

Section 8

Bullying Prevention



Ipswich Public Schools

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BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PROCEDURE

In May 2010, Governor Deval Patrick signed into law comprehensive legislation that addresses bullying prevention and intervention. This law has specific requirements for how schools address bullying and retaliation effectively for students with disabilities.

Requirements

IEP Teams must consider and specifically address social skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing

- whenever a student's Team evaluation indicates that the student's disability affects social skills development;
- when the student's disability makes him/her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing; and/or
- for all students on the autism spectrum.

Documentation

IEP Teams must document that issues of bullying, harassment, and teasing were considered at all Team meetings based upon the student's presenting social/emotional profile. It is critical to document that the conversation took place *even if* some Team members do not feel that the student falls into one of the three categories listed above. The documentation is important as it indicates that the conversation occurred and all Team members had a voice in the determination of vulnerability to bullying, harassment, and/or teasing.

The language below should be incorporated into all students' IEPs as indicated:

Student is Vulnerable

Insert the following statement in the N1 and PLEP B:

*The Team considered and discussed the implications of M.G.L. Ch 71, Section 370, MA Bullying Prevention Legislation at **(student's name)** Team Meeting. At this time, the Team, including **(student's name)**'s parents and **(student, if appropriate)** feel that **(student's name)** is vulnerable to bullying and would benefit from additional supports in the form of **(list what has been incorporated into the IEP, e.g. services and/or accommodations)** to help **(student's name)** throughout the school day. Skills and proficiencies are address in Goals # **(insert goal numbers here)**.*

Student is Not Vulnerable

Insert the following statement in the N1 and Additional Information:

*The Team considered and discussed the implications of M.G.L. Ch 71, Section 370, MA Bullying Prevention Legislation at **(student's name)** Team Meeting. At this time, the Team, including **(student's name)**'s parents and **(student, if appropriate)**, do not have any concerns in regard to bullying. If, in the future, concerns arise, the Team will immediately reconvene to discuss what supports are needed and address skills and proficiencies focus areas.*

Optional addition to this statement: ***(Student's name)** has demonstrated and stated that there are trusted adults at school that he/she would feel comfortable going to should there be bullying, harassment, or teasing concerns.*

Teams must be mindful that any goals, benchmarks, and services that relate to bullying, harassment, and teasing are addressed within the IEP in a manner that is clear to the parents.

For expanded information, please refer to the Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2011-2: Bullying Prevention and Intervention within this section of the Procedural Guide.

Special Education

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2011-2: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Principals, Administrators of Special Education, Directors of Approved Special Education Private Schools, Directors of Educational Collaboratives, and Other Interested Parties

From: Marcia Mitnacht, State Director of Special Education

Date: February 11, 2011

Introduction

The purpose of this advisory is to provide guidance to address changes to Massachusetts educational practice relating to students with disabilities stemming from enactment of the bullying prevention and intervention law. This advisory covers the following topics:

- The Massachusetts Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law
- Leadership and Schoolwide Efforts
- Evaluating Social Skills Development
- Skills and Proficiencies Students Need to Respond to Bullying, Harassment, or Teasing
- Implications for the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Students with Disabilities under Section 504

I. The Massachusetts Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law

In May 2010, Governor Patrick signed into law comprehensive legislation to address bullying in public and non-public schools. Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 (*An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*)¹ requires school leaders to create and implement strategies to prevent bullying, and to address bullying and retaliation promptly and effectively if they occur. Sections 7 and 8 of the law have specific implications for the IEP process and for students with disabilities.

Section 7 states: Whenever the IEP Team evaluation indicates that a student's disability affects social skills development, or when the student's disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the IEP must address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (G.L. c. 71B, §3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010.)

Section 8 states: For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, the IEP Team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (G.L. c. 71B, §3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010.)

In August 2010, the Department released a Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan² (Model Plan) for districts to use in creating their local plan. The Model Plan is organized in a format that parallels the Behavioral Health and Public Schools Framework.³ School districts are encouraged to approach the special requirements related to students with disabilities in Section 7 and Section 8 of the bullying prevention and intervention law in the same whole school context as they approach the development of their local plan for bullying prevention and intervention.

II. Leadership and Schoolwide Efforts

Strong leadership and schoolwide climate improvement efforts are essential and must go hand-in-hand with individual student supports if schools are to address effectively the prevention of bullying of students with disabilities. This integrated approach consists of schoolwide efforts, as outlined in the Model Plan, and the individual student supports provided through the IEP process that will build students' skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying. It will require communication, coordination, and cross-training between general and special education staff, and between staff and parents, to ensure that the schoolwide efforts address the needs of students with all types of disabilities.

Efforts to review bullying prevention and intervention policies with an understanding of the needs of students with disabilities and explicit ways of including all students in the schoolwide bullying prevention and intervention curriculum will foster supportive and safe school environments. These efforts also will support IEP Teams as they meet to address the needs of individual students. Additionally, an effective social skills curriculum⁴ that must be part of all schools' bullying prevention efforts will support the needs of most students with disabilities, as well as students without disabilities. By combining whole-school efforts with those taking place on behalf of individual students with disabilities, schools and districts can reduce the

threat of bullying of and by this population, and continue to make progress toward school safety and the effective inclusion of all students in their school communities.

