

## Students and Staff School Climate and Bullying

### **Policy Statement**

All schools must support and promote teaching and learning environments where each and every student achieves academically and socially, has a strong and meaningful voice and is prepared for democratic life and successful transition into the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. A positive school climate is an essential element of achieving these goals. Rigorous implementation of the following set of guiding principles and systemic strategies will promote these desired outcomes.

The Brookfield Board of Education (the Board) adopts this Policy that is guided by the fundamental belief that each and every school community member should be treated with dignity, should have the opportunity to learn, work, interact and socialize in physically, emotionally and intellectually safe, respectful and positive school environments, as well as the opportunity to experience high quality relationships. Schools, therefore, have the responsibility to promote conditions designed to create, maintain and nurture positive school climate.

This Policy sets forth the framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process, which includes a continuous cycle of (i) planning and preparation, (ii) evaluation, (iii) action planning, and (iv) implementation, and serves to actualize the expectations of the five National School Climate Standards, as detailed herein.<sup>2</sup>

The Board recognizes that there is not one best way to improve school climate. Each school needs to consider its history, strengths, needs, and goals. This Policy will support and promote the development of research-supported action plans that will create and/or sustain physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe learning environments that foster social, emotional, ethical and academic education.

### **Definitions**

An “Effective School Climate Improvement Process” is one that engages all stake-holders in the following six essential practices:

1. Promoting decision-making that is collaborative, democratic, and actively involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;
2. Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g. survey) and qualitative (e.g. interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive/intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process;

<sup>1</sup>Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup>School Climate improvement is more encompassing than any individual program that might be implemented as a strategy for improving one or more dimensions of school climate.

3. Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students and broader school community. These goals shall be integrated into overall school improvement efforts thereby leveraging school strengths to address evidence-based areas of need, while sustaining the improvement process over time;
4. Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity among school personnel and develop common staff skills to educate the whole child;
5. Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning; and
6. Strengthening policies and procedures related to:
  - a. Climate informed teaching and learning environments;
  - b. Infrastructure to facilitate data collection, analysis, and effective planning;
  - c. Implementation of school climate improvement plans;
  - d. Evaluation of the school climate improvement process; and
  - e. Sustainability of school climate improvement efforts.

**“Positive Sustained School Climate”** is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:

1. Norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe;
2. People who treat one another with dignity, and are engaged and respected;
3. A school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision;
4. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
5. A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

**“Safe School Committee”** (the “Committee”) means the committee appointed at a specific school building by the Specialist to perform the duties described herein.

**“Safe School Climate Coordinator”** (the “Coordinator”) means the Superintendent or the certified administrator appointed by the Superintendent to oversee the implementation of the district’s Safe School Climate Plan and perform the duties described herein.

**“Safe School Climate Plan”** means the district plan developed and implemented pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-222(d), containing provisions pertaining to bullying, filing complaints and conducting investigations, and posted on the district website.

**“Safe School Climate Specialist”** (the “Specialist”) means the certified administrator appointed by the Coordinator at a specific school building to oversee the implementation of the district’s Safe School Climate Plan within the building, oversee the implementation of the School Climate Improvement Plan within the building, and perform the duties described herein.

**“School Climate”** means the quality and character of the school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. School climate is also based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures.<sup>3</sup>

**“School Climate Improvement Plan”** (the “Improvement Plan”) means the building- specific plan developed by the Committee using the survey data and developed in accordance with the process described herein. An Improvement Plan must include the requirements of the Safe School Climate Plan, but has the larger purpose of improving school climate on a more global level and actualizing The 13 Dimensions of Climate (Appendix B) and The National School Climate Standards (Appendix A).

**“School Climate Survey”** (the “Survey”) shall mean a well-established reliable and valid survey, approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education, with additional external confirmation of its strength through third party evaluators and research studies, that is vigorously field tested, measures the core district populations (including students, parents/ guardians, all school personnel - administrators, educators, certified and non-certified staff)and, when available, the wider community, and is easy and quick to administer. It shall also be administered in the predominant languages used by the population being surveyed.<sup>4</sup>

**“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 the Board; 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 Board.

**“Bullying”** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

<sup>3</sup>National School Climate Council (2007). The School Climate Challenge: Narrowing the gap between school climate research and school climate policy, practice guidelines and teacher education policy. On: <http://www.schoolclimate.org/publications/policy-briefs.php>.

