

Arlington Public Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

December 2010

I. Leadership

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan directly impacts the Arlington Public Schools 2010-2011 district goals. The district goals specifically address bullying intervention for staff, students, and parents, professional development, program development and curriculum integration, and provisions to support an inclusive school climate.

The Arlington Public Schools has organized a representative group of participants to serve on the district Task Force. The Task Force met this fall to give input into the development of a comprehensive district plan. Members on the task force included teachers, administrators (principals, the Special Education Director, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, department heads), parents, students, Arlington Police (SRO), Youth Health and Safety Coalition representatives, and members of various subgroups including PTO's and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEPAC). Subgroups of the Task Force in conjunction with the administration developed surveys, wrote sections of the plan, and continue to research curriculum and plan professional development. The Plan went out for public comment to school councils in November prior to being presented to the Arlington School Committee subcommittee and the full committee on November 23, 2010. Continued consultation with staff, local police, special education, SEPAC, school councils, and PTOs will be pivotal to the ongoing development and implementation of the Plan.

Teachers will report and intervene in incidences of bullying as well as implement prevention programs such as anti-bullying curricula. Secondary guidance counselors will center their Collaborative Learning Team work this year on cross-curricular activities and implementation of programs such as the *World of Difference*. District administrators will continue to track investigations of allegations, document incidences of bullying, respond and intervene to keep targets safe, and ensure support services for both targets and aggressors. Police will be pivotal in investigative procedures and identifying criminal/harassment charges.

Assessing needs and resources.

- The Assessment Sub Committee of the Task Force in consultation with MARC and an evaluator developed and administered separate bullying surveys to students in grades 3-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12, and to all parents and staff in the fall of 2010. All surveys have been constructed to be audience appropriate, include protected classes questions, and address local concerns. Surveys will be repeated in the fall of 2011. Follow up on these results will include collecting and analyzing district, building-specific and SEPAC data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying and focus on identifying vulnerable populations, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender and homeless students. This information will help to identify "hot spots" in school buildings, school grounds, or school buses, patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies for students with the skills and knowledge to respond to bullying, harassment and retaliation. Other interventions may include adult supervision, age-appropriate curricula, support service allocations, and teacher and parent education. Patterns of significant concern will be a priority of the district and will be addressed by teachers, administrators, and support services personnel.

Planning and oversight.

- This Plan was developed by the Arlington Public Schools Bullying Intervention and Prevention Task Force in conjunction with district administrators, was presented for public comment by the

co-chairs of the Task Force, the Interim Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Wellness and Counseling, and approved by the Arlington School Committee in December 2010. The Task Force Assessment Subcommittee will compile and analyze the surveys being administered this fall, measure these results as well as end of the year incident reports of bullying, and report back to the larger Task Force in the spring.

- Principals K-5, Principal/Assistant Principals 6-8, and High School Deans 9-12 are the designees in each school who are responsible for receiving reports, conducting investigations, contacting the parents of targets and aggressors of confirmed incidences of bullying, and inputting these into Powerschool.
- Social workers and guidance counselors will provide and monitor progress of individuals group support for both targets and aggressors. Classroom curriculum, *Open Circle*, and the peer leader program, *World of Difference* will support these efforts. Students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will also be provided by these supports and any additional resources as identified by the Team developing the IEP.
- Professional development on “Recognizing, Responding and Reporting Bullying” was and will continue to be offered to all teachers and staff annually through the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.
- The School Committee has developed and approved a policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention and will re-visit it at the end of the 2010-2011 school year.
- Codes of conduct, school handbooks have been revised, and the Incident Report form and investigation format have been revised and developed by principals to coincide with district goals and the policy based on the law.
- Schools and districts will establish a referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services. Current local referral protocols will be evaluated to assess their relevance to the plan, and revised as needed.
- The Director of Health and Wellness will coordinate parent resources to address bullying and cyberbullying, post these on the district website, and organize relevant parent forums.
- This Plan will be reviewed annually.