III. Evaluating Social Skills Development

Since disabilities can affect multiple aspects of a student's life, the student's individual evaluation must be comprehensive in order to identify areas affected by the disability and to allow for appropriate supports to ensure student success. During the evaluation process, the IEP Team must gather relevant data and information related to the student's social skill development. Massachusetts regulations require initial evaluations to include: "an assessment of the student's attention skills, participation behaviors, communication skills, memory, and **social relations with group, peers, and adults.**"⁵ Similarly, federal IDEA regulation 34 CFR 300.304 (c)(4) requires that "the child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, **social and emotional status**, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities." (Emphasis added.) Generally speaking, this means that well planned evaluations will contain the information that IEP Teams need to address the special requirements of the bullying prevention and intervention law for students with disabilities.

Sections 7 and 8 of the bullying intervention and prevention law refer to three groups:

Students with disabilities

- on the autism spectrum;
- when the disability affects social skills development; and
- when the disability may result in a vulnerability to bullying, harassment, and teasing.

The Department recommends that IEP Teams for these students carefully consider the supports needed to build each student's social skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

IV. Skills and Proficiencies for Students

The Department reviewed a wide range of information on available skill building programs and offers this list from The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).⁶ CASEL has reviewed current research and identified specific skills and proficiencies needed to avoid or respond to bullying, harassment, and teasing. The skills and proficiencies that a school district may incorporate into its general curriculum, or that an IEP Team may identify in the student's IEP, may include but are not limited to the following core categories identified by CASEL:

- **Self-Awareness:** accurately assessing one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths/abilities, and maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence.
- **Self-Management:** regulating one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles; setting personal and academic goals and then monitoring one's progress toward achieving them; and expressing emotions constructively.
- **Social Awareness:** taking the perspective of and empathizing with others; recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences; identifying and following societal standards of conduct; and recognizing and using family, school, and community resources.
- **Relationship Skills:** establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict; and seeking help when needed.
- **Responsible Decision-making:** making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate standards of conduct, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations; and contributing to the well-being of one's school and community.

V. Implications for the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Because the IEP serves as a vehicle for improving the educational experience and achievements of a student with disabilities, the IEP Team uses a variety of information sources, including evaluations, assessment information, and its discussions of the student's present level of educational performance and social acumen, to inform the development of the IEP. The IEP Team's discussion focuses comprehensively on the student's educational needs and on the student's overall involvement in the school, including participation in the general curriculum and in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. In this process, the IEP Team considers the student's disability and the impact of the disability on the student's interaction and communication with others.

- For all three groups of students with disabilities named in the bullying prevention and intervention law, the IEP Team must consider how the student's disability affects his/her learning the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. Many students will receive support in developing appropriate skills and proficiencies through general instruction. In such cases, the Team should include in the IEP any supports the student needs to learn the needed skills through the existing curriculum. As appropriate, the

Team should include in the IEP needed accommodations to the general education program, or goals and objectives and special education services related to student's learning the necessary skills.

- Because of the nature of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), progress in positive social skill development is already a likely focus within the IEP of every student with ASD. Social skills instruction should be at the student's skill level and appropriate for his/her age. The focus of the IEP in relation to the bullying intervention and prevention law will be to aid the student in accessing social and emotional learning to handle more effectively challenges in his/her academic, social, and communication realms.
- IEP Teams should consider ways that the age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention and intervention incorporated into the school's general curriculum already assists a student with a disability in these areas and should reflect this discussion in the IEP. As noted earlier, the IEP should address those skills and proficiencies that the Team has determined the student would be unlikely to learn solely within the general curricular program, or any supports the student needs to make learning possible in the general curricular program.
- IEP Teams should consider whether modifications or services are needed for students with all types and severities of disabilities to be involved and progress in the school's or district's bullying prevention and intervention program that is incorporated into the school's or district's general curriculum. Also, Teams should ensure that students can participate fully in all procedures related to the reporting and investigation of bullying incidents. The district must ensure that the IEP Team includes a member of the school's staff who is knowledgeable about the school's bullying prevention and intervention general education curriculum when those issues are discussed at a Team meeting.
- Incorporated within the Team meeting process and the Team's discussion of a student's skills and proficiencies to respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing may also be education for families about the district's bullying prevention and intervention plan, the general education curriculum the school is using to instruct all students about bullying prevention and intervention, and the reporting mechanisms that are in place within the school.

School districts are not required to reconvene IEP Team meetings for currently eligible students solely to discuss the law's new requirements for bullying prevention or intervention. However, each time the IEP Team convenes, the Team should consider whether the student has been involved in any bullying incident, and use that information to inform its discussion of the student's needs. Additionally, the district should convene the IEP Team if the parent or any staff member believes that the student is at risk of being bullied or is exhibiting bullying behavior and such risk or behavior is directly tied to the student's disability. In many cases, effective school special education practices will have already identified social skills instruction and other bullying prevention measures in eligible students' IEPs.

