



# IPSWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PLAN

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed to meet the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, section 370 and is modeled after the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Model Plan for dealing with bullying behaviors in schools. The Plan complements the Ipswich School Committee Bullying and Harassment Policy JICFB found online at <https://www.ipsk12.net/domain/23>. The Plan includes Ipswich's best practices for identifying, reporting, and responding to bullying behaviors, as well as prevention efforts. This Plan is supported by the District's current student wellness, social/emotional skills curriculum, restorative justice, and discipline policies. In accord with practices advised by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), this plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis in order to reflect continual analysis and improvement in practices and protocols.

## LEADERSHIP

The District acknowledges that school leaders, especially building principals, teachers, and counselors play a critical role in modeling appropriate social interactions, and in teaching students to respect and understand diversity and individual student differences. The District works in partnership with parents and the community at large to establish a positive school climate that is safe for all students, and in particular, those who are most vulnerable. The District recognizes that research has established a clear relationship between a positive school climate and student achievement, as well as positive overall mental health.

## CLEAR AND CONSISTENT PROCEDURES

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, section 370, the original Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. The District invited all interested community members and groups to provide public comment relative to this proposed Plan before its original adoption by the District in 2010. Subsequently, the Plan has been examined and reviewed on a regular basis so that it remains current with changes in both presenting bullying concerns, as well as in the development of new and effective prevention practices.

The Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan provides the District with a blueprint for enhancing our capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of our other positive school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process we continue to assess the adequacy of our current programs; review our current policies and procedures; examine our data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and draw upon current resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health supports.

## ONGOING ANALYSIS AND OVERSIGHT

As a District, we examine both our own local data and that of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, including the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) survey. Examination of the data allows us to analyze the prevalence, characteristics, and many manifestations of bullying. This information guides our identification of patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and impacts our selection of prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age- appropriate curricula, schoolwide initiatives, and in- school support services. The District recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. As a result, we have worked to create safe, supportive environments for these vulnerable populations in the school community in order to provide all of our students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. Our endeavors have also focused around ensuring a climate where there is no place for hate or victimization, either within or outside the school community.

The Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan identifies the building principal/ designee as the individual who receives and has oversight over all reports on bullying. The building principal/designee is responsible for collecting and analyzing building data to assess the presenting problems and examine outcomes. Input from faculty, staff, and parents/guardians is also factored into the determination of these school climate needs. The building administrator tracks incident reports, and accesses information related to targets and aggressors. The District also annually reports bullying incidence data to DESE. The data reported include: 1) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation; 2) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying and retaliation; 3) the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation; and 4) other information required by DESE.

The District, including the collaborative administrative team of building principals and other administrators, as well as the mental health school staff members, collaborates in creating the ongoing professional development that is required by the law. The building principal or his/her/their designee has ultimate responsibility for the customization of supports that are responsive to the individual circumstances and needs of both targets and aggressors. Each building administrator owns the responsibility for implementing the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, and for amending student handbooks and codes of conduct in their buildings to reflect the District's plan. At the building level, administrators also oversee the development of parent/family engagement initiatives, parent information materials, and the review of these efforts each year. The Superintendent (or designee) has final oversight over the development of new or revised practices and protocols under the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, including the Internet safety policy, and designation of key staff charged with reviewing and updating plans on an annual basis. The School Committee is ultimately responsible for the approval of any policy updates.

The Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying. Each school in the District is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and

the community to prevent harassment, violence, or malintended/insensitive behaviors. In consultation with these stakeholders, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The overarching expectation in the District is that all members of the school community will treat each other in a respectful manner, with empathy and tolerance for differences.

## **TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Ipswich Public Schools maintains ongoing professional development to reflect the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, section 370. Ongoing professional development is targeted to the experiences and needs of all staff members, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

Annual mandated training for all school staff on the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes current research on bullying and effective interventions; staff responsibilities under the law; a review of the steps that the principal/designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation; and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula offered at all grades throughout the school buildings. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired.

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, respectful communication, sensitivity to the needs of others and tolerance for differences. Professional development builds the capacity of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of school-wide and professional development is informed by research and includes information on:

- Developmentally/age appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally/age appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly vulnerable to bullying in the school environment;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development also addresses ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities. This includes a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or other students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas of professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding and respect for diversity and differences;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive and restorative disciplinary practices;

- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in age appropriate planning and decision-making;
- maintaining safe and caring classrooms for students

Written notice of the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan including sections related to staff responsibilities, can be accessed on the opening page of the District website.

## **ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

Creating a positive school climate requires that the underlying emotional needs of all students are addressed. At least every four years, the District administers a student survey to assess school climate and the needs of students. These students include targets, aggressors or bystanders of bullying or cyberbullying. In addition, the emotional needs of these students' families are also examined. The Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies for providing support and services necessary to meet these needs and for enhancing the District's capacity to effectively prevent, intervene and respond to bullying.

The District currently has many services available for students and families that are used to address the needs of targets, aggressors and bystanders. These services include needs analysis by the District's Intervention Teams, individual and group counseling, and referral to appropriate services for students and family members.

