

Bullying**STATEMENT**

The Manchester Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on 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 local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-8,

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The Manchester Board of Education has the responsibility to create and maintain a school environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. The Safe School Climate Plan represents a comprehensive approach to promoting a school climate in which bullying is not tolerated by students and school employees.

I. Definition of Bullying

- A. **“Bullying”** means the repeated use by one or more members of the school community of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyber-bullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student attending school in the same district that:
1. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property;
 2. places such student 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 such student;
 4. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
 5. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- B. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

II. Other Definitions

- A. **"Cyber-bullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.
- B. **"Electronic communication"** means 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;
- C. **"Hostile environment"** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;
- D. **"Mobile electronic device"** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a cellular telephone, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;
- E. **"Outside of the school setting"** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned,

leased or used by a local or regional board of education;

F. **"Prevention and intervention strategy"** may include, but is not limited to,

(1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in Kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the student found to be engaged in bullying behavior, parents and school employees, and interventions with the student who experienced the bullying, parents and school employees, (6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, and (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

G. **"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.

H. **"School employee"** means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

I. **"School-Sponsored Activity"** means any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Education.

III. Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

A. The Board prohibits any form of bullying behavior on 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 local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education.

B. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

C. The Board also prohibits discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying.

D. Students who engage in bullying behavior in violation of Board Policy and the Safe School Climate Plan will be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

IV. Leadership and Administrative Responsibilities

A. District Safe School Climate Coordinator

The Manchester Board of Education directs the Superintendent to appoint a District Safe School Climate Coordinator. The Superintendent will communicate, in writing, the name and contact information of the District Safe School Climate Coordinator annually. The Coordinator will:

1. be responsible for implementing the district's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying in district schools;
3. provide data and information, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education regarding bullying;
4. meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss issues relating to bullying in the school district and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Plan.

B. Safe School Climate Specialist

The principal of each school (or principal's designee) will serve as the Safe School Climate Specialist. The Principal will communicate, in writing, the name and contact information of the Safe School Climate Specialist annually. The Safe School Climate Specialist will investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying and act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying in the school.

V. Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan

- A. The Principal of each school will establish a committee in the school to be responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues relating to bullying in the school. Such committee will include teachers and special services staff as well as at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, as appointed by the school principal. School Climate teams at the secondary level will include at least one student. The Principal will communicate, in writing, the names and contact information of the School Climate Committee annually.
- B. This committee will: 1) receive copies of completed reports following bullying investigations; 2) identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school; 3) review and amend school policies relating to bullying; 4) review and make recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the Safe School Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school; 5) educate students, school employees and parents/guardians on issues relating to bullying; 6) collaborate with the Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and 7) perform any other duties as determined by the principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying.
- C. Any parent/guardian serving as a member of the Committee will not participate in any activities that may compromise the confidentiality of any student, including receiving copies of

investigation reports, or identifying or addressing patterns of bullying among students in the school.

- D. The School Climate Plan will be available on the district's and each school's web site, all student handbooks, and any school publications that include the rules, procedures, and standards of conduct.
- E. The Manchester Public Schools District Safe School Climate Coordinator will ensure that all staff receive annual training on the safe school climate plan.

VI. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Complaints of Bullying

- A. Parents (or guardians of students) must file written reports of alleged bullying. A form will be available in the school's office to report an alleged bullying complaint. Written reports of alleged bullying will include the time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of incidents, the target of the suspected bullying, and the names of potential witnesses. The building principal will receive such reports and forward them to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with the Plan.
- B. Students may make written anonymous reports of alleged bullying. Anonymous complaints must be made to any school professional employee. If the student requests anonymity when making a report, the Safe School Climate Specialist will meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact that maintaining the anonymity of the complainant may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action. Anonymous complaints will be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the complaint. The Safe School Climate Specialist will not disclose the source of the complaint, and any disclosure must be consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.
- C. School employees who witness acts of mean-spirited behavior or possible bullying or receive reports of alleged bullying will orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, as soon as reasonably possible but no later than one (1) school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of alleged bullying. The school employee will then file a written report with the Safe School Climate Specialist no later than one (1) school day after making such oral report.
- D. The Safe School Specialist will be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of alleged bullying and will investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of alleged bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. In order to allow the school to investigate all complaints adequately the parent of the student suspected of being bullied must provide written consent to permit the release of that student's name to those third parties that the Safe School Climate Specialist contacts as part of the investigation.
- E. In investigating reports of bullying, the Safe School Climate Specialist will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved, interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

VII. Responding to Verified Acts of Bullying

- A. If acts of bullying are verified following the investigation, the Safe School Climate Specialist will:

1. Notify the parents or guardians of the students against whom such acts were directed as well as the parents or guardians of the students who commit such acts of bullying of the finding not later than forty-eight hours after the investigation is completed. This notification will include a description of the school's response to the acts of bullying and be consistent with the statutory privacy rights of students, including the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student, may not be disclosed except as provided by law.
2. Invite the parents or guardians of the student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardian of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student/victim and to prevent further acts of bullying. The invitation must include a description of the school's response to such acts, along with consequences, as appropriate. At the discretion of the Safe School Climate Specialist and with written consent of the parents/guardians involved, the meeting(s) may be held jointly.
3. Develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an act of bullying was directed. Such support plan will include safety measures to protect against further acts of bullying.
4. Develop a case-by-case intervention plan to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual, which may include counseling and discipline.
5. Coordinate an investigation with other appropriate district personnel if the bullying complaint raises concern about discrimination or harassment on the basis of a legally protected classification (such as race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability).

If the investigation concludes that bullying has not occurred, the Safe School Climate Specialist will notify the parents or guardians of the finding not later than forty-eight hours after the investigation is completed. The steps that will be taken to address any mean-spirited behavior will also be explained to parents or guardians at the time of notification.

- B. If the principal reasonably believes that any act of bullying constitutes a criminal offense, he/she will notify the Manchester Police Department.

VIII. Documentation and Maintenance of Log

- A. Each school will maintain written complaints of bullying, along with supporting documentation received and/or created as a result of bullying investigations, consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law. Any educational record containing personally identifiable student information pertaining to an individual student shall be maintained in a confidential manner, and shall not be disclosed to third parties without prior written consent of a parent, guardian or eligible student, except as permitted under Board policy and state and federal law.
- B. The principal of each school will maintain a tally of each verified act of bullying in the school and this list will be available for public inspection upon request. The list will not identify any of these particulars of each verified act, including, but not limited to any personally identifiable student information.

- C. The principal will annually report the number of verified acts of bullying in the school to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

IX. Other Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- A. To protect students from further acts of bullying, the school administration will develop a written intervention plan to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual.
- B. Prevention and intervention strategies may include non-disciplinary and disciplinary responses to enforce the Board's prohibition against bullying.

- 1. Non-disciplinary interventions may include:

- a. counseling;
- b. increased monitoring and supervision of students;
- c. peer mediation;
- d. positive behavioral interventions and support systems to create a safe and positive school climate;
- e. rules and consequences designed to prevent bullying behavior;
- f. adequate adult supervision in specific areas where bullying is likely to occur;
- g. grade-appropriate bullying prevention curriculum for all grades;
- h. intervention strategies with the perpetrator, the perpetrator's parents and school staff; and interventions with the bullied student, parents, and school staff;
- i. staff training related to a safe school climate;
- j. student peer training, education, and support;
- k. promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
- l. planned professional development programs addressing prevention and intervention strategies, which training may include school violence prevention, conflict resolution and prevention of bullying, with a focus in evidence-based practices concerning same;
- m. modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
- n. creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
- o. employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere;
- p. yoga, mindfulness, or other calming activities;
- q. use of therapy dogs in schools and classrooms;
- r. implementation of a social emotional learning curriculum.

- 2. Disciplinary interventions

When acts of bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences consistent with the Board's discipline policy. No disciplinary action will be taken based solely on anonymous complaints.

- 3. Other Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Administrators, teachers and other professional employees will educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior.

Administrators, teachers and other professional employees will intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, harassing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying.”

X. Annual Notice and Training

- A. The principal will annually provide students, parents or guardians of students the process by which students may make reports of bullying.
- B. At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent will provide all employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district’s safe school climate plan.
- C. All school employees will annually receive training on the identification, prevention and response to bullying as required by law. The Manchester Public Schools District Safe School Climate Coordinator will ensure that all staff receive annual training on the safe school climate plan.

XI. School Climate Assessments

The Board of Education requires each school in the district to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments disseminated by the Department of Education. The Superintendent’s Office will collect the school climate assessments for each school in the district and submit such assessments to the Department of Education.

School principals will annually include, within their school improvement plans, strategies to improve the quality of school climate based on assessments of school climate, and behavioral data including but not limited to behavior that may constitute or lead to bullying or harassment.

