

## **Bullying/Cyber-Bullying Policy**

*The Waterbury Public Schools are committed to providing an educational environment where the right and dignity of every student is respected.*

**A. POLICY STATEMENT:** The Waterbury Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on 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 local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying 1) causes physical or emotional harm to a student or such student's property; 2) places a student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property; 3) creates a hostile environment at school for such student; 4) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or 5) substantially disrupts the educational process.

Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of any act of bullying are likewise prohibited. Any student who engages in bullying behavior shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which action may include suspension and expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials in accordance with the Board's policies and state and federal law. In addition, the Waterbury Board of Education will address teen dating violence in accordance with its Safe School Climate Plan.

## **B. DEFINITIONS:**

***Bullying*** is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyber-bullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:

- a) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- b) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
- c) creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
- d) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
- e) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but is not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

***Cyber-bullying*** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

**Bullying/Cyber-Bullying Policy, continued**

**C. DISTRICT PROGRAM AND SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN:** The Safe School Climate Plan (“Plan”) is a multi-faceted approach to improving overall school climate and to prohibit and address any incidences of bullying and teen dating violence in the Waterbury Public Schools. The Waterbury Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of the Waterbury Public Schools or his/her designee, along with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator, Safe School Climate Specialists and Safe School Climate Committees to develop, approve and adopt a Safe School Climate Plan in accordance with state law in furtherance of this policy. The Plan is to be periodically reviewed and revised as appropriate. Such Plan shall include, but not be limited to provisions which:

1. Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which students may make such reports;
2. Enable parents/guardians to file written reports of suspected bullying;
3. Address teen dating violence.
4. Require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;
5. Require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report;
6. Require the safe school climate specialist to provide prompt notice that such investigation has commenced to the parents or legal guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or legal guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed;
7. Require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
8. Require each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;
9. Provide for the inclusion of language about bullying and teen dating violence in student codes of conduct and in all students handbooks;
10. Require each school to notify parents or guardians of students who commit any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of any student against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;
11. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying;

**Bullying/Cyber-Bullying Policy, continued**

12. Require each school to invite the parents or legal guardians of the student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting separate and distinct from the meeting referenced in 11 above of this subsection, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying.
13. Establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
14. Direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
15. Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
16. Require the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;
17. Require the principal of a school or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any act of bullying constitutes criminal conduct;
18. Prohibit bullying (A) on 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 local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the students against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) subsequently disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
19. Require, at the beginning of each school year, for each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
20. Require all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended on bullying prevention and related topics.

Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and any Board policy regarding student confidentiality and access to records.

Legal Authority: Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-222d et. seq. as amended by Public Acts 14- 242, 14-172 and 14-232.

**Policy adopted by the Waterbury Board of Education on July 26, 2012  
and revised on November 6, 2014**

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation)****Purpose/Priority Statement**

The Waterbury Board of Education (Board) is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. The District has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan to promote a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning, create a consistency of approach and to create a climate in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable. Attitudes and practices can contribute to bullying, to lower levels of confidence, self-esteem and lack of achievement.

The following plan, “The Waterbury Public Schools Safe School Climate Plan (Plan),” addresses the mandated areas of compliance which are required under C.G.S.10-222d as amended. In addition to the following current efforts, the administration, faculty and staff of this District commit to continue to improve, enhance, and update both the Plan and its implementation in order to best serve the students, parents, guardians and the community.

**I. Prohibition Against Bullying****A. On School Grounds**

The Board of Education (Board) prohibits bullying (a) on 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 the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board.

**B. Off Campus/Outside the School Setting**

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

**C. Retaliation Prohibited**

In addition to prohibiting student acts which constitute bullying, the Board also prohibits discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying.

**D. Student Discipline**

Students who engage in bullying behavior in violation of Board policy and the Plan shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion in accordance with the Board’s policies on student discipline and consistent with state and federal law.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued****II. Definitions**

**“Bullying”** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)

**“Cyberbullying”** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

**“Gender Identity or expression”** means a person’s gender related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or assigned sex at birth.

**“Electronic communication”** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

**“Hostile environment”** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.

**“Mobile electronic device”** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

“**Outside of the school setting**” means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional Board of Education.

“**Prevention and Intervention Strategy**” may include but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, (2) School rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees, (6) school wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support and (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

“**School employee**” means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school Superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional Board of Education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional Board of Education.

“**School climate**” means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. (It is based on peoples’ experiences of school and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)

“**Teen Dating Violence**” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

**III. Leadership, Administrative and School Personnel Responsibilities****A. School Employees**

Any school employee who witnesses acts of bullying or receives a report of must orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available not later than one school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The school employee must file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report. (Form B) Reports shall be appropriately investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

**B. District Safe School Climate Coordinator**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District’s Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying in District schools;
3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education; and
4. Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying issues in the district and make recommended changes to the District’s safe school climate plan.