The following are sample considerations that the Team may include in a student's IEP, as appropriate:

- Provide instructional personnel or supplementary aids and services during identified periods of the school day (e.g., lunch, recess, study hall, bus) when the student requires additional support.
- Identify a "safe" adult to whom the student can go for support when feeling vulnerable or targeted.
- Provide additional counseling for skill-building supports to prevent or respond to bullying.
- Provide a communication skills/social pragmatics skills group.
- Provide a Functional Behavioral Analysis and develop a Behavioral Intervention Plan that identifies target or aggressor behaviors, identifies antecedents to these behaviors, and proposes interventions for teaching the student to reduce and/or avoid these behaviors.
- Teach appropriate responses to bullying, harassment, and teasing.
- Provide opportunities for the student to develop and practice a safety action plan.
- Identify skills or accommodations necessary for school success - educationally and socially.

These considerations are illustrative of several ways that the Team may address a student's identified needs. Teams must consider the individual circumstances and needs of each student in order to ensure that the skills and proficiencies needed to address and respond to bullying, harassment, and teasing are supported in the IEP. IEP Teams cannot prevent or respond to bullying alone; the Team's efforts to help individual students develop the necessary skills and proficiencies to prevent or respond to bullying must also be supported and informed by the broader bullying prevention and intervention initiatives taking place at the school and district level.

A Department resource document entitled "[*Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities in the IEP and in School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Efforts*](#)" is available for IEP Teams and districts to consult as they serve Massachusetts students with disabilities. In addition, the Department publishes links to other bullying prevention and intervention resources on its website at [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Resources webpage](#).

VI. Students with Disabilities under Section 504

Students with disabilities who are eligible for aids and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, must have access to bullying prevention and intervention programs, activities, and protections.⁷ Pursuant to Section 504, no student with a disability may be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any of a school's programs.⁸ This includes the district or schoolwide bullying prevention and intervention curricula, programs, services, or initiatives. Under Section 504, schools must ensure that any 504-eligible

student, regardless of the nature or severity of the student's disability, receives a free appropriate public education. Schools must provide services and/or accommodations in academic, non-academic, and extra-curricular programs and activities in such a manner as is necessary to afford the student equal access and opportunity.⁹

Closing

In closing, the Department acknowledges the challenges faced by schools and families when dealing with the issues of bullying, harassment, and teasing of all students and, most particularly, students with disabilities. The Department is continuing to develop resources for schools to use to implement the requirements of the bullying prevention and intervention law, and to support districts' and schools' comprehensive efforts to ensure safe and supportive learning environments for all students. Resources focusing on bullying prevention and intervention are available on the Department's website at [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Resources webpage](#). Working together, we can help to ensure that all students are able to access a free and appropriate education in a safe, civil, and supportive learning environment.

¹ [Session Laws: Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010](#)

² [Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan](#)

³ [Behavioral Health and Public Schools Self-Assessment Tool for Schools website](#)

⁴ The bullying prevention and intervention law requires the Department to publish guidelines for implementing social and emotional learning curricula by June 30, 2011. This timeline is contained in Section 16 of the [bullying prevention and intervention law](#).

⁵ 603 CMR 28.04 (2)(a)(2)(ii) (emphasis added).

⁶ [The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#) is an organization formed in 1994 that provides national and international leadership to enhance scientific research on social and emotional learning (SEL) and to expand the effective practice of SEL in schools. SEL is defined by CASEL and in the bullying prevention and intervention law (Section 16), as the process by which children acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and constructively handle challenging social situations.

⁷ Sections 7 and 8 of the bullying prevention and intervention law do not apply to a student identified as a student with a disability under Section 504, because Sections 7 and 8 apply solely to students eligible for special education services under c. 71B.

⁸ Section 504 applies to programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. 34 CFR 104.4.

⁹ Bullying conduct may also constitute harassment under Section 504 and violate a student's civil rights. For more information, see [October 26, 2010 Dear Colleague letter](#) from U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

IPSWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Public Involvement

In order to involve a wide range of constituents to share in the development of the Ipswich Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, a number of meetings were scheduled and a draft committee was formed. Members of the committee created to formulate The Plan include the Superintendent of Schools, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services (Special Education Director), the Ipswich High School Principal, the Ipswich Middle School Assistant to the Principal, the Doyon Elementary School Principal, and the Social Worker for the Winthrop Elementary School. This committee includes Central Office, a representative from each building, special education, the school resource officer and a member of the Ipswich Teachers Association.

A draft of The Plan was presented to the Ipswich School Committee Policy Sub-Committee involving several School Committee members. Their review of The Plan was followed by a forum opened to all members of the community. An invitation was sent by each building Principal to all parents of Ipswich students. The forum was also mentioned in the local newspaper and posted on the school's website. That evening presentation/discussion was designed to present the Draft Plan and to elicit comments and feedback. In addition, the Administrative Team for the district reviewed The Plan as an agenda item at a regularly scheduled meeting.

The final step before submitting The Plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was the presentation to the Ipswich School Committee at a regularly scheduled public meeting, televised to the entire community.

B. Accessing Needs and Resources

In developing the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the Ipswich Public Schools District accessed information from a major student survey conducted by an outside consultant (working with the Principals) in the Spring of 2009. This comprehensive survey was conducted in all four schools in the district. A large sampling was used in each of the four buildings with a wide range of questions. Significant emphasis in the study focused on bullying, safety, violence and general feelings, student's objective responses and their written comments. Each school's data is different and therefore the individual decisions they make on practices, culture and services vary.