Arlington Public Schools priority statement

The Arlington Public Schools are 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 develop resilient, strong, and kind young people, to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

II. Training & Professional Development

Annual staff training on the Plan.

Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include specific staff duties under the Plan, such as reporting and responding, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be trained in district procedures during the school year in which they are hired, unless they are able to demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

Ongoing professional development

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the 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

school wide and district wide professional development has and will be informed by research and include information on the following:

- Developmentally and age appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally and age appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- 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;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Anti-Bullying Training and Professional Development to date in 2010 to address the above criteria:

- Administrative Training, full day, “Investigative Skills and Strategies Workshop” (August 25, 2010) by Richard Cole, Civil Rights Attorney and Safe Schools Consultant
- Opening Day of school (Sept. 7, 2010) presentation for all teachers and staff on bullying law by Nora Mann from the Office of the Attorney General
- School based presentations on the law and school reporting procedures (Sept. 2010)
- Train the Trainer Workshop by MARC Oct. 9, 2010 (4 teachers/administrators trained)
- Professional 1/2 Day (Nov. 2, 2010) on “Recognizing, Responding, and Reporting Bullying and Harassment” for all teachers and staff led by Richard Cole, Civil Rights Attorney and Safe Schools Consultant, and by Phil Fogelman, from the Anti-Defamation League, on the *World of Difference* school climate program at the middle school
- EDCO course, “Addressing IEP Requirements for Victim and Perpetrator” (Dec. 15, 2010) for (3) special education leaders

Whenever the evaluation of the Individualized Education Program team indicates that a student has a disability that affects social skills development or that the child is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of the child’s disability, the Individualized Education Program shall address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

Special education leaders and other district team members will be trained to address the necessary social, behavioral and self-advocacy skills that may be included in the IEP to develop the student’s skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. They will gain the background knowledge needed to create an IEP that considers parent and student concerns, available assessments, and the student’s current levels of performance. This training will also include skills to address the needs of students with autism or whose disability affects social skills development or the student who may participate in or be vulnerable to bullying harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability. Compliance related procedures will be developed according to DESE guidelines.

Currently the Arlington Public Schools has trained or is in the process of training staff in the following programs that promote and model the use of respectful language; foster an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference; build relationships and communication with families; constructively manage classroom behaviors; employ positive behavioral intervention and constructive disciplinary practices; teach students explicit skills for positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others; engage students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and maintain a safe and caring classroom for all students:

- K-5 – *Open Circle* in all elementary schools
- K-6 - Comprehensive Health – *The Great Body Shop*
- Gr. 6-8 – Peer leaders in *World of Difference* program

- Grade 7-10 - Comprehensive Health Program
- Grade 8 - Facing History and Ourselves
- Gr. 9-12 – Advisory groups that are made of of small groups of students per grade, that are assigned to a teacher and meet periodically throughout the year on a variety of topics, including bullying and cyber-bullying.

Identified Needs for Professional Development:

- Research programs and train teachers in a curricular framework for teaching acceptance, understanding, and celebrating differences, especially for students with disabilities
- Continue to train new Pre-K- 5 teachers in *Open Circle*
- Purchase and train all teachers in additional curricula packet of Bullying
- Train pre-K teachers in *Second Step*
- Train K- 5 teachers on explicit bullying lessons in *Open Circle*
- Research and train teachers on additional social competency curricula for middle and high school students
- Expand implementation of *World of Difference* program at the middle school
- Include training in classroom management techniques for new Pre-K-5 teachers during orientation (already do this for secondary teachers)
- Integrate anti bullying concepts into literature & history of existing curriculum like *Facing History* program
- Research and introduce lessons on cyber-bullying and media safety for students in Gr. 3-12
- Professional Development will be provided to district team members on evidence based instruction on bullying prevention based on the Massachusetts Department of Secondary Education guidelines for acceptable programs.

Written notice to staff.

The district will provide all staff with annual written notice of the Plan, and publish information about it on the website, including sections related to staff duties and the Initial Bullying Report form in the district employee handbook, the New Teacher Handbook, school student handbooks and codes of conduct.

