

**BULLYING PREVENTION PLAN**  
**NARRAGANSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Policy and Plan**

The Narragansett Regional School District (NRSD) has formed a Bullying Prevention Task Force to prepare a policy and a plan for implementation that prohibits bullying as defined by section 370, c. 71. The Task Force includes the Templeton Police Chief, the Narragansett Resource Officer, Principals, Central Office Staff, Teachers, Guidance Counselors, the Special Education Director, School Committee Members, and Parents.

The Policy passed by the Narragansett Regional School District includes provisions to protect students from bullying and cyber-bullying. The Narragansett Regional School District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. This school district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. In conclusion, this district will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying or cyber-bullying or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in any school-related activities. Members of the NRSD Task Force will be planning a K-12 Bullying Prevention Curriculum due to the DESE in June 2011. A major task in preparing a curriculum is to identify evidence-based programs, speakers, and materials/resources for parents and staff.

The Bullying Prevention Policy and Plan provide a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. This school district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. The content of the Bullying Prevention Plan are as follows:

**Annual Staff Training**

Annual staff training will include an overview of the steps that the Principal/Designee will follow upon a receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation and an overview of the Bullying Prevention Curricula to be offered at all grade levels. The training and subsequent professional development will be for the purpose of creating a school climate that promotes safety and respect for differences. Professional development will assist staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. A flow chart for reporting bullying and moving through the process is attached. In addition, each year, there will be a District-wide training and overview on bullying and cyber-bullying prevention. A staff member trained by Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) will conduct this training each year.

### On-Going Professional Development

Each year all staff members will receive written notice of the Plan, Policy, and Curriculum and provide their signature stating that they have read the Plan, Policy and Curriculum. Each school's Handbook will have written notice of the Bullying Prevention Plan and Policy. The Plan, Policy, and Curriculum will be available on the District's and Schools' websites. Discussions, DVDs such as "Bullying and Consequences for High School Students" or "Recognizing and Reining In Bullying in Elementary Schools", etc. will be on the agenda for staff meetings at individual schools during the year in addition to the District-wide training. Other DVDs for consideration are: "Bullying, Hazing, and Parents" or "A Guide for Teachers – Bullying in the Classroom".

### Access to Resources and Services

Each school in the Narragansett District has access to counseling services by school counselors and adjustment counselors. The Middle School and High School each have two school counselors and one adjustment counselor. There are two school counselors servicing the four elementary school buildings. Baldwinville Elementary School serves K-4; Phillipston Memorial School serves PreK-4; Templeton Center School serves K-2; East Templeton School serves 3-4. The School District has one psychologist whose primary function is to test students for the purposes of identifying eligibility for special education services. Information about bullying prevention will be provided at child study teams at each school facility. The District's Crisis Intervention Team will continue to provide its membership and subsequent staff population with the tools to recognize and understand the severity and implications of bullying as a danger to students. The District's involvement in Response to Intervention (RTI) provides further commitment of the District's goal of a bullying-free environment. Even the annual Restraint Training for staff communicates the negative and injurious fall-out of acts of bullying. Allowance of such behavior destroys the positive climate of a school seeking to provide equity for all students.

Counseling opportunities are available to all students. Recently, the District created a Director of Guidance position. The major purpose of this position is to bring together the counselors and create a unified and consistent service provision that coordinates the PreK-12 levels. The particulars of the service provisions at each grade level will be completed for the Bullying Prevention Curriculum due to the DESE by June 2011. This planning by the Guidance Department PreK-12 will assure more early intervention, services, and to close the identified service gaps. Meetings of all counselors have already begun. Training will be provided for all counseling staff by our MARC trained facilitator.

In regard to students with disabilities, as required by M.G.L. c. 71B, Section 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of The Acts of 2010, when the I.E.P. Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or that the student may be vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what 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.