As a school system, we plan to conduct student surveys every two years with the 2011-2012 school year being the next survey target. A sufficient sample of the populations of each school in the district will provide survey data to help us enhance our programs and responses. Data gleaned from the survey will be shared with the Principal, School Leadership Team, Faculty, Administration Team, and School Councils. We will continue to have a consultant work with us to design the survey instrument and help collate and analyze the data. The consultant will provide feedback to each school and assess new data compared to earlier survey data.

C. Planning and Oversight

1. The following information provides a framework from which schools in the Ipswich Public Schools will deal with information and planning regarding bullying.

Each Principal or designee will receive reports from any source which alleges bullying. Each school will use a similar reporting form and investigating form to ensure a thorough and consistent response to a bullying report. Reports from staff members are required to be in writing on the approved form. Reports may be received orally or anonymously from students and parents. Once a report is received, the Principal or designee will investigate using a pre-approved form. The form will detail dates and times of any witness interviews and the substance of that information. Interviews with the target and/or aggressor will also be detailed on the reporting form. A brief narrative of the alleged bullying and a summary of the validity or lack of evidence of bullying will be detailed. Where appropriate, contact with parents will be noted and dated as will any information to the School Resource Officer or to the Superintendent of Schools. The form will include the action taken to resolve the allegation or to deal with the aggressor.

2. A summary report of bullying activity will be prepared annually by each Principal. This summary report will provide the basis for developing curriculum and interventions for the following school year. The summary reports will be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools who will prepare a district-wide overview of bullying activities and related actions taken by the individual schools. This information will be shared with the Administration Team and then used as a factor in preparing an annual district training plan.

Data from these annual reports will be compared annually to assess patterns, concerns or improvements in dealing with bullying on either a school or district-wide basis.

The Superintendent of Schools will prepare an annual report to the School Committee providing them with an overview of bullying incidents and detailing progress made over time to reduce or eliminate bullying.

3. Each school will keep either a paper or electronic record of the reporting and investigation reports. An annual report to the Superintendent of Schools will detail the number of bullying reports, the results of investigations and the specifics of actions taken to deal with the aggressor and end the acts of bullying.

4. The Ipswich Public Schools Administration Team will annually plan for the professional development that will take place as a district and within each school. The planning and preparation will include: (1) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (2) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (3) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target and witnesses to bullying; (4) research findings on bullying including information about specific categories of students at risk for bullying in the school environment; (5) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and (6) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

5. In order to prepare to meet the needs of targets and aggressors, each school will create a committee involving school counselors, social workers, psychologists and administrators. These committees will devise interventions, remediation and support

strategies to both assist targets and to educate or reform aggressors. Targets and aggressors will have access to information and counseling. Aggressors will be required to participate in an intervention plan dealing with the uniqueness of their bullying activities.

6. Each individual school in the district in conjunction with the District Administrative Team will design age appropriate curriculum to be utilized in that building. Curriculum devised by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be examined and enhanced by locally produced curriculum. In focusing on developmentally appropriate information and strategies, it is expected that the curriculum will vary greatly on a K-12 basis. Once the curricula are devised, each school will select appropriate places in the curriculum as a whole in which bullying instruction will be included.

7. An Ad Hoc Committee comprised of administrators, teachers, counselors and the school resource officer will develop policies and protocols to deal with bullying. The policies and protocols will be submitted to the Policy Committee (a sub-committee of the School Committee), for their review and approval. The policies and protocols will be acted upon and adopted by the full Ipswich School Committee. The District Internet Safety Policy will be reviewed and revised based on the modifications of the Bullying Law.

In each school building, the Principal is charged with the responsibility of introducing The Plan and making certain that all aspects are included in the daily operation of the school building. By extension, the Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the compliance of the District as a whole in all aspects of The Plan including professional development, age appropriate curriculum and thorough reporting and investigation practices.

8. On an annual basis, the Principal of each school, in concert with the faculty and School Council, should amend the student handbooks to remain consistent with modifications resulting from the Bullying and Intervention Plan. Principals are responsible for updating and keeping current the staff handbooks in each school.

9. On a building basis, each Principal will make diligent efforts to keep parents informed about bullying and the bullying law, interventions to reduce bullying and other correspondence as necessary. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for notifying parents and members of the School Committee so that they are kept current and informed regarding all aspects of bullying. The Superintendent provide updates to the School Committee on an annual basis.

10. The District Administrative Teams will annually review and update the Bullying and Intervention Plan. Updates will be done more frequently if information or patterns of behavior necessitate more immediate modifications.

D. Priority Statement

The Ipswich Public Schools expects all members of the school community, including but not limited to students, families, teachers, staff, and administrators, to work together respectfully and to show compassion for individual differences. We understand that knowledge and empathy are the most effective means to combat harassment and prevent dangerous behaviors. We are committed to the creation and maintenance of safe learning environments that are free of bullying and disruptive behavior, and are able to promote learning, especially for vulnerable student populations. We will take steps to provide our students with the skills and tools necessary for protection against bullying, harassment, and teasing. This

commitment will be an integral part of all aspects of our school and community, including curricula, instruction, student activities, and professional development.