On at least an annual basis, school teams review staffing and programs in regard to their impact in creating positive school environments with appropriate intervention to prevent negative dynamics, engage individuals or groups of students, and to provide services at an appropriate level of intensity. At the same time, school teams develop recommendations and action steps to address resource and service gaps. The Ipswich Public Schools has worked in collaboration with local and state agencies to adopt evidenced- based curricula and to provide additional preventative services to students, parents/guardians, faculty and staff. Among the agencies we work with are the Essex County District Attorney's Office, Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth (MPY), the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC), Safe and Supportive Schools, Suffolk University Restorative Justice, KL Greer consulting (digital citizenship presentations), and Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC).

School counselors, nurses, school psychologists and special educators currently provide a variety of skill-based services to students within the educational setting that include ongoing emotional support, risk assessment, crisis intervention, and help with community- based counseling referrals when appropriate. School counselors meet with students, parents and teachers as needed to collaboratively address students' academic, emotional and behavioral concerns. The District provides linguistically- appropriate resources to identified families, drawing upon the expertise of interpreters and translators as appropriate. School counselors, school psychologists and special needs educators and other mental health support personnel maintain up-to-date information on community-based mental health referrals, outside agencies and services for Medicaid eligible students. They work collaboratively to develop positive behavior plans and other interventions enhancing social skills for students. They also work to support parents, through offering parent workshops, as well as informing parents about outside resources to bolster parenting skills and provide for the needs of children.

Among the services offered in various school buildings are the following:

- Individual and small group counseling
- Building-based student support teams (MTSS, Child Study) brainstorm wraparound supports
- Collaboration which takes place with outside agencies and therapeutic supports
- Crisis intervention support
- Facilitation of classroom meetings to resolve problems
- Restorative Justice circles
- School counseling curriculum which focuses on issues of respect, sexual harassment, student success skills, social-emotional learning, executive functioning, self-advocacy, and social skills
- Peer Mediation
- School wide initiatives such as Kindness Club, Ipswich Advisory and Mentoring (IAM) Club, PRIDE Club (middle school), Gay Straight Alliance (high school), Transition And Growth (TAG) Club, and Teaching Tolerance to promote a prosocial culture within the school
- Lunch Bunch/friendship groups
- Parent-teacher meetings
- Transition planning
- Behavioral Support Plan development
- Classroom observations
- Teacher consultation
- Multilingual Leaders Club
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees at the school level
- No Place for Hate Initiatives

The District holds ongoing parent and staff training through collaboration with the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University with Dr. Elizabeth Englander, and dynamic, nationally-known speakers for families such as Lynn Lyons, LICSW, and Jessica Minahan, PhD, BCBA. Our building-based teams meet on a weekly basis to examine student needs and collaborate on effective strategies for individual and group needs.

For students with disabilities, the IEP Team examines student vulnerabilities in regard to exhibiting bullying or being bullied. When the Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of their disability, the Team creates individualized social emotional supports that are included in the student's IEP. These may include social pragmatics groups, individual or small group counseling, incentivizing Behavior Support Plans and other interventions.

The Ipswich Public Schools has current practices in place for referring students and families to outside services. School counselors and other specialists help students and families access appropriate and available services. Referrals comply with relevant laws and policies. Referrals to outside providers are evaluated on a regular basis in reference to their availability, expertise for particular needs, and their accessibility to families.

## **ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

The Ipswich Public Schools provides age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each school.

Bullying prevention curricula are based on evidence-based research that, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and differences; and
- providing parents and guardians with information regarding the school bullying prevention curricula

Initiatives also educate students about the student-related sections of the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan through the Student Handbook, school assemblies and/or small group meetings.

The following core components have been essential in establishing a safe and supportive school environment that form the basis for the District's efforts in bullying intervention and prevention activities:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, students of the LGBGT community, and homeless students;
- communicating with parents and guardians regarding the schools' goals and expectations
- for students and students' safety
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop interest in, and positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving,
- conflict resolution training, restorative justice, and positive behavioral supports.
- learning about becoming responsible digital citizens and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

The Ipswich Public Schools has established policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures ensure that all members of the school community, including students, parents, and staff know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

### **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents/guardians, or others in the larger community, and may be oral or written. Staff members have been instructed that oral reports made by, or to, a staff member must be recorded in writing. All employees are

required to immediately report to the building administrator any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of, or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents/guardians, or other non-employees may be made anonymously. The district makes the reporting forms available to the community in each school office, counseling and nursing offices and on the District website, accessed by a quick link on the opening page under “Bullying Prevention . “

Forms can be found on the district website (link here) [Report a Bullying Incident](#) or via the QR code here:



At the beginning of each school year, the District provides the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents/guardians, with notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal (or designee), is incorporated into student handbooks and on the District website, so that information about the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is readily available to parents/guardians.

Staff members have been advised that they must immediately report to the principal (or designee) when they witness or become aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. Staff members are also reminded of the value of immediate adult intervention. They are encouraged to model positive actions by not allowing the behavior to go unnoticed and making it clear that such conduct is “not ok.” 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 the school’s policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

## **PRACTICES TO PROTECT THE TARGETED STUDENT**

The District expects students, parents/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the building administrator. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action can be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents/or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students are provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member. This is both to ensure their comfort with the process, as well as to prevent retaliation from the aggressor.

