Andover Public Schools
30 Whittier Court
Andover, Massachusetts 01810

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
September 2026

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Andover Public Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

I. Introduction

A. Massachusetts General Law

In 2010, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts approved new legislation, *An Act Relative to Bullying* (c. 92, Acts of 2010). Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37O, require schools to take active steps to prevent and respond to bullying. The Andover Public School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (hereinafter, the "Plan") has been updated to reflect M.G.L. c. 71, §37O, as amended by Sections 72 - 74 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of 2013 and Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014.

The Superintendent or their designee is charged with reviewing and updating the Plan biennially. Consultation will include, at a minimum, posting a proposed updated Plan on the APS website and holding a public comment period prior to adoption of an updated Plan.

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or their designee provides the school community, including staff, students, and parents/guardians with written notice of its policies for reporting bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning and building-level administrators (Principals and Assistant Principals), is incorporated in student and staff handbooks and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents/guardians. The Plan can be located on the district website (www.aps1.net) under the "Parent", "Student" and "School Committee" tabs.

The Andover Public School District remains strongly invested in ensuring the safety of all of our students.

B. Definitions Used in the APS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

It is essential for school personnel, students, parents or guardians, law enforcement agencies and other interested parties to use common language.

Aggressor is a student or member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

1. Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
2. Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
3. Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
4. Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
5. 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 means any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation about bullying or has reliable information about bullying.

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

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

Andover's Plan includes a statement prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. This statement is included in the student code of conduct, the student handbook and the staff handbook. These handbooks and codes of conduct are available by level (elementary, middle and high school) on the APS website (www.aps1.net) under the "Parents" or "Students" tabs entitled "Student Handbooks".

C. Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

The Andover School Committee prohibits bullying throughout the Andover Public Schools. The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying. Acts of bullying, which includes cyberbullying, and retaliation, 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 APS; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by APS, 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 APS, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringes 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 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.

D. Purpose of the Plan

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is intended to function as a guide in implementing a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. APS is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies and the community to prevent issues of bullying and retaliation. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. Each APS Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at his/her respective school, with support from the Superintendent and the central administration. If there is a reported bullying incident that involves the principal or assistant principal as the alleged aggressor, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report and taking other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan,

including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. The policies and procedures for investigating such allegations of bullying and retaliation are detailed in Section IV: Processes and Procedures of the Plan.

E. Priority Statement

The Andover Public Schools (APS) expect that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The APS 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.

The Andover Public Schools community understands that members of certain student groups may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, teasing and retaliation 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, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. APS will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment and retaliation and afford protection for all students regardless of legal status. Each TEAM considers Sections 7 and 8 of the law and incorporates the necessary steps into the child's IEP (Individualized Education Plan).

APS will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber- bullying or retaliation in our schools, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore a target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parent or guardian involvement.

F. Problem Resolution System

A parent/guardian who wishes to file a claim/concern or to seek assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). The information can be found at http://www.doe.mass.edu, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781.338.3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Office of the Assistant Superintendent.

II. Sustainability: Professional Development and Training

A. Educators

Andover Public Schools, in accordance with the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, 37O, is committed to providing ongoing training and professional development regarding anti-bullying and retaliation for all staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals.

1. Annual Staff Training on the Plan

Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be 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 previous two years. Faculty training will be offered through building-based staff meeting(s). New hires will be trained through the Mentor/Mentee Program. Training for other staff will be determined by administration.

Annual training for all school staff 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 and district.

2. On-going Professional Development

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, respect for differences and personal dignity. 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 the professional development will be informed by research and include information on raising the awareness and responsibility of staff to the ways that their behavior could intentionally or unintentionally cause embarrassment or humiliation to students and:

- Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying and retaliation
- Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying and retaliation incidents

  Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among aggressors, targets and witnesses to bullying
- Research findings on bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment 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, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying
- Best practices in the field of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation prevention
- Legal issues and responsibilities related to bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation
- Community concerns about bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation as expressed through School Committee meetings, parent surveys, student surveys and through other means.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying of and retaliation against students who identify or are perceived to identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Professional development will also address issues specific to students with disabilities and items relative to bullying prevention and intervention that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism and students whose disability affects social skills development.