**C. Safe School Climate Specialist**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Provide prompt notice to parents and legal guardians of the investigation, investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying in the school in accordance with the District’s Safe School Climate Plan (Form C) and meet separately with parents or legal guardians within 48 hours of the completion of the investigation;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying in the school; and
3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying reports in the school.

**IV. Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan**

- A. For the school year commencing July 1, 2012 and each school year thereafter, the Principal of each school shall establish a committee or designate at least one existing committee (“Committee”) in the school to be responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence in the school. Such committee shall include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, as appointed by the school principal.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

- B. The Committee shall: 1) receive copies of completed reports following bullying investigations; 2) identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school; 3) review and amend school policies relating to bullying; 4) review and make recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the Safe School Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school; 5) educate students, school employees and parents/guardians on issues relating to bullying; 6) collaborate with the Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and 7) perform any other duties as determined by the Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying.
- C. Any parent/guardian serving as a member of the Committee shall not participate in any activities which may compromise the confidentiality of any student, including, but not limited to receiving copies of investigation reports, or identifying or addressing patterns of bullying among students in the school. In addition, the Committee as a whole must be mindful of the Board's obligations under state and federal law regarding the privacy and confidentiality of student information. No information shall be shared with the Committee that compromises student confidentiality in violation of state or federal law pertaining to the confidentiality of student information and educational records.
- D. Not later than January 1, 2012, the Board of Education shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to Board policy and submit such plan to the Department of Education. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Board, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

**V. Procedures for Reporting Bullying****A. Annual Notification of the Reporting Process**

Students and parents/guardians shall be notified at the beginning of each school year regarding the process by which students may make reports of bullying and such information shall be included in the student handbook of each of the District schools. In addition, this Safe School Climate Plan shall be placed on the District website and on the website of each District school. The Board shall also ensure that language regarding bullying and teen dating violence is included in student codes of conduct (i.e. discipline policies).

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued****B. Written Reports**

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file written reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying. (Form B) Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school employee, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator, if the Safe School specialist is unavailable, for review and action consistent with this Plan.

**C. Verbal Reports**

Students may make verbal reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying to any school employee (as defined by this Plan), including any administrator, or to the Safe School Climate Specialist. Such verbal reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school employee, or administrator or the Safe School Climate Specialist who receives a verbal report of bullying shall promptly reduce the report to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the school employee, administrator, if not the Safe School Climate Specialist, shall be promptly forwarded to the Building Principal for review and action in accordance with this Plan.

**D. Anonymous Reports**

Students may make anonymous reports of bullying to any school employee. Students may also request anonymity when making a report, even if the student's identity is known to the school employee. In cases where a student requests anonymity, the Safe School Climate Specialist, if not the Principal or his/her designee, shall meet with the student (if the student's identity is known) to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. All anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the report, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued****IV. Staff Responsibilities and Investigating Reports of Bullying****A. Teachers and Other School Employees**

School employees (as defined by this Plan) who witness acts of bullying, as defined above, or who receive reports of bullying, shall notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The school employee shall then file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report concerning the events witnessed or reported.

**B. Responsibilities Safe School Climate Specialist/Investigation**

1. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of bullying and shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall promptly notify the parents and legal guardians of the students involved of an investigation. In order to allow the district to adequately investigate complaints filed by a student or parent/guardian, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied should be asked to provide consent of the student's name in connection with the investigation process, unless the student and/or the parent has requested anonymity.
2. In investigating reports of bullying, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the student involved. The Safe School Climate Specialist will interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
3. Following investigation, if acts of bullying are verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the students against whom such acts were directed as well as the parents or guardians of the students who commit such acts of bullying of the finding no later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. The notification shall include a description of the school's response to the acts of bullying. In providing such notification, however, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of other students, including the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on any student, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian's own child, may not be disclosed except as provided by law. An invitation to a meeting must be given to the parents or legal guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to communicate to such parents or legal guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and policies and

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying. An invitation to a meeting must be sent to the parents or guardians of a student who commits any certified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting required with the parents or legal guardians of the victim, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying.

4. If bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an act of bullying was directed. Such support plan will include safety measures to protect against further acts of bullying.
5. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. The written intervention plan may include counseling, discipline and other appropriate remedial actions as determined by the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee, and may also incorporate a student safety support plan, as appropriate.

