

# **Plainville Public Schools**

## **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

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## I. LEADERSHIP

Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference.

Leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing this plan.

### A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, §370, this Plan was developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. Upon completion of a draft document the Plan was posted on the district website for public comment with notice provided to all groups listed above. The draft Plan and all comments were presented to the School Committee prior to the Plan's adoption.

### B. Assessing Needs and Resources

School leaders will survey students, staff, parents, and guardians on school climate and school safety annually and collect and analyze the data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying. This information will help to identify patterns of behavior and areas of concern and will inform decision-making for preventive strategies.

**At least once every four years beginning with the 2015/2016 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey. Additionally, the district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.**

### C. Planning and Oversight

Each principal shall be responsible for receiving reports on bullying for his/her assigned school. The principal shall also be responsible for collecting and analyzing school data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes. In addition the principal shall follow district policy as it relates to recording and tracking incidents of bullying.

Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by law shall be the responsibility of the districts' Professional Development Planning Team.

Choosing and implementing the curricula that the district will use will be the responsibility of the principals subject to approval by the Superintendent and School Committee.

Amending student and staff handbooks, leading parent or family engagement efforts and preparing parent information materials shall be the responsibility of the district leadership team (superintendent, principals, administrators) who shall also be responsible for reviewing and updating the Plan each year.

#### D. Priority Statement

The schools and the district expect that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (Plan) is a comprehensive approach to address bullying and cyber-bullying, and the schools and district are committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established a Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for implementation and oversight of the Plan for their school with the Superintendent being responsible for the Plan at the district level.

**We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become 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. The district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.**

## II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Annual training for all school staff and employees on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. 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, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.
- B. Ongoing professional development. The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff and employees to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the

content of schoolwide and districtwide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- (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 cyber-bullying; and
- (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

C. Written notice to staff. The district will provide all staff and employees with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

### III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

#### A. Identify Resources

In addition to the positive school environment that is supported by all of the teaching and support staff, students may access counseling through the schools' psychologists. If a

student receives counseling services through an outside agency, school staff routinely work with families to solicit releases to directly communicate with outside providers and with this authorization, communication is established between the school program and outside providers to enhance the effectiveness of the services. Should a student require additional counseling or other agency resources, staff work closely with families to identify the need and provide access to community resources.

Plainville Public Schools has also identified resources for families of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

#### B. Counseling and Other Services

As indicated above, counseling and positive behavior support services are available for all students in the Plainville Public Schools. Should behavioral incident reports or bullying incident reports indicate a need for further counseling supports, the administration will make an immediate referral to one of the psychologists. Additionally, positive behavioral support plans may be developed or modified based upon incident reporting through the intervention support of the administration and/or staff.

Should acts of bullying occur, staff will identify common times students are together and work to increase supervision or separate students to the greatest extent possible. Staff may also refer students for counseling. This counseling may include 1:1 or group sessions that focus on social skills.

School psychologists, along with administration, will work with families to identify an action plan which includes an assessment component if warranted, implemented on a case by case basis. The need for a behavior management plan will be assessed; and if the bullying behavior or possible victimization becomes a pattern for students with identified special needs, it will be addressed in the student's Individualized Education Plan.

#### C. Students with Disabilities

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, §3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team must consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

#### D. Referral to Outside Services

In the event that a referral for outside services is deemed appropriate, the administration and/or school psychologist will work with parents to obtain consent to communicate with outside service providers. These determinations will be made on an individual basis.

#### IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- 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 cyber-bullying, 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; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

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 and prevention initiatives:

- 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, 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 Form.

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, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

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 immediately 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; 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 Plainville Police Department representative, if any, 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.

- 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.

**The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.**

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 district's code of conduct. It shall also be applied in accordance with the rights and responsibilities of students, including the rights of due process and privacy.

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.

### 3. 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. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

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 will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, 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.

The plan shall apply to students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals.

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. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM

**Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System \*PRS). That information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pgs>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.**

## IX. 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 or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an

extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a 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.

## X. 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.

## APPENDIX A: BULLYING POLICY

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### BULLYING PREVENTION

The Plainville Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying. For the purpose of this policy whenever the term bullying is used, it is to denote bullying or cyber-bullying.

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

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

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- phone
- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, text messaging or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and/or cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Plainville Public Schools;

Bullying is prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Plainville school district if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school

### **Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

### **Reporting**

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviours are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.



Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

### **Investigation Procedures**

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall consult with the Plainville Police Department and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified and assume responsibility for this action.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

### **Retaliation**

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

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

### **Target Assistance**

The Plainville Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

### **Training and Assessment**

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 6 students.