3. Improving School-Wide, District-Wide and Community Climate by:
   - Maintaining a safe, caring and respectful classroom for all students and staff
   - Engaging students in school and/or classroom planning and decision making
   - Promoting and modeling the use of a common, respectful language
   - Establishing and communicating key definitions (conflict versus bullying)
   - Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and differences
   - Implementing a whole school approach that builds and sustains relationships and communication opportunities between and among staff, students and families
   - Constructively managing classroom behaviors using positive behavioral intervention strategies and immediate response procedures
   - Applying constructive, consistent disciplinary practices
   - Standardizing and communicating reporting actions
   - Defining and utilizing the "check-in" technique
   - Teaching students social competency skills including positive, assertive communication, anger management, stress management, empathy for others and personal advocacy
   - Educating staff and families on student trends in on-line usage focusing on cyberbullying behaviors; frequencies, types, motives and gender differences; and
   - Educating staff and those responsible for implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting and bullying behaviors.

4. Written notification to staff
   The District will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, in school handbooks as well as in the district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

B. Collaboration with Families

The APS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of each of our schools as well as the district to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration. Provisions for informing parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the schools include: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying and retaliation; and (iii) online safety and cyberbullying. Parents and guardians will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Andover Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The district will be sensitive to and respectful of age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic and cultural make-up of students and their families.

1. Parent education and resources

Andover Public Schools will partner with the District's parent organizations to support 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. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Parent-to- Parent, Special Education Parent Advisory Council and similar organizations.

2. Notification requirements

Each year Andover Public Schools will inform parents and 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.

3. Reporting Bullying

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the principal or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously. See Appendix J for a list of schools and phone numbers.

School staff members must report immediately to the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessionals.

When the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly investigate. If the school principal or designee determines that a violation of the district's anti-bullying policy has occurred, they shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of an aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

III. Comprehensive Social Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention Program

A. Access to Resources and Services

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families and others are addressed. Andover's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs.

1. Identifying resources

Andover's Plan includes a process to identify the resources that are available in every school to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors and their families. These resources are separate from the people who could deliver them. Building principals, in collaboration with social workers and school counselors, will identify these resources. The Plan also includes a process to identify a team of people who could be available as an intervention team. Schools will conduct an annual review of staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments, focusing on early interventions and intensive services, develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. This may include adopting new evidence-based curricula, reorganizing staff, establishing safety planning teams and identifying other agencies that can provide services.

2. Counseling and other supportive services

Social workers, school counselors, board certified behavior analysts ("BCBAs"), nurses, school psychologists, speech pathologists, special educators, special education program heads and child study team members can help to identify a variety of therapeutic and skill-based services to students within the educational setting that include emotional support, risk assessment, crisis intervention and help with community-based counseling referrals when appropriate.

Social workers, school counselors, BCBAs, nurses, school psychologists, special educators and special education program heads can also provide parents and teachers with resources and support to address students' academic, emotional and behavioral concerns. Examples of interventions to help address students' needs include individually focused curricula, social skills groups and behavioral intervention plans. Every school has a Student Support Team that meets regularly to discuss students.

Social workers and others work with administrators to provide linguistically appropriate resources to identified families. Guidance counselors and social workers maintain current information on community based mental health referrals as well as Community Service Agencies (CSAs) within the local area, providing services to Medicaid eligible students.

Social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, speech pathologists, BCBAs and intensive special needs educators work collaboratively to develop behavior plans and social thinking groups for students with social skill weaknesses. Additionally, they work collaboratively to educate and support parents, conduct parent workshops and apprise parents of outside resources to enhance parenting skills and provide for the needs of children.