III. Access to Resources and Services

Current Resources identified in the Arlington Public Schools:

At each level, *developmentally* and age appropriate interventions are provided for all students, targets and aggressors, and parents:

- Social workers at the elementary level provide groups and counseling for identified targets and aggressors. Classroom teachers use *Open Circle* anti-bullying lessons and other explicit curriculum to reinforce a positive school climate.
- The middle school counselors and social workers will lead groups for targets and aggressors as identified and teach bullying and cyberbullying lessons integrated into the curriculum. To create a positive school climate, *The World of Difference* peer leadership program is being implemented.
- At the high school level, social workers will lead groups for identified targets and aggressors. guidance counselors, administrators and social workers are additional resources. Health and Advisory classes led by counselors and teachers address issues of anti -bullying and support bystanders to have the courage to speak up to bullying.
- Parents are supported by the administration at each level. Resources for parents include, but are not limited to annual:
 - o *Open Circle* Parent Workshops

- o “Guiding Good Choices” Workshops
- o Parent Forums on bullying legislation, cyber-bullying and other anti bullying programs
- o Anti-bullying resources, such as the “Creating Safe Schools; Prevention, Interventions, Response and Recovery Site,” and Reporting Form on district and school websites
- o Upon request, essential information will be translated for parents in home languages other than English
- o List of referrals to outside resources and agencies will be posted to our website

Personnel resources

- Teachers
- Guidance counselors
- School Psychologists
- Social workers – general education and special education
- School nurses
- Administrators
- Arlington Youth Consultation Center – in school and outside resources
- School-based Safety Teams
- Collaboration with English Language Learners Department
- Other town agencies: Police, Human Rights Commission, Commission on Disabilities

Identified needs:

- Special Education forums for parents of students on IEPs addressing social skills development and helping students who are vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of his or her disability.
- Comprehensive parent education resources compiled and disseminated on the district website with links to school websites (including access to resources in languages other than English)
- Consistent process for communicating information to all staff, students, and parents
- Compliance guidelines from DESE regarding IEP process, development, and documentation regarding bullying of students with special needs on IEPs or whenever an evaluation indicates that a child has a disability on the autism spectrum.
- Identification of additional culturally and linguistically appropriate anti-bullying resources within the schools, the district and the community.
- Procedures to ensure that all students on IEPs participate in and receive developmentally and age-appropriate instruction and access to the general curriculum programs provided within the district at all grade levels.

Counseling and Other Services

- Arlington has a long-standing relationship with many outside agencies that provide counseling in and out of school. The Arlington Youth Consultation Center and Brighton Allston Mental Health are invited into the schools to provide group and individual counseling and frequently follow up with families as well. Provisions for families and students with cultural, linguistic, and/or financial needs are also made available.
- Administrators in each school are responsible for creating safety plans for students who have been the targets of bullying or retaliation. Additionally, teachers provide social skills programs to prevent bullying, and social workers and guidance counselors offer education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting early signs of bullying behaviors.

Identified Needs:

Common district protocols and safety plans for bullying and retaliation

Students with disabilities

- If the IEP Team determines that a student's disability adversely affects social skills development, a student who has a disability on the autism spectrum, and/or a student may be found to be participating in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- Whenever an evaluation indicates that a child has a disability on the autism spectrum, the team must consider instruction that will develop the skills and proficiencies needed to identify and respond to bullying, harassment and teasing.
- All available and existing curricula to address these needs will be modified and/or be accessible to students with disabilities. Curricula that is evidence-based / DESE guidelines for acceptable program instruction will be provided to support identified goals/objectives.

Identified Needs

- District intervention to address bullying of students with disabilities.
- Types of specially designed instruction that may be needed to access the general curriculum

Referral to outside services

- Arlington has a referral process for providing families with services outside of school.
- District protocol will be developed as part of the investigation process so that students and families of both the aggressor and the target are provided with a referral to outside resources, when deemed necessary.
- The district website contains a book of outside resources in the local area.