May 23, 2016

**MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REPORT OF ALLEGED BULLYING FORM/
INVESTIGATION SUMMARY**

(Please review Student Policy 5131.1 for further information on Bullying and School Climate)

School: _____ Date: _____

Reporter Information:

- Anonymous student
- Staff member (Name: _____)
- Parent/Guardian (Name: _____)
- Student (Name: _____)

Describe the alleged act of what happened:

Who committed the alleged bullying act? _____

Who was the target(s)? _____

Time(s) of day alleged act(s) happened: _____

Frequency of alleged bullying (Only once, daily, 2x/week, etc.): _____

Location alleged bullying occurred (If by electronic device, please specify type and if possible attach any supporting documents, usernames, etc.): _____

Please write the name(s) of any potential witness: _____

After completing the above information, please give this form to your building principal.

Parent/Guardian must also complete and attach the "Report of Bullying/Consent to Release Student Information" form when submitting this report to begin investigation.

Building Administrator Use Only:

Describe what action the reporter took (i.e. students were separated, office was called, police were called, etc.):

Administration Investigation Notes:

Was bullying verified? (If yes, you **must** do the following:) Yes No

- Parent/Guardian of victim(s) and perpetrator(s) were notified within 48 hours of conclusion of investigation. *Date:* _____
- The notification included the mandatory statutory privacy rights and due process rights of students. *Date:* _____
- Parent/Guardian of perpetrator(s) was notified of specific disciplinary consequences imposed. *Date:* _____
- Parent/Guardian of victim(s) and perpetrator(s) were invited to attend a meeting to review. *Date:* _____
(Meetings should be separate unless both parties agree and give consent to a joint meeting.)
- A Student School Safety Plan was developed. (Attach with this form)
- (If applicable) A case-by-case intervention plan was developed for repeat incidents against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual which may include counseling, etc.
- (If applicable) The Manchester Police Department was notified.
- ESchool and the principal's records have been updated and reflect the verified act of bullying.
- A copy of this form was forwarded to the District School Climate Coordinator and Director of Pupil Personnel Services.
- Other: _____

Administrator Signature: _____ Date: _____

MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REPORT OF BULLYING/CONSENT TO RELEASE STUDENT INFORMATION

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

School: _____

To Parent/Guardian:

A complaint of bullying has been filed on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been the victim of bullying. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint, the Manchester Public Schools may need to disclose the name of your child and/or other information which may otherwise disclose your child's identity.

(Please check one):

- I hereby give permission for the Manchester Public Schools to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the district to adequately and appropriately investigate such complaint, to third parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

- I do NOT give permission for the Manchester Public Schools to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the district to adequately and appropriately investigate such complaint, to third parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Name (Please print)

Manchester Public Schools

Student Safety Plan

The below student has been identified as a victim of substantiated bullying. New state law and school policy requires there must be a safety plan for named student.

If you have received a copy of this plan, you are responsible to read and implement this safety plan.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ School: _____

Primary Staff /Contact Person: _____ Classroom Teacher/Team Leader: _____

Plan Start Date: _____ Plan End Date: _____ Plan Review Date: _____

A. School/Staff (Check all that apply)

- All appropriate school staff will be informed of this plan and will make every effort to implement successfully.
- Any staff that becomes aware of or hears of any mean-spirited behavior against this student will intervene immediately and report it to the building principal.
- Mr./Ms. _____ has been designated as the primary point of contact (trusted adult) for this student.
- Mr./Ms. _____ has been informed about the situation and will keep the student and his/her aggressor separated in the classroom and during class activities.
- Classroom teachers have been informed about the situation and will keep students separated in the classroom and during staff activities.
- Security officers (or other appropriate staff) will be visible in hallways and monitoring the student during passing times.
- The student will visit _____ at a designated time daily to ensure that the plan is working. If student does not or cannot visit, the above designated person will locate and check with the student.
- The bus driver will be instructed to intervene and report any bus incidents immediately to the principal.
- The school will immediately report any mean-spirited behavior to the student's parents.
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

B. The Student (check all that apply)

- The student will not have face-to-face or electronic contact with perpetrator while this plan is in effect.
- The student will identify with the social worker/guidance counselor who his/her safe and trusted friend is.
- The student will remain as close as possible with his/her trusted friend during the school day.
- The student will visit _____ on a daily basis at _____ to check to see that the plan is working.
- The student will share all passwords and "friend" his parents on all social networking sites so his/her parents can monitor.
- The student will report any mean behavior immediately to his/her trusted adult, teacher or parents.
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

Parent/Family (Check all that apply)

- The parents or other family members agree to support this student with this safety plan, monitor the use of technology and contact the school if the problem persists.
- Parents are welcome to contact the school to check on effectiveness of this plan.
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

All parties understand that if the mean-spirited behavior persists or escalates, law enforcement may need to be called.

This plan is in place from _____ through _____ at which time it will be reviewed, revised, discontinued, or continued, if necessary.

We agree to the above safety plan:

Student

Parent

Principal

Other

Completed/Modified/Extended _____
Date