### **Publication and Notice**

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the Plainville Public Schools website.

REFERENCES:           Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's  
Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

LEGAL REFS.:           Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended  
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission  
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
603 CMR 26.00  
MGL 71:37O  
MGL 265:43, 43A

MGL 268:13B  
MGL 269:14A

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination  
ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing  
JK, Student Discipline  
4 of 4

Revised: October 22, 2013)

## APPENDIX B: HARASSMENT OR BULLYING FORM

This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act  
**DO NOT FILE IN THE STUDENT'S CUMULATIVE RECORD**

### PLAINVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS HARASSMENT OR BULLYING REPORTING FORM

**DIRECTIONS:** Harassment and bullying are serious and will not be tolerated. If you are a student, staff member, the parent/guardian of a student, a close relative of the student, or a volunteer/visitor, and wish to report an incident of alleged harassment and/or bullying, complete this form and return it to the school principal. All school employees are required to report alleged violations. Contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time. This form can be completed anonymously by omitting signature and name. **Every** reported act of bullying or harassment will be investigated, and parents will be informed.

Name of Student Victim (please print) :

School:

Age:

Grade:

Today's Date:

Name(s) of alleged offender(s) (If known):

Age Grade

School

Is he/she a student?

☐ Yes

☐ No

On what date(s) did the incident happen?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/Day/Year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/Day/Year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/Day/Year

Where did the incident happen? (Choose all that apply)

☐ On school property

☐ At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property

☐ On a school bus

☐ On the way to/from school

☐ At the bus stop

☐ On the computer

Place an X next to the statement(s) that best describes what happened? (Choose all that apply)

☐ Teasing

☐ Threat

☐ Stalking

☐ Theft

☐ Cyberbullying

☐ Social exclusion

☐ Intimidation

☐ Physical Violence

☐ Public humiliation

What did the alleged offender(s) say or do?

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

Did a physical injury result from this incident? Place an X next to one of the following:

☐ No

☐ Yes, but it did not require medical attention

☐ Yes, and it required medical attention

Was the student victim absent from school as a result of this incident?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how many days was the student victim absent from school as a result of this incident? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any additional information you would like to provide?

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

NAME OF PERSON REPORTING INCIDENT:

Telephone:

email (optional):

Place an X in the appropriate box:

☐ Student

☐ Staff

☐ Parent/Guardian

☐ Close adult relative

☐ Visitor

☐ Volunteer

Signature

Date:

## APPENDIX C: INCIDENT FOLLOW-UP FORM

### Plainville Public Schools Incident Follow-Up Form

\_\_\_\_\_ **Interviewed target of aggression**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ supported him/her, i.e. affirmed his/her feelings

\_\_\_\_\_ brainstormed on solutions for avoiding aggression

\_\_\_\_\_ reminded him/her to report aggression

\_\_\_\_\_ recruited peers to befriend him/her

\_\_\_\_\_ notified parent of target

\_\_\_\_\_ notified teacher of target

\_\_\_\_\_ notified other staff including: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ referred for counseling

\_\_\_\_\_ **Interviewed child(ren) / staff member(s) accused of aggression**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Confirmation of incident** (if not witnessed by an adult): \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**If no, proceed to interview of witnesses**

\_\_\_\_\_ Interviewed witnesses of aggression

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Discussed importance of reporting incidents of aggression

Confirmation of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**If aggression is confirmed, is this**

\_\_\_\_\_ **1st offense**

\_\_\_\_\_ **2nd offense**

\_\_\_\_\_ **3rd offense**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Other**

**Consequence assigned:**

---

\_\_\_ reviewed what will happen if behavior continues

**When and with whom will "Think About It Form" be completed:**

---

\_\_\_ **notified** parent of accused

(When parents notified, please point out child's positive behavior, i.e. telling the truth, feeling remorse, etc.)