The Ipswich Public Schools will not tolerate behaviors that compromise our safe learning environment. We will investigate complaints and take prompt action against those whose behaviors are disruptive in order to restore a sense of safety for all. We will collaborate with families, community members, community agencies, and law enforcement to prevent incidents of aggression and to comply with the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Annual Staff Training

At the beginning of each school year, the Ipswich Public Schools will provide mandatory training for all staff as it relates to the Bullying and Intervention Plan. Training will be provided in each school as part of the initial staff development days that precede the first reporting day for students each year. The training will include an overview of the process of reporting and investigating any bullying complaints. The process for reporting and related reporting forms will be reviewed. The details of the Investigation Process and the resulting actions will be reviewed for all staff.

Staff training will include specific information about the age-appropriate curricula that will be offered at all grades in each school.

Staff who join the school after the training has been completed will be provided equivalent training unless they can demonstrate having received training in an acceptable and comparable program within the preceding two years.

The district will provide a similar training program for all bus drivers, monitors, cafeteria workers, custodians and central office staff.

B. Ongoing Professional Development

Professional development will be provided within each school building to build awareness and skills needed to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of the school wide training(s) will be informed by research and may include information on the following topics.

- (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- (ii) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address the prevention and response to bullying for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). This training would be particularly focused towards students

who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders and/or those students whose disability includes social skills deficits.

Additional areas of training will be based on the needs and concerns identified by staff and may include:

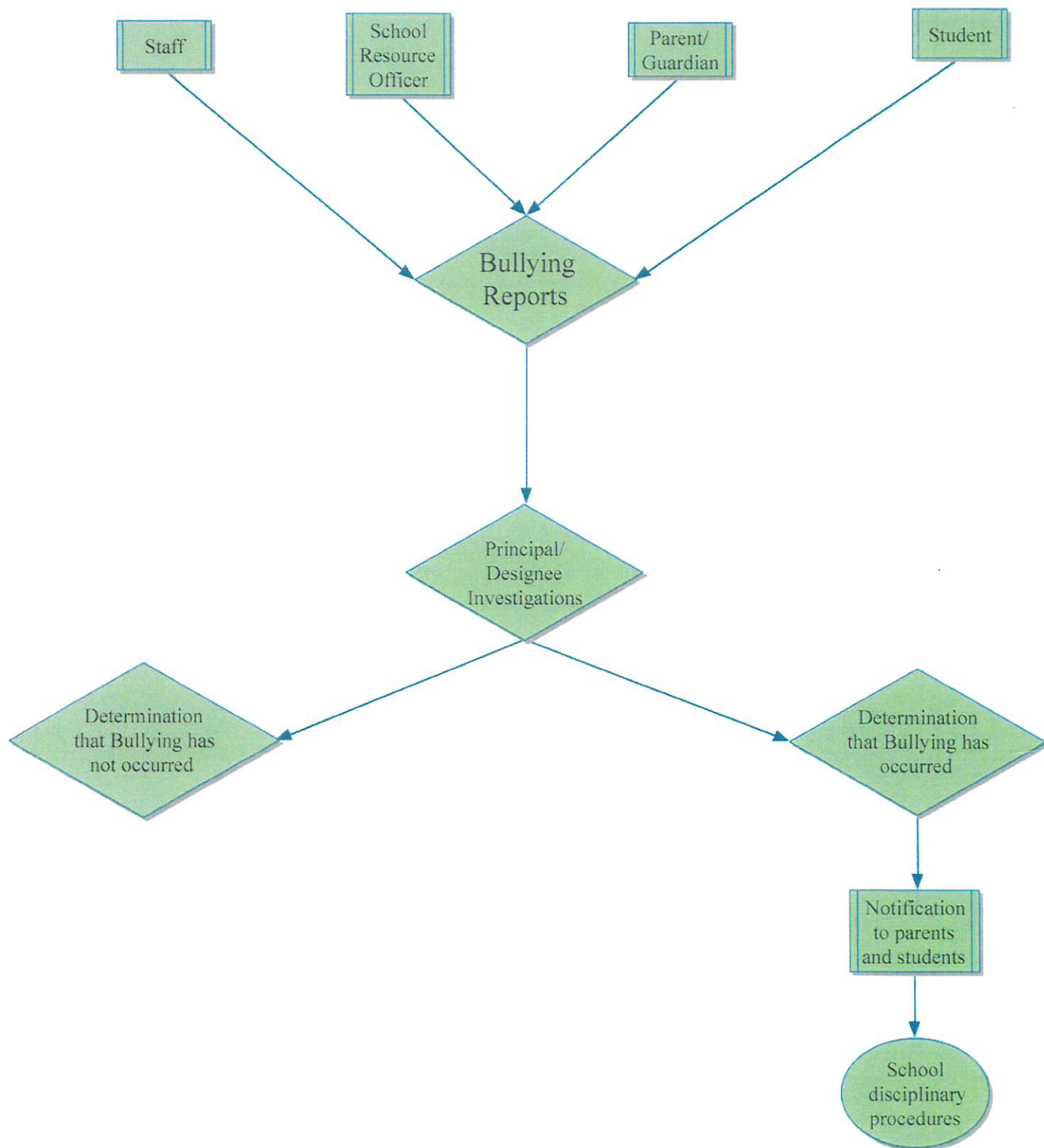
- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering a respect for diversity and difference;
- building collaborative relationships and communicating with parents;
- teaching and modeling social skills (i.e. anger management, conflict resolution, and empathy for others);
- utilizing positive behavioral intervention;
- fostering student leadership and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

