

# Roxbury Prep Network Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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## I. LEADERSHIP

*Leadership from the Board/Chief Operating Officer to School Leaders will play a critical role in developing and implementing the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“the Plan”) in the context of other school wide efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. Leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in updating and implementing the Plan.*

A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan was developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Consultation consisted of notifying the aforementioned constituencies before the Plan was adopted by the school committee or equivalent authority. Any member could then make comments which were considered by the Plan Development Team. Notification of all constituents took place via the school website ([www.roxburyprep.org](http://www.roxburyprep.org)) which is viewed by a wide audience. In addition, staff were notified of the draft plan during a staff meeting and parents were notified of the draft plan during parent meetings with teachers.

B. Assessing needs and resources.

Roxbury Prep has a wide range of community building and disciplinary initiatives which were in place before the enactment of the law on bullying and cyber-bullying. The community will need to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives in implementing the Plan. In order to make sure that all of Roxbury Prep’s initiatives in this regard are robust staff, parent and student surveys will include questions on the Plan. The results of those surveys will drive professional development for the ensuing school year and curriculum development on the Plan.

Roxbury Prep is a very strict school with guidelines around student expectations. These expectations extend from the moment a student steps onto the bus until they arrive home at the end of the school day. Students receive demerits and suspensions for various behaviors including: playfighting, disrespect to another student, disrespect to a teacher or staff member, and the use of foul language, among other things. In addition, the school week includes advisory sessions with grade level cohorts which develop students’ social skills more broadly, as well as the opportunity to survey students. The school has four individual needs teachers who provide assistance to students with IEPs and other special needs. The school has two counselors on staff who provide individual and group counseling for students. Finally, teachers meet as grade-level teams on a weekly basis, allowing for the sharing of information and action planning in response to all student needs. The purpose of all of these initiatives is to create a safe school environment to students and while they were developed with overall school culture in mind, they will effectively serve as the basis for the implementation of the Plan.

Periodic needs assessments may include: 1) surveying students, staff, parents, and guardians on school climate and school safety issues; and 2) collecting and analyzing 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). 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.

Broad assessments will be done at the end of each trimester. Specific assessments will take place on an on-going basis in the context of school discipline. School leaders meet daily to discuss student discipline. These meetings allow for the discussion of early intervention to prevent bullying from occurring.

C. Planning and oversight.

The Co-Director for Finance and Operations will be responsible for: 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 and aggressors; 4) 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; 5) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct; and 6) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.

The Co-Director for Curriculum and Instruction will be responsible for: 1) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; 2) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 3) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school will use; and 4) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials.

D. Priority statement.

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

The school is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. 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.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target 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.

## II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Co-Directors 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. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year (typically during the school's August curriculum planning session) 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. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:
- (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
  - (ii) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
  - (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
  - (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
  - (v) information on the incidence and nature of 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 school for professional development may include:

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

- C. Written notice to staff. The school will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the Personnel Policies Manual.

### III. 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.*

- A. Identifying resources. The school will evaluate its responses to bullying incidents on an ongoing basis. This review will seek to identify if further resources are needed to address an individual case. The school will maintain a current list of agencies which can provide additional services as needed. If the school determines that school resources are consistently insufficient to deal with bullying incidents then a larger review of staffing will be undertaken. The school is committed to providing appropriate and timely resources to early intervention and intensive services. The Individual Needs team and the Counseling Team, in close contact with teachers and Co-Directors provides these services.
- B. Counseling and other services. School Counselors provide counseling to students who are targets of bullying or retaliation; provide social skills counseling to prevent bullying; and offer intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. The Counselors develop safety plans in conjunction with the Co-Directors and Staff. The safety plan is then communicated to all Staff and may include ways that the target of the bullying can safely and discretely notify any staff member that bullying is taking place.
- 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 skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- D. Referral to outside services. The school will utilize its current protocols for Grade Level Teams, IEP Team, the school's Individual Needs Team, and school counselors to utilize a response to intervention methodology in assessing and servicing student needs, including outside referral. A list of outside referral resources will be maintained by the school counselors.

### IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

*Roxbury Prep will provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the school curricula. Curricula will be evidence-based. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development; this curriculum will be most commonly delivered through the school-wide Advisory curriculum. The school will follow state guidelines for implementing social and emotional learning curricula by June 30, 2011. Other resources are currently available on the Department website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/bullying/>.*

- A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
  - using scripts and role plays to develop skills;

- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan will be reviewed with students at the beginning of each year during the initial advisory sessions.

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

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

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

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school staff member is required to report immediately to the Co-Directors or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school staff members, may be made anonymously. Reports can be made with or without an Incident Reporting Form to any of the following:

Roxbury Prep Charter School  
 Attn: Co-Director for Finance Operations  
 Re: Bullying

120 Fisher Avenue  
Roxbury, MA 02120  
Phone: 617-566-2361  
Fax: 617-566-2373  
Email: [nobullying@roxburyprep.org](mailto:nobullying@roxburyprep.org)

Incident Reporting Forms are available from the Office Manager, Co-Directors, in the student manual and on the website at <http://www.uncommonschools.org/rpcs/people/parents.html> . The form is available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

At the beginning of each school year, the school will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Co-Directors or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school 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 Co-Directors or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Co-Directors or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

The school 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 Co-Directors or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the Co-Directors or designee.

### B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

#### 1. Safety

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

targets to ensure safety (see III. D.).

The Co-Directors 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 Co-Directors or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Co-Directors 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. 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 Co-Directors or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Co-Directors 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 Co-Directors or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Co-Directors 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 Co-Directors or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the Co-Directors will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the Co-Directors or designee deems appropriate.

- C. Investigation. The Co-Directors 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 Co-Directors or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Co-Directors or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Co-Directors or designee, other staff members as determined by the Co-Directors 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 Co-Directors or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Co-Directors or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Co-Directors or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation. (Align this with school procedures.)

- D. Determinations. The Co-Directors or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Co-Directors or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The Co-Directors or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary, pursuant to the school's Code of Conduct and the Plan.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Co-Directors or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target or aggressor 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 Co-Directors or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Co-Directors or designee cannot report specific information to the target parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the Co-Directors or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school 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 Co-Directors or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school 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 Co-Directors or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Co-Directors 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 school 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 Co-Directors or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

## 3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Co-Directors or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the Co-Directors 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 Co-Directors 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 Co-Directors or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

## VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. Parent education and resources. The school will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Family Involvement Committee.
- B. Notification requirements. Each year the school will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school 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 will post the Plan and related information at [www.roxburyprep.org](http://www.roxburyprep.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 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 district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## VIII. DEFINITIONS

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

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

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

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

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses,

cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

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

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

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.