\_\_\_ notified teacher of accused

\_\_\_ notified other staff including \_\_\_\_\_

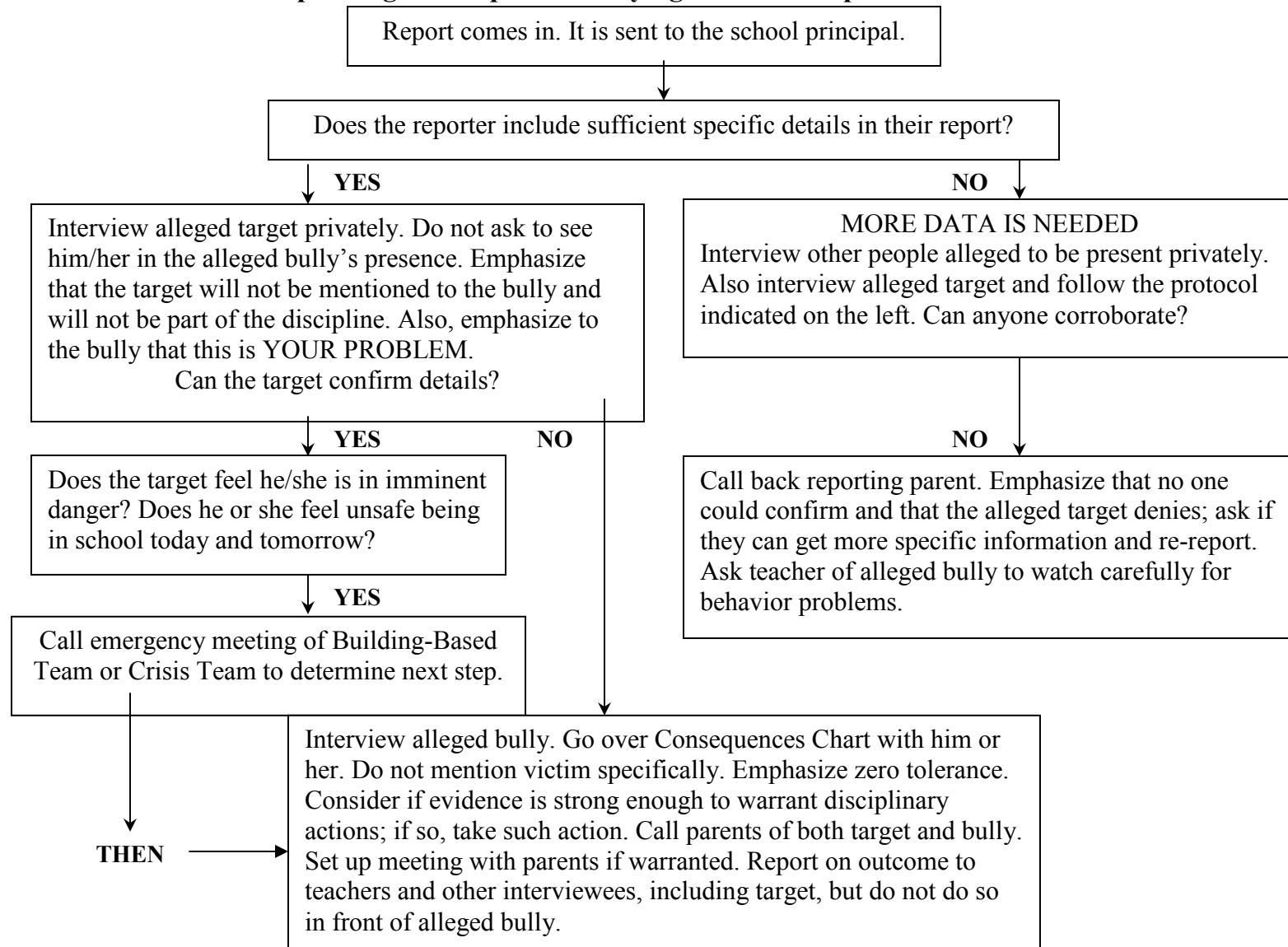
\_\_\_ referred for counseling

Name of Person Completing this Report \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D: RESPONSE FLOW CHART

### Plainville Public Schools Responding to a Report of Bullying Protocol: Report from a Parent



APPENDIX E: PARENT COMMUNICATION FORM

**PLAINVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
PARENT COMMUNICATION FORM (PCF)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As children develop through the elementary years, they are learning how to interact with others and how to meet their needs in positive ways. I am writing to let you know that your child, \_\_\_\_\_, had a learning experience in school today. We believed it was important to share this information with you.

1. What was reported

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---

2. How your child described his/her actions

---

---

---

3. If necessary, how I investigated and what I determined happened

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---

---

---

4. What consequences assigned for having engaged in this behavior

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5. What will happen if this behavior occurs again

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Please sign and return this letter to school in an envelope addressed to me as soon as possible. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.

---

Principal/Designated Staff Date

---

Parent Date

## APPENDIX F: THINK ABOUT IT FORM

### THINK ABOUT IT

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What did you do?** *Please be specific and start with "I."*

**What was wrong with this behavior?** *Whom did you hurt? How did you know you hurt them?*

**What made you do this?** *What problem were you trying to solve? Did you want attention? Did you want to be left alone? Were you trying to have fun? Were you already mad about something?*

**Next time you're feeling this way, how will you act differently without hurting anyone?**