**C. Notice to Law Enforcement**

If the Principal of a school (or his/her designee) reasonably believes that any act of bullying constitutes a criminal offense, he/she shall notify appropriate law enforcement. Notice shall be consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law and Board policy regarding the disclosure of personally identifiable student information. In making this determination, the Principal or his/her designee, may consult with the school resource office, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

If a bullying complaint raises concern about discrimination or harassment on the basis of a legally protected classifications (such as race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity), the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also coordinate any investigation with other appropriate personnel within the district as appropriate (e.g. Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator etc.)

**V. Other Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

- A. Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the Building Principal or his/her designee that is intended to address the acts of the perpetrator and the needs of the victim and to assure that the prohibition against bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such bullying behavior will end as a result.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

- B. Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in the nature of the offense and the impact the behavior may have on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying, or to other inappropriate behavior which does not meet the definition of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying” as defined above, will generally warrant traditional disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying, whether and to what extent to impose traditional disciplinary action (e.g., detention, in-school suspension; suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Building Principal (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee and must be consistent with state law and Board policy governing student discipline. No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. As discussed below, schools may also consider appropriate alternatives to traditional disciplinary sanctions, including age-appropriate consequences and other restorative or remedial interventions.
- C. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidences of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same student. This plan may include safety provisions, as described in this Plan, for students against whom acts of bullying have been verified and may include other interventions such as counseling, discipline, and other appropriate remedial or restorative actions as determined by the responsible administrator.
- D. The following sets forth possible interventions which may also be utilized to enforce the Board’s prohibition against bullying:

**1. Non-disciplinary Interventions**

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a traditional disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying. Students may also be subject to other forms of restorative discipline or remedial actions, appropriate to the age of the students and nature of the behavior.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation)** continued**2. Disciplinary Interventions**

When acts of bullying are verified and a traditional disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with Board policy. This consequence shall be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior.

**3. Interventions for Bullied Students**

The Safe School Climate Specialist/Building Principal (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student may include the following:

- Counseling;
- Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations;
- Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;
- Peer mediation where appropriate
- Student Safety Support Plan; and
- Restitution and/or restorative interventions.

**4. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

In addition to the prompt investigation of reports of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other District actions may ameliorate any potential problem with bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. A focus will be placed on district and school efforts to improve school climate based upon the National School Climate Standards.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

While no specific action is required and school needs for such interventions may vary from time to time, the following list of potential intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional staff members in each school:

- a. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;
- b. A safe school climate assessment on or after July 1, 2012 and biennially thereafter to determine the prevalence of bullying. Such assessments may include, in addition to those approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education, in collaboration with CAS, the National School climate Standards Self-Assessment Tool' and the Connecticut State Department of Education's "Improving School Climate Team Rubric. Such school climate assessment instruments shall include surveys that contain uniform grade-level appropriate questions that collect information about students' perspectives and opinions about the school climate at the school and allow students to complete and submit such assessment and survey anonymously.
- c. Establishment by the school Principal of a Safe School Climate Committee in each District school or the designation of an existing committee that is responsible for fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying and teen dating violence in the school.
- d. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur;
- e. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school;
- f. Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student, parents and school employees;
- g. School-wide training related to safe school climate and related topics such as sexual harassment training, cultural diversity, multiracial education or other similar training in civil rights legislation;
- h. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
- i. Respectful responses to bullying concerns raised by students, parents or staff;

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

- j. Planned professional development programs addressing bully/victim problems;
- k. Student peer training, education and support. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
- l. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping (e.g., males need to be strong and tough);
- m. Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of staff and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;
- n. Modeling by all school employees of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
- o. Culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.
- p. Referrals to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service and periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the bullied child.
- q. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
- r. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

- 1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying;
- 2. Identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school;
- 3. Review and amend school policies relating to bullying;
- 4. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
- 5. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence.
- 6. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and
- 7. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying for the school.
- 8. No information shall be shared with the committee which violates the confidentiality provisions related to student information, except as permitted by law. Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are specifically excluded from activities #1 and #2 above and from any other committee activities that may compromise student confidentiality.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued****5. Other Interventions**

In addition to prevention and intervention strategies, administrators, teachers and other professional employees may find appropriate opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying through class discussions, counseling and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe mean-spirited student conduct, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying.”