<sup>4</sup>Faster, D. & Lopez, D. (2013). School climate and assessment. In Dary, T. & Pickeral, T. (ed) (2013). School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability. A School Climate Practice Brief, Number 1, and New York, NY: National School Climate Center.

- A. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- B. Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. Infringes on the rights of such student at school, or substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- E. Shall also include any instances of "teen dating violence" as defined as "any physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship."

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or 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. (*The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.*)

**“Cyberbullying”** 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.

**“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 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.

**“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.

**“Hostile environment”** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;

**“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.

***Declarations*****I. Applicable Standards:*****A. For School Employees:***

1. All certified educators in the State of Connecticut are accountable for compliance with the regulations enacted by the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Bureau of Education Standards and Certification, including, but not limited to the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility For Teachers, Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, (Section 10-145d0400a) and the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility For Administrators, Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (Section 10-145d0400b) (collectively “Codes”), as they may be amended from time to time.
2. All school employees are accountable for compliance with the policies and procedures of the Board applicable to personnel, including, but not limited to non-discrimination, conduct and professional rights and responsibilities.

***B. For Students:***

1. All students are accountable for compliance with applicable codes of student conduct, policies and procedures for student participation and behavior.

***C. For Board Members:***

1. Board Members are accountable for compliance with the Boards Code of Ethics and applicable Board By-laws governing Board member conduct.

***D. For Persons Contracted to Provide Services to the Board:***

1. Persons contracted to provide services to the Board (such as bus drivers, consultants, evaluators or the like) are accountable for compliance with such codes of ethics as may apply professionally, the terms of any such contract, as well as the policies and procedures of the Board generally applicable to persons on school property.

***E. For Other Participants in the School Community:***

1. Parents/guardians, family members, visitors and other persons on school property or otherwise participating in programs or services of the Brookfield Public Schools are accountable for conducting themselves in accordance with applicable policies and procedures pertaining to such participation.

**II. Alignment with Conn. Gen. Statutes Section 10-222(d):*****A. This Policy is aligned with C.G.S. 10-222(d), “An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.”******B. In order to be in compliance with applicable law, all individual schools in the District of Brookfield must adhere to the following requirements:***

1. In order to develop and maintain an “Effective School Climate Improvement Process,”<sup>5</sup> schools must develop and implement “Improvement Plans,” administer and utilize the findings of “School Climate Surveys,” and engage in a continuing systemic process of learning and evaluating identified goals and objectives. The vision of the Brookfield Board of Education is to support a vibrant and thriving school community by removing any barriers to teaching and learning, and reengaging those who may have become disengaged.
2. In order to implement an Effective School Climate Improvement Process, qualified and effective leadership is required. Such leadership shall be developed through (a) the

implementation and satisfaction of appropriate professional development, (b) the Superintendent or the appointment of a Coordinator by the Superintendent, (c) the appointment of Specialists at each school building by the Coordinator, and (d) the establishment of a Committee at each school building.<sup>6</sup>

### III. Safe School Climate Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities:

- A. The Superintendent shall assume the role of, or appoint from among existing school district administrators, a district Coordinator.
- B. The duties of the Coordinator shall include those enumerated under C.G.S. Section 10-222(d) and the Brookfield Board of Educations Regulation Section 5131.911. at a minimum, and shall also include the following:
  - A. Overseeing the implementation of the district's Safe School Climate Plan;
  - B. Preventing, identifying and responding to any kind of mean-spirited behavior including, but not limited to reports of alleged bullying and harassment in the schools of the district, in collaboration with the Specialists, as well as the Board and the Superintendent as appropriate;
  - C. Providing data and information regarding school climate improvement to the Connecticut State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Superintendent as may be required by law;
  - D. Meeting with the Specialists at least twice during the school year to: (i) identify strategies to improve school climate that promotes high quality relationships among all school community members, and, as a result, is designed to eliminate intentional and unintentional mean-spirited behaviors including, but not limited to bullying and harassment, (ii) make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Safe School Climate Plan, as well as to make recommendations concerning amendments to each individual school's "School Climate Improvement Plan," and (iii) oversee completion of each individual school's "School Climate Survey;" and
- v. Providing leadership for the following activities:
  1. Advancement of evidence-based policy and best practices to improve school climate, foster high quality relationships, and promote physical, emotional, and intellectual school safety; and
  2. Development and dissemination of resources and training materials for Specialists, Committees, school staff and community members about issues of school climate and school climate improvement efforts and activities.