3. 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 will 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.

The APS recognize that students who are members of certain student groups may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, teasing and retaliation 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 may need additional curricular and therapeutic supports in order to avoid bullying behaviors or to avoid becoming the target of bullying behaviors.

Within the context of their IEPs, students with disabilities who have needs in this area receive specialized instruction from speech and language pathologists, school social workers, special education teachers and/or other special education staff. This specialized instruction may include but is not limited to direct and indirect ways to react to and avoid bullying behavior. Goals and objectives focus on the needs of the individual students and may include such areas as self-advocacy skills, social communication skills, skills for responding to teasing, "bystander" behavioral skills, problem-solving skills, skills for dealing with anger and avoiding trouble, skills for recognizing the feelings of others and conflict resolution skills. Most of our students with disabilities also participate in general education classroom instruction to combat bullying, such as *Open Circle, Responsive Classroom, Second Step,* health classes at the elementary, middle and high

school levels and building-based bullying prevention programs.

When needed, students are offered accommodations and support to help them to avoid becoming aggressors or targets of bullying behaviors. These may include behavior plans, allowing students to leave class early to avoid hallway incidents, adult support during structured and unstructured times during the school day and frequent communication with their parents.

4. Referral to outside services

APS school counselors and school social workers have an established practice of providing parents and students with referral information and assistance with accessing needed therapeutic resources in the larger community. In cases where parents elect to augment in-school intervention and support with community-based therapeutic services, APS school and social work staff will, upon the request of a parent/guardian, provide information on mental health resources in the community.

B. Social Emotional Learning/Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) helps students acquire the skills necessary to be respectful and responsible members of their school community and the ever-evolving global society. Effective SEL programs emphasize the development of five core social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

APS provides age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention and intervention in each grade that is incorporated into the district's curricula. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development. Within the APS plan there are two SEL programs that serve as the foundation for their learning: *Open Circle and Responsive Classroom.* In addition, and where appropriate, the program *Social Thinking* will be advanced across schools for students who exhibit pragmatic language or social communication difficulty and/or on the autism spectrum.

1. Social Emotional Learning/Anti-Bullying Programs

- Responsive Classroom (Pk - 5)
- Health Curriculum (6-8)
- Health and Physical Education Curriculum (9-12)
- AHS Advisory (9-12)
- Social Thinking (K-12)
- WEB (6-8)
- Professional Development and Training for all staff K - 12 provided by the Safe Schools Program

Responsive Classroom - PK - 5 - The Responsive Classroom approach is a research-based approach to teaching that offers elementary schools practical strategies for bringing together social and academic learning throughout the school day. Responsive classroom has a set of core beliefs and guiding principles based on the idea that in order for students to be successful, they should have experience with cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy and self-control. For more information, visit https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/

Team Time – Grades 6-8— Team Time is a central feature of the middle school schedule. Grade-level teams have the flexibility to hold team meetings and special events. Administrators meet with teams at the beginning of each new school year to review behavioral expectations, school climate initiatives and the laws around bullying and cyber-bullying.

WEB (Where Everybody Belongs) – Grades 6-8 - A supportive, year-long orientation program designed to help 6th grade students make a successful transition to middle school. 8th grade students are trained to be mentors to each of our new 6th grade students. They run a series of welcome activities at the beginning of the year as well as special events each month. The program empowers students to connect with each other and use these connections to combat bullying.

"Through this program students learn that people care about them and their success" - www.boomerangproject.com.

After School Extra-Curricular Program – Grades 6-8 - Students have opportunities to participate in a wide variety of developmentally appropriate clubs and activities that help them to build a healthy sense of self and connections to others while developing new interests, skills and competencies.

