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Granby Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Granby Public Schools is committed to providing all members of its community with a safe, respectful and responsive learning environment that is free from aggression, bullying, and harassment. Our district understands that optimal learning cannot occur in an environment where intentionally hurtful actions are tolerated and/or ungoverned.

We thus subscribe to the following Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan developed in accordance with Massachusetts state law (See Legal References in Appendix).

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying as defined by Massachusetts state law 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:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property.
- Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property.
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the target.
- Infringes on the rights of the target at school.
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

*Though the word “repeated” is used to define bullying, the school will act upon any observed or reported hurtful behavior immediately via our standard discipline/code of conduct (see Student Handbook links in Appendix).

I. Prevention

A. Needs Assessment

Each school in the district will develop a RAMS subcommittee to create a developmentally appropriate assessment tool which will encompass the following:

- Surveying students/staff/families on school climate and bullying issues.
- Collecting and analyzing building specific data on bullying and harassment behavior.

B. Professional Development

Initial staff training for the Plan will occur in 2011, during a designated professional development day. “Staff” refers to *all staff*, which the state designates as including “educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.”

Annual staff training will be designed based on what is established in the initial, comprehensive training. This will include components that are addressed in our district-wide meeting beginning each school year, as well as those that are reviewed within each building.

New staff members will participate in an orientation program, which will include training about the Plan. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired.

Ongoing professional training will be determined by assessment of staff needs and by staff role (e.g., a bus driver will need a different skill set than an investigator or special education teacher) within the district and within buildings.

Assessment and training will focus on relevant and specific skills and knowledge base necessary for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying. These are:

- Use of developmentally appropriate language and interventions.
- Understanding the power dynamics among students in target, aggressor and bystander roles.
- Research regarding particular student sub-groups, known to be at higher risk for bullying, including students with disabilities.
- Internet safety and cyber-bullying.
- Elements and practices essential to a safe and positive school climate.

C. Activities/Education

R.A.M.S. (Respecting All Members of Society) is a multi-disciplinary task force, devoted exclusively to the development and stewardship of the District's Prevention and Intervention Plan. RAMS is comprised of faculty representing each of the three schools, parents, the school resource officer and students from both the Junior and Senior High Schools.

In 2011, RAMS will form building-based subcommittees which will develop and implement building-specific procedures for prevention and intervention. RAMS will work to ensure continuity among buildings, so that a cohesive plan is developed/implemented Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 12. Whole-school models are considered best practice and will be the expectation for each school in the district. These will address the following:

- Classroom/school structures, routines and teaching approaches that explicitly renounce bullying and harassment.
- Swift, appropriate intervention plans with students who are aggressors and appropriate protection/support plans for students who are targets; and their families respectively.
- Safe, inclusive environments that support and accept diversity.
- Assessment of school's supervisory system.
- Positive behavioral supports.
- Relationship building between adults and students.
- Positive practices that aid in the social and emotional development of students.
- Behavioral health services in school and in partnership with community.
- Safe use of Internet and electronic devices.
- Support and encouragement of non-academic and extra-curricular activities.
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum at every grade level that teaches emotion management, social problem-solving and the dynamics of bullying and harassment (DESE to suggest evidence-based programs in 2011); including age-appropriate summaries of plan with home and community components.
- Adult/staff culture that promotes support and role modeling.

D. Collaboration with Families

The district recognizes the need to engage and collaborate with families in order to increase prevention and intervention capacities. Essential aspects of effective collaboration are communication and relevant resources for families. The plan will address provisions for informing parents about bullying prevention/intervention curricula.

- How parents can reinforce curricula at home and support the plan.
- The dynamics of bullying; clarification about what bullying is and what it is not.
- Internet safety, cyber-bullying and electronic devices.
- Parents and guardians will also be notified via student handbook each year about the bullying prevention and intervention plan.

II. Interventions and Procedures

A. Reporting

Any member of the school community who wishes to make a complaint regarding bullying and/or harassment behavior can find an Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix), in each school's main office, guidance office, and nurse's office. The form will also be found online for download at a later date. Forms can be returned to the principal or vice principal.

Anyone who wishes to make a report anonymously may do so by filling out the standard reporting form without including their name. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Each building will have an anonymous drop box.

Any school community member who retaliates against another for reporting bullying/harassment, or who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying/harassment or retaliation, shall be subject to strong disciplinary action.

B. Investigation

The district understands that good investigative work requires several skills: ability to discern relational and power dynamics between and among children and adolescents (i.e., distinguishing friendships from strictly peer relationships, knowledge of social hierarchy and peer culture); ability to sort out normal conflict from bullying and to distinguish bullying from harassment; knowledge and use of appropriate consequences that will prevent an escalation of aggressive behavior.

Investigations will be conducted by building principals and/or their designees. Investigators warrant specialized training which will be determined by the Superintendent.

Once an allegation of bullying is made, the investigator will assure and restore safety of the target and/or reporter. Once safety considerations are addressed, further investigative procedures will be initiated.

A checklist will be developed and utilized for investigations to aid in making a determination of bullying.