### IV. Safe School Climate Specialist Roles and Responsibilities:

1. At the beginning of each school year, the Principal of each school, or the Principal's designee as approved by the Coordinator, shall serve as the Specialist for the individual school to which he or she is assigned.
2. The Specialist's duties shall include those enumerated under C.G.S. Section 10-222(d) and the Brookfield Board of Educations Regulation Section 5131.911. In addition to these duties, the Specialist shall:

<sup>5</sup><http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/process.php>.

<sup>6</sup>In the National dialogue, this Safe School Climate Committee is often referred to as a Safe School Climate Team, see [http://schoolclimate.org/climate/stages\\_tasks\\_challenges.php](http://schoolclimate.org/climate/stages_tasks_challenges.php).

- a. Investigate, or supervise the investigation of, reported acts of mean-spirited behaviors including, but not limited to reports of alleged bullying and harassment in the school in accordance with this Policy;
- b. Collect and maintain records of such reports in the school;
- c. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to such reports in the school and leading efforts to improve school climate;
- d. Chair or co-chair the Committee and establish the meeting calendar for the Committee meetings; and
- e. Serve as the primary supervisor of the school's School Climate Improvement Plan for the implementation and the monitoring of the School Climate Improvement Plan.
- f. Parental Notification: A school official, under the direction of the School Climate Specialist, shall notify the alleged target's family and the alleged perpetrator's family promptly that a bullying investigation has commenced. School officials shall meet separately with the parents of alleged target and with the parents of alleged perpetrator, rather than in a combined meeting. The officials shall inform the parents, respectively, of the steps being taken to ensure the safety of the alleged target and to prevent further acts of bullying.

V. Safe School Climate Committee Roles and Responsibilities:

- A. In collaboration with the Coordinator, the Specialist at each school building shall form a representative Committee consisting of a demographically representative group of students enrolled in the school (if developmentally appropriate); parents of students enrolled in the school (See Committee responsibilities in Section D below.); school personnel, including, but not limited to teachers, administrators, student support personnel; other medical and mental health experts where available; and community members.
- B. Such Committee shall be formed no later than 30 days from the effective date of this Policy.<sup>7</sup>
- C. Committee composition/membership shall be reviewed annually by the Coordinator and the Specialist.
- D. The duties of the Committee shall include those enumerated under C.G.S. Section A 10-222(d) and the Brookfield Board of Educations Regulation Section 5131.911. In addition to these duties, the Committee shall, at a minimum, perform the following duties:
  - i. Supervising the scheduling and administration of School Climate Surveys to students, staff, parents, and community members;
  - ii. Setting goals and tracking survey completion;
  - iii. Reaching out to staff and parents before administering the Survey;
  - iv. Providing Survey data to the Coordinator;
  - v. Reviewing and analyzing the school-based school climate assessment data;

<sup>7</sup>As of July 1, 2012, pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-222(d), every school should have identified a "Safe School Climate Committee." Satisfaction of this Policies requirement of establishing a Safe School Climate Committee may have been satisfied previously by complying with these C.G.S. Section 10-222(d) requirements.

- vi. Using the data and other appropriate data and information to identify strengths and challenges with respect to improving school climate;
- vii. Using the data to create and/or update the school-based School Climate Improvement Plan;
- viii. Overseeing the implementation of the school-based School Climate Improvement Plan;
- ix. Implementing the School Climate Improvement Plan and monitoring the progress of school climate improvement, in collaboration with the Coordinator;
- x. Overseeing the implementation of annual school climate assessments at the school;
- xi. Reviewing and making recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the safe school climate plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
- xii. Overseeing the education of students, school employees and parents/guardians of students on issues relating to improving school climate;
- xiii. Holding meetings at least four times each year, at which minutes shall be kept and made available to the public; and
- xiv. Performing any other duties as determined by the Specialist and/or the Coordinator that are related to improving school climate in the school, or required by law.

#### VI. School Climate Surveys:

- A. Each school, supported with oversight by the Coordinator and under the guidance of the Committee, shall administer, on an annual basis, at the same time of year each year, the School Climate Survey in order to assess a school's strengths and challenges.
- B. Preparation for Survey Administration: All survey participants should be made aware of the purpose and value of the survey as determined by the Committee prior to administration, so that the school will receive authentic data to help drive decisions that will benefit the entire school community.<sup>8</sup>

#### VII. School Climate Improvement Plans:

- A. In collaboration with the Coordinator, each Specialist shall develop and/or update an Improvement Plan based on the findings of the School Climate Survey.<sup>9</sup>
  - 1. The Specialist and the Committee shall develop and/or update the Improvement Plan, using the School Climate Improvement Plan template,<sup>10</sup> taking into consideration the needs of all key stakeholders, with sensitivity to equity and diversity.
  - 2. The Improvement Plan shall support the actualization of the following five Standards<sup>11</sup>:
    - Standard 1: Develop a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate.