Middle School Health Curriculum – Grades 6-8 - The curriculum focuses on the critical thinking skills, knowledge and motivation needed to optimize personal health, safety and wellness. Students explore the social, emotional and physical health issues of adolescence and work to develop a strong sense of self and personal control. The health curriculum aligns with the National Health Standards and MA Health Framework. It is comprehensive and sequential with a strong emphasis on learning and practicing the life skills needed to make responsible decisions, resist peer pressure, resolve conflicts, build resiliency, engage in self-advocacy, process objective content information and develop relationships. Specific topics include:

GRADE 6: Self-Esteem, Personal Hygiene and Sun Safety, Respiratory Anatomy and Physiology, Tobacco Prevention, Nutrition Education, Fitness and Body Image, Media Literacy and Consumerism, Teasing, Cyber-Bullying and Bullying Awareness and Prevention

GRADE 7: Healthy Relationships, Friendship, Love, Sexuality, Gender Roles, Body Image, Media Literacy, Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology, Abstinence, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Violence Prevention: Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Dating Violence, Teasing, Cyber-Bullying and Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

GRADE 8: Self-Esteem, Emotional Health, Stress Management, Sleep, Happiness, Suicide Awareness and Prevention, Brain Anatomy and Physiology, Substance Abuse and Prevention, Healthy Relationships, Teasing, Cyber-Bullying and Bullying Awareness and Prevention

AHS Student Advisory – Grades 9-12 – AHS H1 Block Grades 9-12 – H Block provides an opportunity for a student advisory period (H1 Block). H1 provides every student with an adult in the school that knows them well, follows them for four years, and creates smaller peer communities to support students' relationship building with peers, teachers and administrators.

Project Adventure/Challenge - Grades 9-12 —This is considered the cornerstone course of the high school Physical Education program. All students must pass Project Challenge before they graduate. The course is designed to promote self-confidence, group cooperation and problem-solving skills in a mutually supportive environment. The course uses the evidence-based Project Challenge curriculum and is divided into three distinct phases. The initial activities are designed to develop trust and mutual support among group members. The second phase emphasizes group cooperation and problem-solving skills. The initiative problems presented

require a full contribution from every member of the group. The final activities in this course are designed to encourage risk taking and to develop self-confidence. These activities include working on the ropes course at the school. Visit www.pa.org for more information.

Health for the Mind and Body - Grade 9 - This is a required course for freshmen. The course content is composed of three units: Addictive Behaviors, Emotional and Mental Health and Human Sexuality. Bully prevention lessons include setting limits in relationships, sexual orientation and harassment/violence prevention. Emphasis is placed on building self-esteem and resilience, making responsible decisions and developing coping skills. The class is interactive and involves the opportunity to process and discuss health topics with the aid of videos, speakers and current literature.

Seminar in Health – Grade 10 - Seminar in Health is a required course for juniors and is designed to examine major health issues of young adults. The program's goal is to foster resilience by enhancing health literacy, healthy self-management and health promotion and advocacy. Units include Building Healthy Lifestyles, Nutrition, Avoiding Risks from Harmful Habits, Facing Life's Challenges/Building Resiliency, Creating Healthy and Caring Relationships and Emergency Preparedness. Bully prevention lessons include understanding mental health issues, building resiliency, suicide prevention, healthy relationships, violence abuse prevention and aspects of sexuality. Emphasis is placed on responsible decision-making skills. Each unit is complemented by presentations from community resource speakers providing additional information and perspective on the topic area.

Social Thinking – Grades K-12, as appropriate

Before people can successfully interact on a social level, Social Thinking must occur. Social Thinking refers to the consideration of emotions, points of view, responses and beliefs of others before social exchange can occur. While this is a way of relating to the people in every aspect of life, there are many who find themselves challenged by the process and need specific intervention in order to acquire the skills necessary to interact positively with others.

The Social Thinking program teaches students how their behaviors have emotional effects on others and how behaviors affect their own emotions, responses to and relationships with others across different social contexts.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey – Alternates with high school and middle school

The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the MA Department of Public Health, conducts the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in randomly selected public high schools every odd-numbered year. The YRBS focuses on the major risk behaviors that threaten the health and safety of young people. This anonymous survey includes questions about tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors that might lead to unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, dietary behaviors, physical activity and behaviors associated with intentional or unintentional injuries. http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrbs/

C. 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 act by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication

technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications, and;
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Andover Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan through school assemblies, grade level assemblies and/or small group meetings at the beginning of each school year.

D. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These approaches underscore the importance of Andover's bullying prevention and intervention 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, students in the LGBTQIA+ community, 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.

IV. Processes and Procedures

A. Planning and Oversight

1. The building Principals are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan in their schools and:
   - receiving and investigating reports on bullying and retaliation;
   - collecting and analyzing building and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes;
   - recording and tracking incident reports and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
   - planning for ongoing professional development in conjunction with the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, the Executive Director of Special Services and the APS Staff Development Committee;
   - identifying and recommending supports that will respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
   - implementing the curricula that each school will use;
   - leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials, and;
   - providing annual reports to the Superintendent.

2. The School Committee reviews revised policies for bullying including Internet and technology use policies, as needed. Policy review and development includes designating key staff to be in charge of

implementation.

3. The Superintendent or her designee amends student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying and retaliation of other students or by school staff will not be tolerated.

4. The Superintendent ensures that student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct include bullying requirements of the Plan and APS Policy.

5. The Director of Technology Integration & Digital Literacy and Chief Information Officer are responsible for updating the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for the review of the Superintendent and School Committee.

6. The Superintendent, or his/her designee, will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Plan biennially, or more frequently as needed, should new regulations and laws be enacted.

7. Oversight of the APS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be provided by the designated school, district administrators, and leaders. The chart below identifies tasks as defined by the Plan:

Task	School Leader	District Leader
Receive bullying reports	Principal, her/his designee	- Superintendent/designee
Collect and analyze building and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and measure improved outcomes	Principal, her/hisdesignee* Designated Teachers School Counselors Social Workers	- Assistant Superintendent of Teaching/Learning - Executive Director of Special Services - Social Worker Coordinator - School Resource Officer
Create a process for recording and tracking incident reports and accessing information related to targets and aggressors	Principal, her/his designee**	- Assistant Superintendent - Superintendent
Plan ongoing professional development as required by law	APS Staff Development Committee	- Assistant Superintendent - Executive Director of Special Services -Superintendent
Plan supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors	Principal, her/his designee School Social Workers School Counselors Special Education Program Head Designated Teachers	- Assistant Superintendent - Executive Director of Special Services
Recommend and implement the curricula	Teachers Principals Advisory Committee – Social Emotional Learning	- Social Worker Coordinator - Assistant Superintendent - Superintendent
Developing new or revise current policies and protocols including Internet Safety Policy and identify key personnel to oversee them	Advisory Committee-Social Emotional Learning	- Director of Technology Integration & Digital Literacy - Chief Information Officer - School Resource Officer - Assistant Superintendent - Superintendent - School Committee
Amend and approve student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct	Principal	- Assistant Superintendent - Superintendent - School Committee - *(High School handbook only)*
Lead parent and family engagement efforts and draft parent information materials	Parent to Parent Community Health Advisory Team Parent Teacher Organizations School Councils Special Ed Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) Principal, her/his designee Parent coffees	Assistant Superintendent Social Workers Coordinator Superintendent
Review and update Plan Biennially	Advisory Committee-Social Emotional Learning Principal, her/his designee	Superintendent, or designee School Committee

**The building principal or his/her designee is responsible for collecting and analyzing building and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problems and to measure improved outcomes. However, the Advisory Committee – Social Emotional Learning is considering the possible future adoption of a Coordinated School-Based Health Model that may ultimately work with building principals on the collection and analysis of data.*

B. Assessing Needs and Resources

The Superintendent and/or her/his designee, with input from staff and school councils, will assess the adequacy of current programs. This may include the following:

- Review of current policies and procedures;
- Review of available data on bullying and behavioral incidents;
- Assessment of available resources including curricula, training programs and behavioral health services;
- Reading of current and relevant articles and research on best methodology to prevent and intervene to address bullying and cyber-bullying:
- Research and review of field-tested and research-based anti-bullying curricula and instructional guides;
- Development of a resource bank of relevant materials for both parents and students;
- Review of the MA comprehensive Health and Wellness Curriculum Frameworks to provide a working curriculum context for anti-bullying curriculum, and;
- Assessments of initial and periodic needs, by surveying students, staff, parents and guardians on school climate and school safety issues.