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal (or designee) assesses the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. There may be circumstances in which the principal/designee contacts parents/guardians prior to any investigation. Notices are consistent with state regulations found in 603 CMR 49.00. Responses to promote safety include: creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who is prepared to act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal /designee can take additional steps to promote safety during the course of, and

after, the investigation, as necessary.

The principal/designee implements appropriate strategies for protection from bullying or retaliation when a student has witnessed or reported bullying or retaliation, or provides information during an investigation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying is maintained to the extent possible given the school's obligation to investigate the matter.

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal/ designee promptly notifies the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor of the incident and discusses the planned response.

### **OBLIGATIONS TO NOTIFY OTHERS**

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, administrators are aware that the principal/designee) first informed of the incident promptly notifies by telephone the principal (or designee) of the other school/s about the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications are in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR.

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal/designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal/ designee notifies the local law enforcement agency. Notice is consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and the District's 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/ designee contacts the local law enforcement agency if there is a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In making this determination, the principal, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school and District policies and procedures, consults with local law enforcement/School Resource Officer (SRO), and other individuals the principal deems appropriate.

### **INVESTIGATION**

The principal promptly investigates all reports of alleged bullying or retaliation by considering all available information, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. During the investigation the principal/designee may interview students, staff, witnesses, parents/guardians and others as necessary. The principal informs the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and can result in disciplinary action. Interviews are conducted by the principal /designee, and other staff members or counselors as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given the obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal maintains confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal also maintains a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation are consistent with District policies and procedures for investigations and for possible disciplinary action. If necessary, the principal consults with the Superintendent regarding consultation with legal counsel pertaining to the investigation of the alleged report.

### **DETERMINATION**

The principal makes a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after



investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal/designee takes 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 will:

- 1) determine what remedial action, if any, is required, and
- 2) determine what actions and/or disciplinary action are necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal/ designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents/guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issues that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development or counseling. In the case of students with special education needs, the principal will confer with the IEP team to ensure that appropriate attention is given to the student's identified disability (ies).

The principal/designee promptly notifies the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notices to parents comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal does not report specific information to the target's parents/guardians about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to enforce violations.

## **SKILL BUILDING**

The Ipswich Public Schools have a range of individualized strategies and interventions that may be used in response to remediate a student's social skills or to prevent further incidents of bullying and/or retaliation.

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior., consistent with M.G.L. c. 71, ch 370(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal considers include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the district's anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with school counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and non-academic positive behavioral supports to help students understand prosocial ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents/guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills-building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for evaluation.

## **Taking Disciplinary Action**

If the principal decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action is based on the facts found during the investigation, 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 is consistent with the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the school's code of conduct as outlined in the student handbook and applicable state and federal law, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), and state laws governing discipline procedures for students with disabilities. If the principal determines that a student knowingly has made a

false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the school's code of conduct/student handbook.

## **PROMOTING SAFETY**

The principal considers what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the sense of safety for the target and others. Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal follows up with the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and if additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal then works with appropriate school staff to implement these measures.

## **COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

The Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of our schools and District to prevent and respond to bullying. Communication with families is necessary for effective collaboration. Provisions for informing parents/or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the schools include sharing information about the following:

- how parents/guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the District Plan;
- the dynamics of bullying; and
- online safety and cyberbullying.

Parents/guardians are notified each year about the student- related sections of the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

The District collaborates with School Councils and parent organizations such as the PTA, and other parent groups to offer resources, information and programs to parents/guardians on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and social skills curricula used by the district, along with online safety and cyberbullying. Information is made available to parents/ guardians in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language/s most prevalent among parents/guardians. The Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and related information is posted on the District website.

## **PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

The Ipswich Public Schools does not tolerate unlawful or disruptive behavior, including bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in school buildings and grounds, on school buses or in school activities. The District investigates all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and takes prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. The Ipswich Public Schools supports this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent/guardian involvement. Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, functions or programs whether on or off school grounds, on schools buses, or through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased, or used by the district, 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, 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 witnesses and reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, section 370, nothing in this Plan requires the District or school to staff non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## **PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM**

The District informs the parents or guardians of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system.

Parents are informed that, in the event that they do not believe they or their children have been afforded the necessary assistance to resolve the bullying behavior, they have recourse to the DESE Problem Resolution System (PRS) at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/> to file a complaint and seek additional support.

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the District may do so with the DESE Problem Resolution System. Emails can be sent to [compliance@does.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@does.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. This information is also available in the Superintendent's office.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Several of the following definitions are transferred directly from M.G.L. c. 71, section 370.

**AGGRESSOR** is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

**BULLYING** as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, section 370, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or 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 physical harm or damage to personal 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 orderly operation of a school.

**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, section 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

**HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT**, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, section 370, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

**RETALIATION** is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

**STAFF** includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, and athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

**TARGET** is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Ipswich Public Schools, 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, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Nothing in the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention 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. In addition, nothing in the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention 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, section 37H or 37H3/4, other applicable laws, or District policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this Plan covers the behavior.