behavior
 - c. Categories of students at risk as aggressors
5. Information on the incidence and unique nature of cyber-bullying
6. Information on Internet safety issues related to cyber-bullying

Training Schedule

- Annual in-district training for all staff
- Initial training of 90 minutes minimum for all staff
- Additional training available for targeted staff including, but not limited to administrators, clinicians, nurses, and other personnel more likely to witness bullying or receive reports of bullying
- Training is required for all new hires unless they can demonstrate prior adequate training
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention training will be added to the Teacher Induction Program

Additional Professional Development

- Specific extended cyber-bullying training
- Distribution of literature related to bullying and cyber-bullying
- Resources / links available on website

- Webinars and teleconferences related to bullying and cyber-bullying
- Out-of-district professional development such as provided by MARC, district attorneys' offices, legal offices, and other venues
- Additional targeted professional development will be provided based on the needs and/or concerns identified by staff and administration

* Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC), located at Bridgewater State College, is recognized throughout the Commonwealth as a leader in bullying and cyber-bullying prevention and awareness.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND CURRICLUM PLAN

Per the legislation, every program within the South Shore Educational Collaborative will implement a curriculum that addresses bullying prevention using age appropriate instruction. A standard, evidence-based curriculum program will be implemented for all grades, based on the statewide academic standards to be developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by June 30, 2011. Until such time that these standards are released, the following curriculum resources and activities will be used to guide a bullying prevention program that teaches students about:

1. Types of bullying including cyberbullying
2. Strategies for dealing with aggressors
3. Ways for students to report bullying
4. Conflict resolution
5. Respectful and empathetic approaches to working and playing with those who are different from you

Curriculum Resources, Programs and Activities – The following curricula will be used to guide educators in age appropriate bullying prevention and intervention instruction:

Grades	Program/Topic	Focus
K-12	Random Acts of Kindness	Daily recognition of Random Acts of Kindness through Visual Representation
K-12	Compassion Groups	Therapeutic student discussion groups regarding the compassion-bullying continuum led weekly by clinical staff
K-12	Staff Training	On going, all staff, professional development through end of day discussions with clinical support
K-12	Individual Clinical Meetings	Clinicians meet with student individually includes discussion of experiences with the compassion-bullying continuum
K-12	Clinical Team Meetings	Weekly meetings of clinical team staff and program director with the compassion-bullying continuum as a discussion point for individual students and the program overall
K-12	Quarterly Parent Meetings	
9-12	Health/Wellness curriculum	All students participate in a Health and Wellness class which includes a month long unit on bullying identification and

K-8		response MARC Bullying Education Program, Steps to Respect and a variety of videos are being used at Quest.
9-12 6-9	Student Assembly on bullying and cyberbullying	Students in the Legal Issues class present PowerPoint presentations to the full student body on legal cases related to bullying Middle School Students have had a presentation on Bullying and cyberbullying by the District of Attorney Office.
K-12	Parent Information	Parent informational literature produced by MARC is distributed to parents at Open House and made available in the main office

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The bullying legislation imposes mandatory reporting requirements for *all* members of the school staff to immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation. Staff members must report incidents, which they have either witnessed or become aware of, to the Director, the clinician, or both. The form identified as the “South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form” can be found in the appendix section of this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. A copy of the reporting form will also be available in the following locations:

- Student Handbook
- Main office of each Program
- Clinicians’ Offices
- Nurse’s Office
- Website

Anyone can report a bullying or retaliation incident, including students, staff, parents or guardians. Reports may be made in writing or orally to the Director or another staff member. Reports may also be made anonymously to the director of each program, or to Executive Director, Henry W. Perrin, Jr., at 781-749-7518 ext. 115, or at hperrin@ssec.org.

INVESTIGATION, DISCIPLINARY POLICIES, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Investigation - Please reference the *South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy*, and the *Bullying Investigation Procedures* documents in the appendix section of this plan.

The program director or designee will conduct a prompt investigation of every report of bullying, cyber-bullying, or for retaliation for the reporting of a bullying incident. The principal has the following duties when incidents of bullying have occurred:

1. Take appropriate disciplinary action as outlined in the student handbook
2. Notify the parents or guardian of the target and notify the parents or guardian of the aggressor
3. Notify the parents/guardians of the target(s) of actions taken to prevent further acts of bullying and/or retaliation
4. Notify the parents/guardians of the aggressor of actions taken to prevent further acts of bullying and/or retaliation
5. Notify law enforcement, when appropriate, if the director or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action will follow the guidelines of the SSEC student handbook. Disciplinary actions will consider the age, intent, cognitive abilities, emotional status and actions of the aggressor(s) and may range from discussions with the involved parties to excluding students from school under the disciplinary code.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout the reporting, investigation, and disciplinary process. Confidentiality will be used to protect anyone who reports bullying or retaliation, who provides information during an investigation, or who is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

Special Education

As required by M.G. L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines that a child has a disability which affects “social skills development” or the student is “vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of the child’s disability,” the Team will determine what to include in the IEP to address the skills and/or proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to these issues. Cognitively appropriate resources will be used with special education students to assist in teaching bullying prevention and intervention skills.

Internet & Electronic Communication Device Use

The South Shore Educational Collaborative has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that guides the use of electronic communication devices and other technologies in the district. The AUP will be reviewed annually to ensure that the content of the AUP reflects the rapidly changing technologies and related safety concerns. All students, employees, and parents will be notified of the policy and will be required to sign the AUP.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

The South Shore Educational Collaborative is committed to ensuring that our students and staff feel safe and supported within the school community. The SSEC will continue to work with students, staff, parents and guardians alerting all to the need for more heightened observation of bullying behaviors. Following investigations, if deemed appropriate by the director, a personalized action plan may be developed to address the needs of the target and/or to work with the aggressor to change behavior and to recognize the harmful effects of his/her actions.

When deemed appropriate by the director, the SSEC will provide counseling or other support for both aggressors and targets. The SSEC will also assist students and families with access to both school and community resources.

PARENT/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Parents and guardians will receive annual written notice of student-related sections of the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan*. The SSEC will make resources available to parents and the community to assist in bullying prevention and intervention. The following Bullying Prevention and Intervention links will be available on the South Shore Educational Collaborative website:

<http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/newlaw.html>

<http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/>

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>

Parent informational sessions will be offered by groups at the South Shore Educational Collaborative, the District Attorney's Office, the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, etc.

Distribution of *Parent and Guardian Bullying Prevention* literature

SSEC BULLYING INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous 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 contact information/telephone number: _____

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 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):

Immediate Safety / Transportation Required? If yes, specify where:

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

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 attach an additional page if necessary.

9. Please comment regarding how this incident disrupted the educational process.

10. Please describe any physical evidence including photos, text, drawings, or messages (phone, computer, etc.)

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ **Date:** _____
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)`

Form Given to: _____ **Position:** _____

Date: _____