C. Data Collection

At least once every four years, APS will administer a student survey developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in our schools. All data collected through the survey will be maintained and protected in compliance with FERPA, the state student records regulations and Department guidance regarding student confidentiality.

Additionally, the district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

D. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the Andover Public Schools have policies and procedures in place for receiving and responding to reports of bullying and retaliation. These policies and procedures will ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and school staff – know what will when happen when incidents of bullying and/or retaliation occur.

<u>Reporting</u>

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 must be recorded in writing. All employees are required to report immediately to the principal or designee, to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying and/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 and each principal's phone number (Appendix I).

Use of the "APS 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 the Incident Reporting Form 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 the Incident Reporting Form on the district's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents/guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including, but not limited to: educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria worked, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, 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, and the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school and 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, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor 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 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, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor. 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 incidents of bullying and/or retaliation with a staff member, with the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, and to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor.

E. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

1. Safety

Upon receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, the principal or their designee, the Superintendent or their designee, or the School Committee or their designee, with the assistance of appropriate support staff, will take prompt steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target(s), along with those who report, witness, provide information in an investigation of, or have reliable information

about bullying or retaliation. The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee also takes steps to protect these individuals from further bullying or retaliation. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee, at their discretion and in accordance with applicable law, contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Responses to promote safety may include but shall 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 a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation and a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying and/or retaliation will be maintained to the extent possible given the school's obligation to investigate the matter.

2. Obligations to Notify Others
   a. *Notice to Parents or Guardians.* Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee shall promptly notify the parents/guardians of the alleged target(s), the student aggressor(s) or aggressor(s) of the report 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/Superintendent/School Committee or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee 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/Superintendent/School Committee or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor(s), the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee 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.

If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee shall notify the local law enforcement agency if they have a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor(s) or aggressor(s).

In making this determination, the Principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable APS policies and procedure, consult with the Superintendent or their designee, and with any other individuals the Principal or designee deems appropriate after consultation with the Superintendent. The Principal shall

document the reasons for their decision to notify law enforcement if such notification is made. Notice to any law enforcement agency under this section shall be consistent with 603 CMR 49.00, APS Policy, including the Memorandum of Agreement between the School and Police, and the confidentiality requirements of the Plan.

F. Investigation

The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee 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.

The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee, as appropriate, may conduct interviews with students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians and others as necessary. The investigator will remind the alleged student aggressor(s), aggressor(s), target(s), and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

To the extent practicable and given their obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation, including the preservation of all email, text communications and other evidence.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with APS policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent regarding consultation with legal counsel pertaining to the investigation of the alleged report.

G. Determination

The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, it is determined that a violation of the district's anti-bullying policy occurred, the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to stop the prohibited conduct, prevent its reoccurrence, and to ensure that the target(s) is/are not restricted in participating in school and in benefiting from school activities. Specifically, the Principal or designee shall:

- Determine what remedial action is required, if any;
- Determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary, including where appropriate, consultation with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or student aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying and/or retaliatory behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development or referral to one or more of the resources identified in the Plan;
- Implement a full range of disciplinary actions up to and including suspension and expulsion;
- In the event of a staff member, the administrator will consult with the Director of Human Resources to determine the appropriate course of action;
- Notify the parents/guardians of the target(s) and the aggressor(s) of the determination and, if it is determined that a violation of the district's anti-bullying policy occurred, what action is being taken to respond to the bullying or retaliation; and
- Notify the parents/guardians of the target(s) of the action to be taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation.