There is a protocol for referral to outside services. Referrals are compliant with State laws and policies. Continuous review of such referral protocols is on-going. The District uses the services of You, Inc. to provide outside counseling services to the District. The District has created a program for students transitioning from grades 8 to 9 and from grades 4 to 5 (elementary to middle school). Each student participates in a summer program prior to entering grade 9 while a spring program is provided for grade 5 entrants. High School students from grades 10-12 are asked to volunteer as mentors and are assigned to entering grade 9 students for the year. Team building activities are planned to provide acceptance of all students and to build trust.

#### 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:

- Student sessions on Audio/Visual safety
- Lessons by counseling staff for all students
- Health curriculum lessons all levels
- Contemporary health issues curriculum providing speakers
- Counseling staff trained specifically to deal with bullying issues

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

- 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 behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development
- Using the internet safely
- Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities particularly in their areas of strength

## C. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

### A. Reporting Bullying and Retaliation

- A flow chart for reporting bullying will be in student/staff handbooks and on the website.
- Reports of bullying 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.
- Staff members are required to report immediately to the Principal/Designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.
- Reports made by students, parents/guardians or other individuals who are not District staff members may be made anonymously.
- The District will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including an Incident Reporting Form, and an e-mail address (already available on-line).
- An Incident Reporting Form, Policy and Plan will be included in the beginning of the year packets for students/parents/guardians, as well as in the student and staff Handbooks and on the District website.

#### 1. Reporting by Staff

The reporting flow chart identifies the steps and process for reporting any case of bullying. This flow chart will be on the Narragansett website.

#### 2. Reporting by Students, Parents/Guardians, and Others

The District expects students, parents, 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 and no disciplinary action will be taken.

### B. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

#### 1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal/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. The schools in the District have identified areas of vulnerability in each building.

As an example, the High School has identified stairwells, cafeteria and locker areas as areas of vulnerability. When an allegation of bullying occurs and if deemed necessary a monitor will be assigned to the potentially vulnerable areas during hall passing time.

At the time of such allegations of bullying, all staff, including teachers, specialists and support staff will be notified. Such responses in the classroom or cafeteria may include assigned seating.

The Principal/Designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting students from bullying or retaliation.

## 2. Obligations to Notify Others

### a. Notice to Parents and Guardians

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal/Designee will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor and of the procedures for responding. There may be circumstances in which the Principal/Designee contacts the parents/guardians prior to an 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/Designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify the Principal/Designee of the other school. All communication will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and with 603 CMR 49.00.

### c. Notice to Law Enforcement

The Narragansett Regional School District has a Resource Officer on the premises. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal/Designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal/Designee will notify the Resource Officer on duty. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with local law enforcement.

## C. Investigation

The Principal/Designee, in accordance with District policy, will conduct the investigation of all reports of bullying or retaliation. Students, staff, witnesses, parents/guardians and others, if necessary, will be interviewed. The alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses will be reminded that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

#### D. Determinations

The determination of bullying will be made by the Principal/Designee. The Principal/Designee will take steps to prevent reoccurrence, to determine remedial action required and to insure that the target is not restricted from participating in school activities.

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

#### E. Responses to Bullying

##### a. Teaching Appropriate Behavior through Skills-Building

Upon Principal/Designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Narragansett Regional District, in accordance with the law, will offer a variety of responses for student learning:

- The District will continue to provide counseling sessions and lessons within the health curriculum to reinforce appropriate behavior.
- The District's anti-bullying curriculum will encompass skill-building sessions; activities for students, individually and/or in small groups or larger group settings.
- Content areas within the curriculum such as contemporary health issues, physical education classes, guidance lessons, and health modules will continue to emphasize appropriate behavior.
- Child study teams will emphasize behavior and suggestions for appropriate conduct.
- Centers such as MARC, and YOU, Inc. will be utilized.

##### b. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Principal/Designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Principal/Designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the students involved.

Discipline will be consistent with the Bullying Prevention Plan and the District's code of conduct. Discipline may include manifestation hearings, suspension, expulsion, recommendations for counseling, etc. Dependent upon the nature of the activity, age of the student, there may be adjustments in the school environment to enhance the sense of safety. Meetings at grade level, classroom meetings, assemblies, small group discussions are possible actions taken to restore or maintain a climate of safety.