<sup>8</sup>When using school climate data as a "flashlight" and not a "hammer," stakeholders will be more fully engaged, and the findings will be more useful for long-term improvement. To promote such a spirit of trust, school leaders should also consider key preparation and planning issues before administration, such as: how representative their Committee is, and to what extent



**Standard 2:** Develop policies that promote social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual learning as well as systems that address barriers to learning.

**Standard 3:** Implement practices that promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic development of students and student engagement as well as addressing barriers to learning.

**Standard 4:** Create an environment where all members are welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

**Standard 5:** Develop meaningful and engaging practices, activities and norms that promote social and civic responsibilities and a commitment to social justice.

3. Each Improvement Plan shall be submitted to the Coordinator for approval and implementation no later than mid-September of each school year. The Coordinator may provide feedback to the Committee with respect to amendments to the Improvement Plan.

#### VIII. Codes of Conduct:

Codes of Conduct for both students and adults shall be amended to reinforce positive school climates by detailing, and consistently recognizing and supporting positive behavior, applying appropriate graduated and restorative responses for inappropriate conduct, in order to address the root causes of the individuals specific conduct, while promoting physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe and supportive teaching and learning environments for all students and adults in the school community. Restorative practice builds community, celebrates accomplishments, transforms conflict, rebuilds and strengthens relationships.<sup>12</sup> Such responses shall be educative and restorative and be chosen in response to the context of each situation to support relationship-building and improvement, and with particular attention to issues of equity. These responses may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- a. Reflective activities;
- b. School counseling support;
- c. Anger management;
- d. Health counseling or intervention;
- e. Mental health counseling;
- f. Skill building such as social and emotional, cognitive, and intellectual skills;
- g. Resolution circles and restorative conferencing;
- h. Community service;

instance, are parents/guardians, students and personnel present to lend their unique perspectives? Differing viewpoints can create powerful discussions and build a transparent culture where members feel valued, trusted, included and actively engaged in the school community.

<sup>9</sup>Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-222(d), all districts are required to have submitted and posted on their District website a Safe School Climate Plan, which contains provisions pertaining to bullying, filing complaints and conducting investigations.

<sup>10</sup>The District Safe School Climate Plan is placed within the School Climate Improvement Plan.

<sup>11</sup>See Appendix A for exact wording of the Standards.

- i. Conflict resolution or mediation; and
- j. Other actions detailed in accordance with Board policies and procedures such as those regarding:
  - i. Participation in extracurricular activities;
  - ii. Student discipline (including detention, in or out of school suspension, and expulsion); and
  - iii. Adult/employee professional responsibility, conduct, separation/disciplinary actions.

**IX. Professional Development:**

- A.** Mandated professional development in the area of school climate shall be provided by individuals and/or organizations deemed qualified service providers by the Superintendent and/or the Coordinator.
- B.** All school employees, as defined in this policy, shall participate in any mandated school climate professional development and update sessions.
- C.** The District shall provide necessary on-site coaching and/or technical assistance in the implementation phase of school climate improvement.

**X. Funding:**

The District shall budget sufficient funding to satisfy the requirements of this Policy. Such funding shall be distributed accordingly, with Superintendent's approval, for assessments and professional development, as well as for community outreach, training, coaching, and technical assistance.

**XI. Accountability:<sup>13</sup>**

- A.** The Board shall establish, foster, support and maintain a "no fault" framework and promote a culture of trust. Such a framework and culture is evident by a shared intent to:
  - i. Take collective responsibility for what has been accomplished and/or not accomplished;
  - ii. Learn from what has been done well and not so well;
  - iii. Work together to improve the quality and character of school life;
  - iv. Create a highly effective professional learning community (PLC) whose responsibility it is to:
    - 1. Establish norms, values and goals that encourage and support collaborative and courageous leadership;
    - 2. Model and provide high quality academic, social, emotional and ethical learning; and
    - 3. Engage in ongoing reflection and evaluation.
- B.** The Board shall hold itself, its individual members, and the Superintendent to the standards of this Policy and promote its intent and goals.
- C.** The Superintendent shall hold himself/herself, the staff, the students and other members of the school community to the standards of this Policy.