- 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.

All notices to parents/guardians shall comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Due to the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or 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(s) must be aware of in order to report violations.

The Principal shall maintain a file of all reports of bullying or retaliation, along with the investigative materials and documentation of the report(s) made to law enforcement. A quarterly report shall be provided to the Superintendent or her designee.

H. Responses to Bullying or Retaliation

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

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building

If the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee determines that a violation of the APS anti-bullying policy has occurred, he/she will 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 school 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;
- Making a referral for evaluation, and
- Providing social/emotional support to address underlying causes that may lead a Student to violate the District's Anti-Bullying Policy.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or their 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, which may include suspension and/or expulsion, will be consistent with the Plan, APS disciplinary policies and the school code of conduct. The APS codes of conduct, by level (elementary, middle, and high school) are available on the APS website (www.aps1.net) under the "Parents" or "Students" tabs entitled "Student Handbooks".

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which will be followed in conjunction with state laws regarding student discipline for students with disabilities (603 CMR 28.11).

If the Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee determines that a student or staff knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student or staff may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the school's code of conduct/student handbook, including suspension and/or expulsion from school for students and up to and including termination for employees.

The APS codes of conduct, by level, are available on the APS website (www.aps1.net) under the "Parents" or "Students" tabs entitled "Student Handbooks".

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee 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/Superintendent/School Committee 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/Superintendent/School Committee or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

I. Confidentiality

All communications arising from the implementation of this Plan and the related APS policy shall be consistent with applicable federal and state privacy laws and regulations, including, but not limited to the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations (603 CMR 23.00, et seq.) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"). In accordance with these laws and regulations:

1. The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee may not disclose specific information to a target's parent/guardian about disciplinary action taken against an aggressor unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target and/or his/her parents or guardians must be aware of in order to report violation;

2. The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee may not disclose information from a target's or aggressor's student record to a parent/guardian unless the information is about the parent/guardian's own child;

3. The Principal/Superintendent/School Committee or designee may, in a manner that protects the privacy of targets, student witnesses, and aggressors to the extent practicable under the circumstances, disclose a determination of bullying or retaliation to local law enforcement authorities without the consent of a student or his/her parents/guardians, and;

4. The Principal/Superintendent/ School Committee or designee may, in situations where he/she determines there is an immediate and significant threat to the health or safety for a student or other individual, disclose student record information about a student to appropriate parties, including law enforcement authorities, if such disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or individual.

J. Relationship to Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Andover Public Schools, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Nothing in the Plan prevents APS 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 APS 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, 37H½, or 37H ¾, M.G.L. c.71, §§ 41 and 42, M.G.L.c.76 § 5, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

File: JICFB - BULLYING PREVENTION

The School Committee 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.

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members 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:

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

Cyber-bullying also includes 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 and cyber-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 cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parent/guardians and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At school functions or programs 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 school district.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are 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 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 plan shall comply with state and federal law and regulations.

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 behaviors 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 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 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 school's resource officer 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.

Pending availability of witnesses and necessary evidence, the District shall complete its investigation as promptly as possible. 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.

Consistent with this policy, each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported, and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. Reports shall be provided to the Superintendent upon completion.

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

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

Target Assistance
The school district 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 12 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 school district website.

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
M.G.L. 71:37O; 265:43, 43A; 268:13B; 269:14A

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

CROSS REFS.:
AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment
JIC, Student Discipline
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing

APPROVED: ASC October 2026

Appendix B

Andover (MA) Public Schools - Bullying Incident Report Form

APS expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. APS does not tolerate bullying or retaliation, in school buildings, on school grounds, or at school-related activities. All staff members who witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation by any student or staff member must inform the Principal or his/her designee (for student and staff) and the Superintendent or her designee (for principals) immediately. This form may be used for reporting bullying or retaliation. The Principal or his/her designee (for student and staff) and the Superintendent or her designee (for principals) will investigate all reports of bullying and retaliation and will take prompt action to end the conduct and restore the target's sense of safety. For more information, please refer to the APS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and Bully Policy available at all school and on the APS website.