Once a determination of bullying is made, the principal or designee will take age/developmentally appropriate responsive and/or disciplinary action. Consultation with a building clinician will be utilized to determine appropriate responsive action aimed at remediating the behavior(s).

Follow-up with the target, the aggressor, and their families will occur within a reasonable amount of time to ensure that further incidents have not recurred and to determine if additional supportive measures are needed.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported and substantiated. Formal documentation reports shall be maintained by the principal and/or designee and copies forwarded to the Director of Pupil Services. The Director of Pupil Services will track reports to aid individual schools and the district in their assessment of prevention and intervention needs.

C. Notification

In compliance with the statute, parents/guardians will be notified promptly of a complaint, once the principal or designee has determined that bullying or retaliation has occurred. Addressing and working with parents of children who bully others and with parents of children who are targeted requires different approaches. As part of their training, investigators will learn appropriate skills for working with parents involved in bullying situations.

Per the district Memorandum of Understanding with the Granby Police Department and the District Attorney's Office, the principal or designee will notify law enforcement (see Legal References in Appendix).

If the reported incident involves students from another school district, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify the principal or designee of the other school. All communication will be in accordance with the state and federal privacy laws and regulations (see Legal References in Appendix).

D. Students with Disabilities

For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum or who have a social/emotional related disability and have an IEP or 504 Plan, the Team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Whenever the Team evaluation indicates that a student's disability effects social skills development, or when the student's disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the Team must address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing (see Legal References in Appendix).

III. Appendix

A. Glossary of Terms

School Community Member is defined as any student, district or school employee, school committee member, independent contractor, school volunteer, parent or legal guardian of a student, or a visitor on school premises or at a school-related or school sponsored function or activity.

Reporter a person reporting an incident under this policy who is a third party and not the recipient of the alleged behavior that violates the policy.

Target: anyone against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Aggressor: anyone who engages in bullying, harassment, or retaliation

Verbal Bullying: Examples of verbal bullying are name-calling, taunting, mocking, mimicking, use of offensive language or jokes, unwelcome nicknames, threats, insults and laughing at someone's mistakes.

Written Bullying: inappropriate or offensive words, symbols, or drawings written to a target directly or on his/her property or in a public display (graffiti).

Physical Bullying: any unwelcome physical contact or threat of contact (use of proximity), pushing, poking, tripping, pantsing, taking or damaging another's property, throwing objects at someone.

Relational Bullying: Isolation of an individual from his or her peer group, spreading rumors and gossip, demanding favors in return for social acceptance, exclusion from peer group activities.

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.

Sexual Bullying: unwanted touch of a sexual nature, unwanted talk about one's private parts, unwanted comments about one's sexuality or sexual activities.

Harassment is defined as unwelcome, intentional, unprovoked discriminatory behavior, toward an individual or individuals, motivated by membership (real or perceived) in a protected category including: race, color, religion, ethnicity/natural origin, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and age. Harassment includes **cyber-harassment** (see definition below).

Cyber-harassment is defined as any willful and repeated harm inflicted through, but not limited to, Web pages, social networking sites, email, instant messaging or text

messaging using computers, cell phones and other electronic devices which is motivated by the target individual or individuals membership in a protected group, whether real or perceived.

Sexual harassment: sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions or decisions regarding student evaluation or participation in school programs or activities (**quid pro quo** sexual harassment); or
2. such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or school performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive environment (**hostile environment**).

(See Legal References in Appendix)

Hostile Environment: a situation in which bullying or harassment causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Hazing: conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include beating, branding, pantsing, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation (see Legal References in Appendix).

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

Bullying and harassment may occur student to student, adult to student, student to adult, adult to adult, male to female, female to male, female to female, and/or male to male.

B. Legal References

Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010
AN ACT RELATIVE TO BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

Memorandum of Understanding (link to be created)

603 CMR 49.00
RELATED TO STATE AND FEDERAL PRIVACY LAWS AND REGULATIONS

M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972), as amended by chapter 92 of the acts of 2010
RELATED TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended 45
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et. seq. (Title IX)
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00
RELATING TO SEX DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

M.G.L CH. 269, S.17.
RELATED TO CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

C. Links to Student Handbooks

http://www.granbyschoolsma.org/west_street/handbook/index.pdf

http://www.granbyschoolsma.org/east_meadow/handbook/index.pdf

<http://www.granbyschoolsma.org/ghs/handbook/index.pdf>

**Granby Public Schools
Incident Reporting Form**

1. Name of Reporter/Complainant: _____

2. Check whether you are the:

- Target (of the behavior) Reporter Staff Member Parent
- Administrator Other (specify)

3. School: _____ **Grade:** _____

4. Information about the incident:

- Name of target _____ Name of aggressor _____
- Date(s) & time(s) of incident(s): _____
- Incident location(s) (be as specific as possible): _____

5. Witnesses (list people who saw the incident OR have relevant information about the incident):

Name: _____ student staff other (specify) _____

Name: _____ student staff other (specify) _____

6. Describe the details of the incident (name of persons involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used; use additional paper if necessary):

Signature of Reporter/Complainant: _____ **Date:** _____

Form given to: _____ **Position:** _____ **Date:** _____

