

# **Attleboro Public Schools**

## **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**



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## I. LEADERSHIP

### A. Public involvement in developing the Plan.

The Plan had been initially developed by a team of administrators, teachers and professional support personnel. During the period of notice and public comment (November 17, 2010 – December 6, 2010), the Plan was shared with the Attleboro community by posting it on the Attleboro Public Schools' website as well as each individual school's website. Families were informed of this posting through a Connect Ed phone message as well as through a televised announcement during the November 29<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting.

In the fall of 2012, a team of administrators, teachers, and professional support personnel met to review and to update the Plan. The updated Plan was shared with the Attleboro Community by posting it on the Attleboro Public Schools' website as well as each individual school's website. Families were informed of this posting through a televised announcement during the December 10<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting.

In the fall of 2017, the District Safety Team which is comprised of teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, administrators, and School Resource Officer met to review and update the plan. The plan was brought to the Policy and Personnel Subcommittee of the Attleboro School Committee for review and comment. The plan was posted on each school's website as well as the district website for families to provide public comment from November 14, 2017 – November 28, 2017. Families were informed of the review through e-mail communication from the Principal in each school.

In fall of 2019, the plan was reviewed and brought to the Policy and Personnel Subcommittee of the Attleboro School Committee for review and comment. The plan was posted on each school's website. Families were informed of the review through email communication from the Principal in each school.

### B. Assessing needs and resources

School leaders, with input from families and staff, will assess the adequacy of current programs; review current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services.

Based on these findings, Attleboro Public Schools should revise or develop policies and procedures; establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities. At least once every four years beginning with 2015/16 school year, the Attleboro Public Schools will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the Attleboro Public Schools will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

1. Students, and staff will be surveyed on school climate and school safety issues through the MA DESE VOCAL Survey, and the Massachusetts Consortium of Innovative Educational Assessment (MCIEA) survey.
2. School building-specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying (e.g., focusing on identifying vulnerable populations and “hot spots” in school buildings, on school grounds, or on school buses) will be analyzed by the District Safety Team to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision making for prevention strategies including but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services.
3. Similar tools to the student survey can be used with faculty, staff, and parents/guardians to assist in determining school climate needs. This information will help to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services.

#### C. Planning and oversight

The Attleboro Public Schools leadership is responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

1. Receiving reports on bullying;
2. Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes;
3. Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets/victims and aggressors/perpetrators;
4. Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law;
5. Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets/victims and aggressors/perpetrators;
6. Choosing and implementing the curricula that the Attleboro Schools will use;
7. Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them;
8. Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated;
9. Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials;
10. Reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.

#### D. Developing priority statements

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the Attleboro Public Schools is committed to

working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the principal or the assistant principal as the alleged aggressor/perpetrator. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target/victim. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor/perpetrator, 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.

## **II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **A. Annual staff training on the Plan**

Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include, 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 throughout the Attleboro Public Schools. A PowerPoint presentation of the steps, guidelines, and curricula will be provided to support annual training. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

### **B. Ongoing professional development**

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. This professional development will be delivered by a team of APS employees who have received training from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC). This training, which is the "Train the Trainer" model, has provided the APS staff with the knowledge base and training methods needed to inform their colleagues regarding bully prevention and intervention techniques.

Professional development will also be provided for Second Steps using the model described above.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and district-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

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

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

Additional areas identified by the Attleboro Public Schools for professional development include:

- Promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- Building relationships and communicating with families;
- Constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- Using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- Applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- Engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making;
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students; and
- Engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors

#### C. Written notice to staff

The Attleboro Public Schools will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, in the Attleboro Public Schools employee and or school handbook and the code of conduct.

### III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The most effective resources and services are multi-tiered through whole-school prevention/education plans, grade level and classroom considerations, meeting needs of students with IEPs, targeting needs of identified aggressors/perpetrators and targets/victims, and providing family outreach for education and support.

#### A. Identifying resources

1. Whole-School Prevention/Education Plans: Health Curriculum, *Second Step*, and *MARC Training*.
2. School Resource Officer, guidance counselors, deans, and administrators are important resources in each building.
3. All staff should be accessible and trained to know how to respond to bullying and reporting of bullying.
4. School psychologists and adjustment counselors are the district's mental health providers in schools.

#### B. Counseling and other services

1. Adjustment counselors and school psychologists provide school-based counseling services.
2. School-based group and individual counseling address anger management, social issues and the development of social skills to ensure the emotional well-being of all students.
3. Safety plans will be written by adjustment counselors, school psychologists, administrators, and deans collectively and collaboratively.
4. Education for all (prevention) in health curriculum and advisory curriculum will be in place.
5. Intervention in small groups or one-to-one will be based on need.
6. Links to community-based programs and agencies: Community Service Agencies, Respect Program, Anger Management Program through the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF); DCF Diversion Program – Attleboro Youth Community Crisis Intervention Team, etc. will be made accordingly.

7. Attleboro Public Schools' collection of community-based resources, phone numbers, and accepted insurance will be made available to each school's adjustment counselor and school psychologist so that families can be appropriately informed.
8. Staff will identify a formal referral plan for accessing services and documenting services provided to specific students.

C. Students with disabilities.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team 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.

1. Social/emotional services will be available for the purpose of developing skills to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, anger and/or teasing.
2. The needs of students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and emotional disabilities will be addressed, as well as all students with disabilities, who may be potential targets/victims or aggressors/perpetrators.
3. Education regarding specific social competency skills and learning how to read social cues will be emphasized with students with special needs.