#### F. Collaboration with Families

Once a month a Parent Advisory Group meets with the Superintendent to review issues and challenges. The topic of Bullying Prevention continues and the Parent Advisory reports discussions with each building Parent Group.

In addition, meetings such as transition from grade 4 to 5, or from grade 8 to 9 will include bullying prevention discussions.

Parent education programs will be offered to each school level, elementary, middle school, high school. Speakers will be invited from our trained MARC staff member and counseling staff.

Resources identified for parent education will be available along with parent hand-outs providing information and contact resource materials. These will be created for the Bullying Prevention Curriculum for parents.

The Narragansett Regional School District will continue to investigate programs, assemblies and speakers who will provide parents/guardians with concrete suggestions for dialogue with their children.

As we continue to develop and write the Bullying Prevention Curriculum, we will explore “evidenced-based” bullying prevention programs. One such “research-based” program of interest is by Jay Banks and is titled, “Stamp Out Bullying”. This five point strategy is easy to share with parents who may, then, share its effective actions with their children.

The five steps are:

- S – Stay away from bullies
- T – Tell someone
- A – Avoid bad situations
- M – Make friends
- P - Project confidence

The NRSB website will provide articles for our community members.

In addition to each school’s handbook, individual schools will provide pamphlets on bullying prevention based upon research articles, practical tips and resources.

The Parent Advisory , PTO, and other parent groups will focus time to provide bullying prevention information at least yearly, in addition to the annual parent meeting, addressing various aspects of bullying prevention.

MARC continues to be a resource along with our trained MARC facilitator.

Each year the NRSB will inform parents/guardians about the anti-bullying curricula used. These curricula will be developed and available by June 2011. Notice to parents/guardians will include information about the dynamics of bullying, cyber-bullying, and on-line safety.

Parents/Guardians will be sent written notice each year about student-related sections of the Plan and the District's internal safety policy. All notices and information available to parents/guardians will be in hard copy and in electronic format. The information including the Policy, Plan and Curriculum will be posted to the website.

#### G. Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

This Plan, the NRSB Policy, and the future Curriculum will begin with a statement of prohibition to bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation.

This prohibition statement will be in the student and staff Handbooks.

The following is the statement to be included:

Acts of bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited:

- 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 the NRSB or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by this school district and
- At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the District. If the acts create a hostile environment or target or infringe on 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.

## H. Definitions:

### Bullying is

- Severe/Repeated – The severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic message, or physical act or gesture toward another student
- Effect – The effects of which are on that other student that cause:
  - ❖ Physical or emotional harm
  - ❖ Damage to his/her property
  - ❖ Him/Her to fear harm or property damage
  - ❖ A hostile environment at school
  - ❖ An infringement on his/her rights at school
  - ❖ A materially and substantially disruption of the educational process

### Cyber-Bullying is

Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means

**BULLYING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE  
PROCESS**

- Annual Notice
    - ❖ Written – including prevention and intervention
    - ❖ Audience – parents/guardians and students
    - ❖ Audience – all school staff
    - ❖ Website – for each school
- ↓
- Bullying Plan must be filed with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by December 31, 2010  
Plan oversight responsibility – Building Principal

Principal

All members of the school staff report any instances of bullying  
(witnessed or awareness)

↓  
Principal

Promptly Investigates

Notify Parents/Guardians of Target(s)/Aggressor(s) and any Student(s) to be questioned.

↓  
Bullying has occurred

→ Notify Superintendent

↓  
Take appropriate disciplinary actions

↓  
Notify parents/guardians of Target(s)/Aggressor(s)

→ Notify Superintendent

↓  
Notify parents/guardians of Target(s)/Aggressor(s) of actions to prevent further incident

↓  
Notify law enforcement if criminal conduct involved

Promptly Investigates

Notify Parents/Guardians of Target(s)/Aggressor(s) and any Student(s) to be questioned.

↓  
No bullying found

↓  
Contact all parties

↓  
Determine any action