1. Name of Person Filing Report (please print): _____

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Knowingly making a false accusation is a violation of policy and subject to disciplinary action.)

Title:_____ Telephone:_____

Signature:_____ Date: _____

2. Check whether you are the: □ Target of the bullying or retaliation □ Reporter (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a: □ Student □ Staff Member (specify role)_____

□ Parent □ Administrator □ Other (specify)_____

Your contact information/telephone number:_____

4. If student, state your school:_____

5. If staff member, state your school or worksite:_____

6. Name(s) of witnesses (person(s) who saw the bullying or retaliation or have information about it)

Name:_____ □ Student □ Staff □ Other:_____

Name:_____ □ Student □ Staff □ Other:_____

Name:_____ □ Student □ Staff □ Other:_____

7. Information about the Incident:

Name of target *(of behavior):* _____

Name of aggressor (person who engaged in the behavior):_____

Date(s) of incident(s): _____

Time when incident(s) occurred: _____

Location of incident(s) (be as specific as possible): _____

_____

Medical intervention required: □ Yes □ No

8. Please describe the details of the bullying or retaliation you experienced, saw, heard (including the names of all people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including the words used) along with what each witness experienced, saw, or heard. Please attach all available documentation such as video, notes, emails, texts, etc. Please use additional space on back if necessary.

Under state and federal law, the APS may NOT disclose specific disciplinary procedures instituted against students, including the aggressor, to third parties, including the target's parents/guardians, unless such disciplinary procedures constitute a "stay away" order or other directive that the target and his/her parents must be aware of in order to report violations. The APS will maintain records of all bullying or retaliation investigations, and the results of such investigations in accordance with the Bullying Prevention Act and related regulations. *January 2021*

Administrator Receiving Report:_____ Date:_____

INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s):_____ Title: _____
2. Interviews:

□ Interviewed aggressor Name:_____Date:_____
□ Interviewed target Name:_____Date:_____
□ Interviewed witness(es) Name:_____Date:_____
Name:_____Date:_____

Documentation attached: □ Yes □ No

3. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor? □ Yes □ No
If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously?
□ Yes □ No

Any previous incidents with finding of Bullying, or Retaliation?
□ Yes □ No

4. Summary of investigation*: (please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed.)*

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of violation of the Anti-Bullying Policy of the Andover Public Schools: □ Yes □ No

□ Discipline referral only □ Incident documented as: _____
□ Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation □ Retaliation

2. Contacts:

□ Target's parent/guardian (date): _____ □ Aggressor's Parent/Guardian (date):_____
□ District Equity Coordinator(DEC) (date): _____ □ Law Enforcement (date):_____
□ Other:_____(date):_____

3. Disciplinary action taken:

□ None □ Detention □ Suspension

□ Loss of privileges □ STEP referral □ Community Service

4. Safety/Conduct Plan required *(attach completed plans):* □ Yes □ No

□ Target follow-up scheduled (date):_____Initial and date when completed: _____

□ Aggressor follow-up scheduled (date):_____Initial and date when completed: _____

Report forwarded to:
□ Principal *(date):*_____*(if Principal was not the investigator)*
□ Superintendent*(date):*
Investigator or Principal signature:_____Date:

Appendix C
List of Schools and Phone Numbers for the Principals' Offices

Andover High School	978-247-5510
Doherty Middle School	978-247-9400
West Middle School	978-247-5400
Wood Hill Middle School	978-247-8800
Shawsheen Elementary School	978-247-8200
High Plain Elementary School	978-247-8600
Bancroft Elementary School	978-247-9500
South Elementary School	978-247-9800
West Elementary School	978-247-5300
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