D. Referral to outside services

1. An identified protocol will be followed to use with outside agencies to support both students and families.
2. Referrals for outside services will be made through the school adjustment counselors and school psychologists.
3. Confidentiality releases will be obtained, so school and community-based supports can coordinate services.
4. Community-based service providers include, but are not limited to: Community Counseling of Bristol County (CCBC), Community Care Services, South Bay Mental Health, and the DCF Diversionary Program- Attleboro Youth Community Crisis Intervention Team. Services may also include anger management training and mentoring.
5. Due to APS being responsible for the Plan and for providing services, APS staff must document all referrals and follow-ups in the instance that parents/guardians do not access the suggested community-based supports to assist their child(ren) and/or themselves. This documentation of discussing outside referrals with parents/guardians should include the dates, times and method, i.e. face-to-face meeting, phone, written letter, etc.



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

##### **A. Specific bullying prevention approaches.**

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

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take-action by knowing what to do when they witness other students 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.
- presentations by the Institute for Responsible Online Cellphone Communication (IROC)

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. At the start of each school year, the Attleboro Public Schools' Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be reviewed with all students in both classrooms through teachers, as well as through advisory groups. Only the portions of the Plan that relate to students will be reviewed and discussed.

##### **B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts.**

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

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines, and safety;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- Responding immediately to derogatory remarks and reporting all suspected incidences of bullying
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline with assistance from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and adjustment counselors

- 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;
- Providing students with media and internet safety information and authentic dilemmas to discuss in health, technology, and other disciplines
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

The Attleboro Public Schools recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating 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. The Attleboro Schools will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

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

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, APS has adopted a district Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **A. Reporting bullying or retaliation.**

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. Attleboro Public Schools staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor/perpetrator or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor/perpetrator, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not Attleboro Public Schools staff members, may be made anonymously. The Attleboro Public Schools will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The Attleboro Public Schools will:

1. include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians;
2. make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and
3. post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the Attleboro Public Schools will provide the school community, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, 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/perpetrator, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the Attleboro Public Schools website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member, including the staff of ABACUS, the Attleboro Public Schools' before and after school program, will report immediately to the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor/perpetrator, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor/perpetrator when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report as provided does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with the Attleboro Public Schools policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

The Attleboro Public Schools 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 superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor/perpetrator. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged

aggressor/perpetrator solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor/perpetrator.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation – Allegations of Bullying by a Student.

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target/victim and/or to protect the alleged target/victim from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target/victim and/or the aggressor/perpetrator in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target/victim; and altering the aggressor's/perpetrator's schedule and access to the target/victim. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. Obligations to Notify Others:

a. Notice to parents or guardians:

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target/victim and the student aggressor/perpetrator of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

b. Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or

designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor/perpetrator, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor/perpetrator. In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable Attleboro Public Schools policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

C. Investigation

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

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

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

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with the Attleboro Public Schools policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

D. Determinations.

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and

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

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

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

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

#### E. Responses to Bullying

##### 1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the Attleboro Public Schools 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 Attleboro Public Schools anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to

reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;

- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and making a referral for evaluation.

## 2. Taking Disciplinary Action

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

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

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

## 3. Promoting Safety for the Target/Victims and Others

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's/victim's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

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

## F. Problem Resolution System

Problem Resolution System: Regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination, the Principal or Designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target/victim about the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system. Any parent wishing to make a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the school district may do so with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Problem Resolution Monitoring (PSM) Information about the PSM can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/> e-mails

to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or they may call 781-338-3700. In addition, the Superintendent's Office has hard copies of information about the PSM.

## VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

### A. Parent education and resources.

Each Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) will be provided with an overview of the anti-bullying legislation and what the Attleboro Public Schools is doing to meet the requirements of the legislation.

- Each PTO will be offered an overview night regarding the evidence-based curricula that is being utilized in their child's school (i.e. *Second Step* for elementary, and *MARC*).
- All parents/guardians will be provided with information in the school newsletters associated with the evidence-based curriculum.
- MARC Parent Resources are available at the following website: <https://www.marccenter.org/resources-for-practitioners>
- The Special Education Parent Advisory Council will be provided the afore-mentioned trainings and information in addition to having guest speakers who can assist parents/guardians of students with disabilities on how to address bullying issues with their children.
- Families and community members can review the *Steps to Respect* curricula in its entirety on the website of the developer of the programs, which is the Committee for Children. The website is [www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org).

### B. Notification requirements.

- Parents/guardians will be notified regarding anti-bullying curricula at the school-based level at the start of each school year.
- The APS Parent/Student Handbook will describe the student-related sections of the Plan and the APS Internet Safety Policy.
- The anti-bullying curricula as well as the Plan will be posted in the APS website throughout the span of the school year.
- All afore-mentioned information will be translated into the five (5) most prevalent languages used (other than English) in the Attleboro Public Schools.
- Suggested web links:
  - [www.MARCCenter.org](http://www.MARCCenter.org)
  - [www.safeyouth.org](http://www.safeyouth.org)
  - [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
  - [www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org](http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org)



## **VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

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

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

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

## VIII. DEFINITIONS

**Hostile Environment** - 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 the student's education.

**Aggressor/Perpetrator** is a student or a member of a school staff, as defined below, 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/victim that:

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

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

**School Grounds** - property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by the Attleboro Public Schools for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

**Target/Victim** - a student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

**School staff** - not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, and paraprofessional.

**Retaliation** - any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a student directed against any student, staff or other individual for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation or for taking action consistent with this policy.

## **IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Attleboro Public Schools, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, 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 the Attleboro Public Schools 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 Attleboro Public Schools policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the Attleboro Public Schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L. c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or Attleboro Public Schools policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior. Nothing in this section shall obligations of the Attleboro Public Schools to remediate any discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law. If an individual has a complaint of discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category, he or she may file a complaint under the District's Nondiscrimination and Harassment Policies/Procedures.