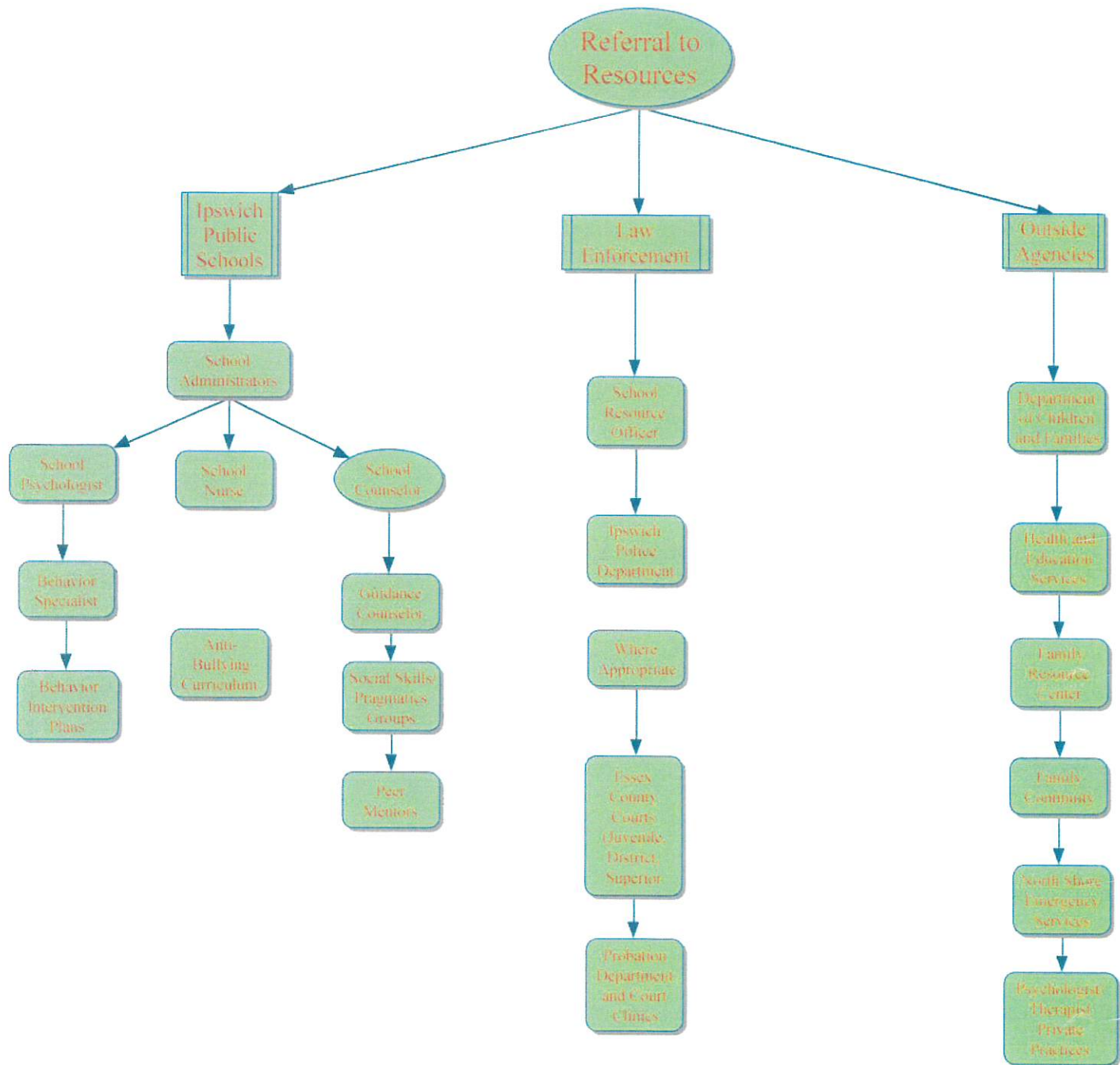
C. Written Notice to Staff:

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be published in the school handbooks and posted on the school web site.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Identifying Resources





Ipswich Public Schools has identified internal, law enforcement, and outside agency resources to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors and their families. The Ipswich Public Schools Administration Team will annually review staffing needs and programs at each of the district's schools to foster positive school environments to address the twin goals of early intervention and intensive remediation/education services. In response to the data collected regarding bullying incidents in the district and the school survey data, the Administrative Team may adopt new curricula, reorganize staffing, establish safety planning teams and update its list of community-based resources to support targets, aggressors and their families.

B. Counseling and Other Services.

Ipswich Public Schools has identified local resources (foreign language teachers, community volunteers) to address diverse linguistic needs. Catholic Charities has also been identified as an outside agency able to provide translation/interpretation services. In order to address culturally appropriate needs, Ipswich Public Schools will develop a database of agencies and providers in the general North Shore area who provide culturally-sensitive services. For Medicaid-eligible students, Ipswich Public Schools will make referrals to the local Community Service Agency ("CSA"), Health and Education Services/Wraparound Services.