**VI. Documentation and Maintenance of Log**

A. Each school shall maintain written reports of bullying, along with supporting documentation received and/or created as a result of bullying investigations, consistent with the Board’s obligations under state and federal law. Any educational record containing personally identifiable student information pertaining to an individual student shall be maintained in a confidential manner, and shall not be disclosed to third parties without prior written consent of a parent, guardian or eligible student, except as permitted under Board policy and state and federal law. Records pertaining to any reports, investigations, student support plans and/or records of any parent/guardian notification or meetings will be

**B. List of Verified Acts of Bullying**

The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of each school will maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Consistent with district obligations under state and federal law regarding student privacy, the log shall not contain any personally identifiable student information, or any information that alone or in combination would allow a reasonable person in the school community to identify the students involved. Accordingly, the log should be limited to basic information such as the number of verified acts, name of school and/or grade level and relevant date. Given that any determination of bullying involves repeated acts over time, each investigation that results in a verified act of bullying for that school year shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of the report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of such verified acts of bullying in the school, and it shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

C. The Principal of each school shall report the number of verified acts of bullying in the school annually to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued****VII. Student Safety and Prohibition against Discrimination and Retaliation****A. Discrimination and/or Retaliation Prohibited**

Discrimination and/or retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of an act of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

The District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school related activities. All reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination and retaliation will be investigated promptly and prompt action will be taken to end that behavior and restore a sense of safety to any student against whom such behavior is directed. This commitment is to be supported in all aspects of the school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular

**B. Student Safety**

As part of any investigation into allegations of bullying, discrimination or retaliation, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to any student against whom such bullying behavior is allegedly directed and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but are not limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the alleged victim (target) and/or the alleged perpetrator in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the alleged student against whom such bullying was directed (target); and altering the alleged perpetrator’s schedule and access to the alleged target. The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist 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.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal/Safe School climate Specialist or designee will contact the victim of verified acts of bullying to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If determined necessary, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued****VIII. Training Requirements for School Staff**

- A. At the beginning of each school year, each school shall provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan and require that all school employees annually complete training on the identification, prevention and response bullying as required by law.
- B. The Board shall provide certified staff with in-service training on the prevention, identifications and response to school bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide. Such in-service training is not required if the Board implements evidence-based model approach that is approved by the Department of Education.
- C. The Connecticut State Department of Education shall provide (within available appropriations) annual training to non-certified staff of the District on the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide. Such training may include, but is not limited to:
  - 1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying among students in school and outside the school setting,
  - 2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate and effective interventions to stop bullying,
  - 3. Information regarding the interaction and relationship between students committing acts of bullying, students against whom such acts of bullying are directed and witnesses of such acts of bullying,
  - 4. Research findings on bullying, such as information about the types of students who have been shown to be at-risk for bullying in the school setting,
  - 5. Information about the incidence and nature of cyberbullying as defined in C.G.S. 10-222d,
  - 6. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying, or
  - 7. Information on the incidence of youth suicide, methods of identifying youths at risk for suicide and developmentally appropriate strategies for effective interventions to prevent youth suicide.

**IX. Notification Requirements**

- A. A copy of this District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in written or electronic format to all District employees annually at the beginning of each school year.
- B. The District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be made available on the Board's website and on the website of each individual school with the District. Such posting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the approval of such plan by the Board.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

- C. The District’s Safe School Climate Plan shall be included in the District’s publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

**X. School Climate Assessments**

- A. On or after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, the Board requires each school within the District to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education.
- B. Completed assessments shall be shared with the Board and then submitted by the Board to the State Department of Education.

**XI. Bullying Through the Use of Technology (Cyberbullying)**

As noted in this Plan, the definition of bullying includes cyberbullying, which includes the use of the Internet and other technology to engage in bullying. Technology enables aggressive expression toward others and does not rely on physical strength or physical contact. By using a cell phone or the Internet, a student can quickly and aggressively spread rumors, threats, hate mail, or embarrassing photos through text messages, e-mails, or instant messages.

There are a number of social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) available to our students that can be misused and/or abused for bullying purposes. The Board strongly encourages any student, parent/guardian or school employee to promptly report any alleged abuse/misuse of technology to an appropriate school administrator or Safe School Climate Specialist.

The District’s discipline policy states that misuse, on or off campus, of electronic devices, for threatening/bullying/hazing or harassment is a violation and can be the basis for discipline. When information is received that a student or students are involved in bullying another district student through the use of technology whether such misconduct occurs on or off campus, the District may take disciplinary and other remedial actions consistent with this Plan, Board policy and state law.

**XII. Relationship to Other Laws**

- A. Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the District and school rules, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color gender, 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 district policies.

**Bullying – Safe School Climate Plan (Regulation) continued**

- B. In addition, nothing in the “Plan” is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action under applicable laws, or local school or District policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the “Plan” covers the behavior.

**XIII. Immunity for Board of Education, School Employees, Others**

Members of the Board of Education and school employees are protected by statute against claims for damages in connection with the reporting, investigation and response to bullying in accordance with the implementation of a safe school climate plan to parents, students, and others who make good faith reports of bullying to a school employee in accordance with the safe school climate plan.

Legal Authority:

Conn. Gen. Statutes Section 10-222d et. seq, as amended by Public Act 14-234, Public Act 14-172 and Public Act 14-232.