Identified Needs

- Current referral protocols to local agencies evaluated to determine their relevance to the Plan, and revised accordingly
- Training for District After School Program personnel
- Training for Lunch Monitors
- Training for personnel transporting students
- Training for coaches

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Arlington Public Schools will include bullying prevention and social competency as part of its comprehensive health programming and school wide cross-curricular initiatives. The goal to ensure school cultures that support teachers to create classroom and school environments that are conducive to building positive relationships. A variety of approaches will be taken at the different levels. Currently we are using the following programs and teaching approaches:

Anti-bullying programs currently in place:

Open Circle, The Great Body Shop, Second Step, World of Difference, Facing History and Ourselves, Comprehensive Health, Family and Consumer Science, Developmental Guidance Programs, and high school Advisory groups that include the following skills and approaches for students:

- 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 cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication

- technologies;
- enhancing students’ skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Components of the Plan, the law, and the skills above will be presented to students in opening of school assemblies each year. The district will take steps to ensure alternative means of communicating of the plan are modified to meet or respond to individual needs.

Identified needs:

Developmentally and age- appropriate activities/modifications/adaptations specific to students with disabilities

General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts include:

- Setting clear expectations for students in regards to behavior, classroom routines, and safety.
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful student behavior
- Creating safe school and classroom environments that incorporate an appreciation of differences for all students, including students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and homeless students. This will happen through implementation of programs listed above as well as special assemblies put on by the system and groups such as the Gay Straight Alliance, the Drama Department, The Human Rights Commission, and the Anti-Defamation League, etc.
- Responding immediately to derogatory remarks and reporting all suspected incidences of bullying
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline, with assistance from guidance counselors and social workers
- Implementing techniques that promote positive student-teacher relationships
- Reinforcing positive approaches to behavior, such as collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution, teamwork, and opportunities to practice positive behavior and healthy social and emotional development in *Open Circle*, *World of Difference*, Peer Mediation, high school Advisory groups, and health classes.
- Providing students with media and Internet safety information and authentic dilemmas to discuss in guidance, health, and other disciplines
- Supporting students’ interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities provided by the district.

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

The Arlington Public Schools’ administration and staff have been meeting and conducting trainings since August of 2010 to develop a policy, a common plan and procedures for reporting and responding to bullying within the district. The Policies and Procedures sub committee of the School Committee, in collaboration with the administration, drafted a policy that was approved on October 26, 2010 on Bullying Prevention ([File: JICFB](#) – see attached). We have educated the majority of staff on procedures for reporting and responding when bullying occurs.

Reporting bullying or retaliation

- All school and district staff members are required to immediately report to the principal or designee any instances of bullying or retaliation about which the staff member becomes aware or witnesses.
- Staff, students, parents or guardians, and others may report bullying or retaliation orally or by voicemail and/or in writing or by email. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be given to the principal or designee and will be recorded.

- Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members may be made anonymously orally or in writing and will also be recorded.
- The Incident Report Form is posted on the website for parents, staff, and students.
- Use of the Incident Report Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Report Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Report Form will be made available in other languages upon request.
- At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the entire school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies and procedures for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation.
- A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on school and district websites, and be available to parents or guardians, all staff, and all students.
- Reporting by staff
 - A staff member will report promptly to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.
- Reporting by students, parents or guardians, and others
 - The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. 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 principal or designee.

Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

Safety

- Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target 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's schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation as necessary.
- The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies to protect from bullying or retaliation any student who has reported bullying or retaliation, witnessed bullying or retaliation, provided information during an investigation, or who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

Obligations to Notify Others

- *Notice to parents or guardians.*

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or

guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

- ***Notice to another school or district.***

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

- ***Notice to Law Enforcement.***

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

Investigation

- The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. For students on IEPs, targets and aggressors, the principal or designee will review the current IEP for information about skills or proficiencies or team determinations of need as part of the investigation process.
- During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- The principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, in consultation with the school counselor as appropriate, may conduct interviews. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation. All acts of bullying that have been investigated and confirmed will be recorded in Powerschool.
- Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

Determinations

- The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after an investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what corrective actions and/or disciplinary action are necessary. Disciplinary measures will be left to

the administrator's discretion, within the guidelines of the school Code of Conduct and age appropriateness.

- Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills support.
- The principal 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 principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's 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.

Responses to Bullying

Teaching appropriate behavior through skill-building:

- Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal, teacher, and school counselor will work with students and relevant staff to ensure that the behavior stops. The school principal or designee will follow up and monitor the behavior.
- The principal shall contact the school counselor, social worker, or special education teacher to determine what appropriate intervention(s) and skill building should be put in place for both the target and aggressor. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B -3, as amended by chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying harassment, or teasing.

Social workers, guidance counselors, teachers, special educators, nurses, and administrators will respond to bullying incidents with a variety of individualized supports, group interventions, and techniques:

- Individual counseling with social workers/counselors
- Small group counseling (Lunch Bunch)
- Ongoing support and consultation for students, i.e. check-ins with counselors, teachers, the nurse, and/or administrators
- Classroom social competency instruction
- Assemblies and special programs that address school climate, bullying, bystanders, etc.
- District and school speaker forums, educational groups, and resources on websites and in weekly bulletins to support parents to reinforce the skills and techniques for social and emotional development at home
- Further intervention(s) when deemed appropriate by Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT) or Student Support, At-Risk, and Learning Teams
- Individual Educational Plans that focus on skill development and safety and provide appropriate resources as determined by the IEP team

Taking Disciplinary Action

- If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.
- Disciplinary actions will be consistent with the Plan and with the school or district's code of conduct unless the IEP process determines otherwise. If the principal or designee determines that

a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action as well.

- The Special Education department will be consulted to ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 504 ADA, and state regulations.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

- The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others.
- The principal or designee may choose to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.
- Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement these immediately.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

Arlington has had a strong parent education program for the past twenty years. As new issues arise, such as the dangers of the Internet and cyberbullying, and new curricula are implemented, programs have been offered to all parents in the community free of charge. The district recognizes that parent participation is a crucial component of a student's education and that no school district is able to address all students' needs and development without parental support and involvement.

- This fall a new link on the district website, "Creating Safe Schools: Prevention, Intervention, Response and Recovery," has been added with a host of resources on safety and bullying prevention.
- Each year the district offers parent workshops on the social competency program, *Open Circle*, to teach parents and guardians how to reinforce the social skills and strategies at home and to support the school and district Plan.
- The District Special Education Department will communicate all IEP team guidelines, processes and protocols to parents and The Special Education Advisory Council.
- These programs are offered in collaboration with school PTOs, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and other educational organizations.

Parent education and resources:

- *World of Difference* Parent Program (10-26-10) led by Phil Fogelman outlined the middle school program being implemented this year to enhance school climate
- An Act Relative to Bullying - How Legislation Impacts Our Schools (November 8, 2010)
- *Open Circle* Trainings
- "Guiding Good Choices" training
- Annually parents receive the "Parent Notification Law," which outlines the bullying prevention topics covered in health classes. At the elementary level The *Great Body Shop* Parent Bulletins alert parents about the topics being covered in each unit as well as strategies and ideas for follow up at home. School open house events each fall provide information and syllabi on health topics being covered.
- Beginning in Fall 2011, the parent notification letter sent home will include: information about the dynamics of bullying, cyberbullying, and online safety.
- The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be posted on school and the district web sites in addition to parental written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and district's Internet safety policy.
- The Acceptable Use of Technology and the Internet Policy will reference the Code of Conduct that addresses cyberbullying, both of which require sign off by the student and parent/guardian.

- Accessibility of information at a variety of locations, in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians, and in multi-dimensional means such as email, hard copy, websites, cable TV, workshops, PTO's, SEPAC, School Councils, and Metco program will enhance communication and outreach to parents who don't typically participate in school events.

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

- 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:
 - 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; or
 - 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's 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.
- Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, 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 or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

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