C. Students with Disabilities.

The Pupil Personnel Director of the Ipswich Public Schools has provided training relative to M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, to the Special Education Program Managers in each of the district's schools. The Program Managers oversee the delivery of special education services and convene TEAM meetings as required by state and federal special education law. For students whose disabilities include Autism Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome), as well as for students who have social skills/pragmatics deficits, the Program Manager will discuss at the yearly TEAM meetings whether the student has a disability that affects social skills development or whether the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of his/her disability. If the TEAM determines that the student is not at risk of bullying (either as a target or an aggressor), the Program Manager/TEAM Chairperson shall note the TEAM's decision in the Additional Information section of the student's Individualized Educational Plan ("I.E.P.") and shall also include that information in the Notice of Proposed School District Action (Form N1) which summarizes the action proposed by the district. If the TEAM determines that the student is at risk of bullying (either as a target or an aggressor), the Program Manager/TEAM Chairperson shall note the TEAM's decision in the Additional Information section of the student's Individualized Educational Plan ("I.E.P.") and shall also include that information in the Notice of Proposed School District Action (Form N1) which summarizes the action proposed by the district. The Program Manager/TEAM Chairperson will also facilitate a discussion by the TEAM as to the information and services which should be included in the I.E.P. to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

The services may include, but not be limited to, functional behavioral assessments, behavior intervention plans, social skills/pragmatics groups and counseling.

D. Referral to Outside Services.

Ipswich Public Schools, through its school psychologists, school counselors/social workers, and guidance counselors refer students and families to community-based treatment services on an as-needed basis. The clinician speaks with the student and his/her parents, secures written parental consent to disclose confidential information to an outside treatment provider and makes the referral to the outside agency via telephone and/or email. The school clinician provides the student and his/her parents with written notice of the name, address and telephone number of the outside agency from which treatment is sought and provides follow-up contact to ensure that the referral process has been completed successfully and treatment is being obtained. If the student and/or parents are not successful in connecting with the outside agency on a timely basis, the school clinician provides additional treatment agencies for the family's consideration.

Current Outside Agency Resources include, but are not limited to:

Ipswich Police Department

15 Elm Street
Ipswich, MA 01938
Tel. (978) 356-4343
School Resource Officer: Shawn Smith

Health & Education Services, Inc.

Psychiatric Emergency
Haverhill Area (978) 521-7777
Salem Area (978) 744-1585

Outpatient Clinics

Beverly (978) 921-1190
Gloucester (978) 283-0000
Salem (978) 745-2440
Haverhill (978) 373-1126
Ipswich (978) 356-1776
Lawrence (978) 683-3128
Amesbury (978) 388-7032

Family Resource Center – North Shore Medical Center

57 Highland Avenue
Salem, MA 01970
Tel. (978) 745-9007

Family Continuity

360 Merrimack Street, #9
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IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches.

Ipswich Schools bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference;
- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- 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 cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts.

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop 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, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be

recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form¹ and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, the student handbook and other locations determined by the principal or designee.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written 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, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report in writing immediately **(within a maximum of 48 hours)** to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will 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 will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, 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;

¹ See Appendix A for Incident Reporting Form.

identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee 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. (Include locally established student safety planning policies and procedures here.)

2. Obligations to Notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

C. Investigation.

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor,

target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation. (Align this with school or district procedures.)

D. Determinations.

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or 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 notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian 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 report violations.

E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;

- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and 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.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

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

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

2. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent education and resources.

The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs may be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations.

B. Notification requirements.

Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district will post the

Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

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

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:

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

Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

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

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

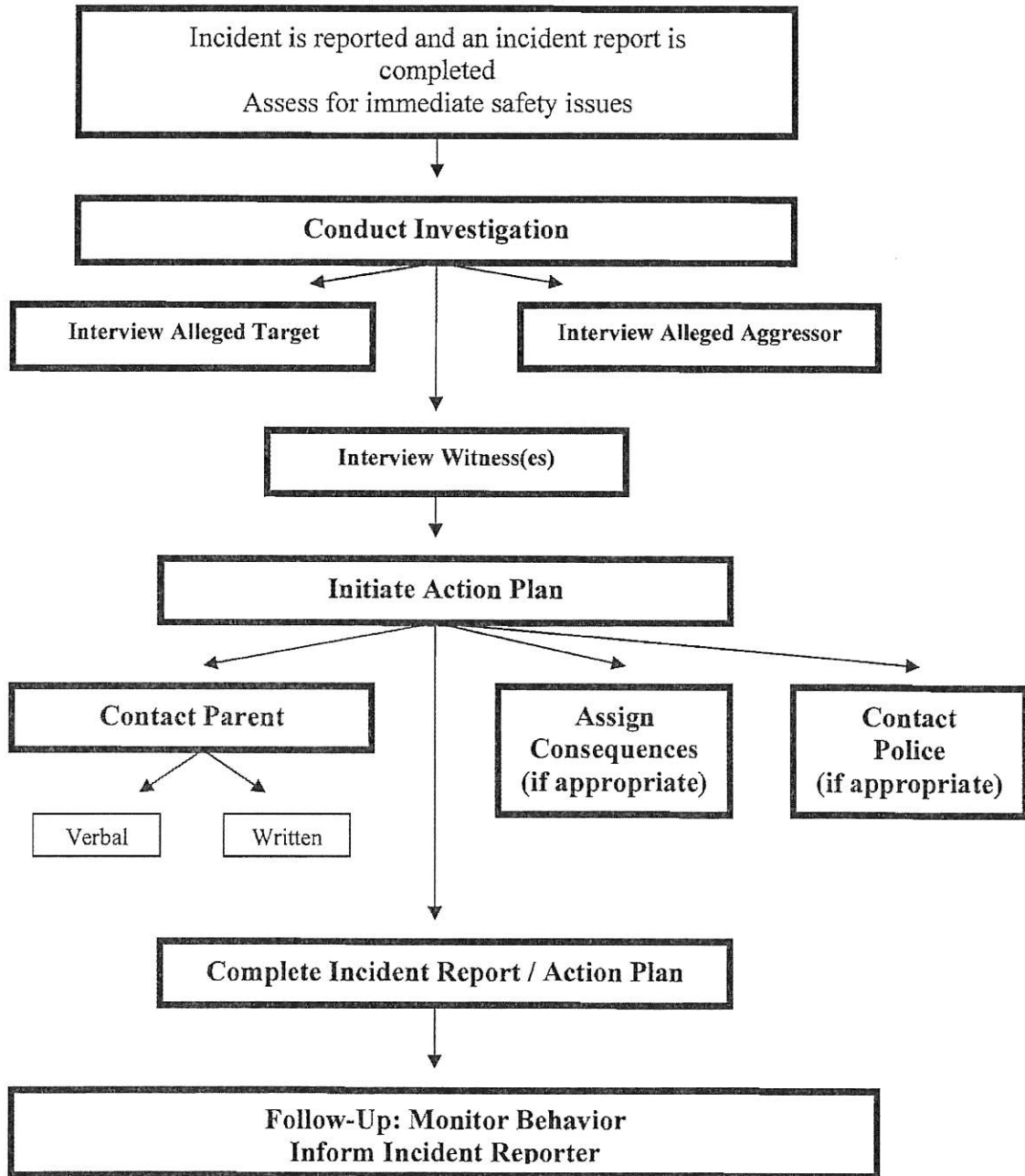
Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, 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.

**Process for Responding to a Report of Bullying
Flow Chart**



Elementary Incident Report Form

Person Completing Form	
Date and Time of Incident	
Who Reported Incident	
Child / Children Involved	
Place of Incident	

Details of Incident	
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To your knowledge, has this occurred before? Yes ____ No ____	Are there immediate safety or transportation concerns? Yes ____ No ____
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If needed, describe incident or concerns in more detail

Action Plan

To be completed by principal / assistant principal / designated staff

Date	
Interviewed Alleged Target	
Interviewed Child Accused of Aggression	
Interviewed Witnesses	
Summary of Findings	
Action Taken	
Contact Made with Parent ____/____/____	Reported to Superintendent ____ Reported to School Resource Officer ____ Verbal ____ Written ____
Signature of Principal / Designee	

Ipswich Middle School Incident Report Form

This report must be submitted to the principal or assistant to the principal as soon as possible.

Target of Bullying (name)	
Alleged aggressor (s)	

What Happened?

Date and Time of Incident	
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Location of Incident	
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Witness(es)

Previous Incidents:

Details of Incident:	
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Has this occurred before?	Do you have immediate safety concerns? Bus concerns/ walking home concerns?
	Yes No

If needed, describe incident in more detail or add pertinent information:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Ipswich Middle School Investigation Form

Date of Investigation	
Investigator	

List Persons Interviewed: 1. 2. 3. 4.	Date and Time:
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Contact made with Parent (s): Date and Time:

Interview Narrative:

Action Taken:

Contact made with Parent (s):		
Date:	Email?	Verbal?

Follow Up Conferences? Plans in place to prevent further incidents:

Was the incident reported to the Superintendent?	Yes	No	
Was the incident reported to the SRO?	Yes	No	Details:

Date of final meeting with student:

Signature of Investigator:	Date:
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Ipswich High School Incident Report Form

This report must be submitted to the Principal or Assistant Principal as soon as possible.

Target of Bullying (name)	
Alleged aggressor (s)	
What happened?	
Date and Time of Incident	
Location of Incident	
Witness(es)	
Previous Incidents:	
Details of Incident:	
Has this occurred before?	
Do you have immediate safety concerns?	
Bus concerns/ walking home concerns?	
Yes No	
If needed, describe incident in more detail or add pertinent information:	
Signature:	Date:

Ipswich High School Investigation Form

Date of Investigation	
Investigator	

List Persons Interviewed: 1. 2. 3. 4.	Date and Time:
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Contact made with Parent (s): Date and Time:

Interview Narrative:
Witness list:

Action Taken:

Contact made with Parent (s):		
Date:	Email?	Verbal?

Follow Up Conferences? Plans in place to prevent further incidents:

Was the incident reported to the Superintendent?	Yes	No	Details:
Was the incident reported to the SRO?	Yes	No	

Date of final meeting with student:

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____