<sup>12</sup>Alameda County School Health Services (California) The seven principles of restorative practice are: (1) voluntary participation, (2) respect for everyone involved, (3) inclusion of all the people impacted, (4) a focus on the harms, needs, and causes that have arisen, (5) consensus-based decision-making focused on how to repair the harm and prevent future harm, (6) opportunity for dialogue that aligns with the above principles, and (7) expanding the capacity of the community to create a just and fair response.

## XII. Compliance with Other Applicable Laws:

This Policy does not modify or eliminate a school's obligation to comply with state and federal constitutional protections and civil rights laws applicable to schools.

## XIII. Liberal Interpretation:

The design of this Policy being to facilitate the operation of the school district in a positive manner and to advance justice, the Policy provisions will be interpreted liberally in any case where it shall be manifest that a strict adherence to them will work surprise or a manifest injustice.

## XIV. Bullying:

The Board believes that a school environment, in which students feel safe, supported, engaged and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically based or gender-based verbal put-downs
3. Threats and intimidation
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. Exclusion from peer groups within the school
6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school ("cyberbullying")
7. Targeting of a student based on the student's actual or perceived "differentiating" characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.
8. Teen Dating Violence as defined under "Definitions".

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in this district and is strictly prohibited.

When students who engage in any act of bullying:

- on school grounds
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity
- at a function or program whether on or off school grounds
- at a school bus stop
- on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education
- through the use of an electronic device
- via an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or
- outside of the school setting

Then the school climate is impacted in the following ways by:

- creating a hostile environment at school for the target,
- infringing on the rights of the target at school, or
- substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students, who engage in mean behavior towards another student, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

A comprehensive program, to improve the school climate, involving everyone in the schools and the community, to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of bullying. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels, school wide, classroom and individual.

The District's program:

1. Requires the development and implementation of a safe school climate plan by the Board of Education to address the existence of bullying in its schools;
2. Permits anonymous reports of bullying by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying by parents or guardians;
3. Requires school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;
4. Requires the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report;
5. Requires the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
6. Requires each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with bullying, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
7. Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
8. Requires each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying;
9. Requires each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;
10. Establishes a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and make such list publicly available and report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
11. Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
12. Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
13. Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;
14. Requires the principal of a school or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;

15. Prohibits bullying (A) 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 local or regional board of education, and (B) 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;
16. Requires, at the beginning of each school year, for each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan, and
17. Requires all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended. Such training shall include identifying and responding to bullying and preventing and responding to youth suicide;
18. Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of bullying;
19. As required, but not later than January 1, 2012, the Board of Education shall approve the safe school climate plan developed pursuant to statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, and cooperative assistance; and
20. Requires that not later than thirty calendar days after approval by the Board, the safe school climate plan shall be made available on the Board's and each individual school in the District's Internet website and such plan is to be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of bullying. The safe school climate specialist of each school is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying. The safe climate specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bully promptly.

In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate behavior at school and at home will reduce the instances and damage of bullying. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted and encouraged.

#### *Prevention and Intervention Strategies*

The District shall implement, as required by C.G.S. 10-222d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which 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 bully, parents and school employees and interventions with the bullied child, parents, and school employees.

6. School wide training related to safe school climate.
7. Student peer training, education and support.
8. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings, and individual interventions.
9. Additional interventions may include referral to a school counselor, school psychologist, or other mental health professional and periodic follow up by the safe school climate specialist. Interventions may also include culturally based curricula on social emotional well-being, self-awareness, and self-regulation.

The Superintendent shall develop rules and procedures, which carry out the provisions of this policy. In addition, the Superintendent shall ensure that students and parents of students are notified of this prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by ensuring the posting of such information at each school and by ensuring inclusion of such information in student and parent handbooks.

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

- (cf. 0521 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
- (cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
- (cf. 5131 – Conduct)
- (cf. 5131.21 – Violent and Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.8 – Out-of-School Misconduct)
- (cf. 5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
- (cf. 5131.91 – Hazing)
- (cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
- (cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 6121.1 – Equal Educational Opportunity)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
 10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student’s records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.  
 10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160 and PA 11-232.  
 PA 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians.  
 PA 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.

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