## North Central Charter Essential School

# **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

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## I. LEADERSHIP

A. <u>Public involvement in developing the Plan</u>. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, NCCES will invite teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement personnel, students, parents, and guardians to attend a meeting where we will gather ideas and work together to develop our plan. This meeting will take place in November 2010. NCCES draft plan will be made available on our website and will be accessible to the public for a public comment before our plan is approved by The Board of Trustees.

Assessing needs and resources. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff, will assess the adequacy of current programs; review current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This process will assist NCCES in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, NCCES will revise or develop policies and procedures; establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities. Here at NCCES, we have a Peer Mediation program that is accessible to all students when needed. The Peer Mediation Program consists of a Director and over 30 students who have been trained at length to help peers resolve conflicts peacefully. Referrals for mediation may be made by students, staff, parents, or other concerned parties. Along with our Peer Mediation program we have 5 outside counselors coming in on a weekly basis to meet with some of our students with mental health issues, and this school year (2010-2011), NCCES has also brought in the Training Active Bystanders program (TAB) for 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders, which teaches our students how to deal with different bullying situations they may see in our school or outside in the community. NCCES has opened up a new position this year and has hired a new staff member, the Student Services Administrative Assistant, who is responsible for supervising all students sent down to the Dean's Receiving office for disciplinary issues while they wait to be processed as well as adding another person to the Student Services Team. NCCES is a trauma sensitive school and has been recognized by the state as a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment for 3 years.

At NCCES, we will create a group that is a collaboration of representatives of each stakeholder to monitor the implementation and progress of our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Based on the results of our School Climate Survey for the school year 2009-2010:

- 85.9% of students agreed that most students at NCCES show respect for other students in the school.
- 90.4% of students agreed that there is a strong sense of community at NCCES.
- 89.4% of students agreed that NCCES policies, procedures, practices, and indicators of success reflect commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.
- 87.7% of students agreed that students are respected and listened to at NCCES.
- 88.1% of students agreed that they feel emotionally safe coming to school at NCCES.
- 91.3% of students agreed that they feel physically safe coming to school at NCCES.
- 93.9% of students said they feel safe when coming to school
- 86% of students agreed that if they need support with non-school related issues (social, relationships, home, safety, etc) they know where to go for help.
- 87.9% of students agreed that when they go for help they feel supported.

- 87% of students agreed that NCCES teachers and administrators are fair.
- 87.4% of students agreed that they are proud to be part of NCCES.
- B. <u>Planning and oversight</u>. NCCES has outlined the school leaders who will be responsible for the following tasks under our Plan:

1) Receiving reports on bullying (Casey Beaulac, Dean of Students);

2) Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes (Casey Beaulac, Dean of Students);

3) Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors (Casey Beaulac, Dean of Students);

4) Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law (Tricia May, Principal);

5) Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors (Casey Beaulac, Dean of Students);

6) Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use (Tricia May, Principal);

7) Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them (Casey Beaulac, Dean of Students);

8) Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct (Casey Beaulac, Dean of Students);

9) Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials (Casey Beaulac, Dean of Students);

10) Reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently (Casey Beaulac, Dean of Students)

#### C. <u>Developing priority statements</u>.

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

NCCES is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

NCCES understands that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. We will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

NCCES will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities, such as athletic events, etc. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff

development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and NCCES is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence.

## II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At the beginning of this school year 2010-2011, all staff, including support staff in the building, underwent professional development regarding bullying. This was accomplished by bringing in the Training Active Bystanders program run by Quabinn Mediation. This program included six units on subjects such as moral courage, inhibitors and how to use your resources if needed. This was accomplished as a whole staff before any students were in school and got all involved in thinking about this bullying issue that we would be facing this school year.

- A. <u>Annual staff training on the Plan</u>. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Principal or Dean of Students 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 NCCES.
- B. <u>Ongoing professional development</u>. The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of NCCES professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:
  - (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
  - (ii) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
  - (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
  - (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
  - (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
  - (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development include:

- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;

- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.
- C. <u>Written notice to staff</u>. The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

#### III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Α. Identifying resources. As stated above, here at NCCES we have a Peer Mediation program that is accessible to all students when needed. The Peer Mediation Program consists of a Director and students who have been trained at length to help peers resolve conflicts peacefully. Referrals for mediation may be made by students, staff, parents, or other concerned parties. This has proven to be an effective way for students as well as staff to resolve conflicts that may otherwise lead to further disciplinary actions. We also have 5 outside counselors coming in on a weekly basis to meet with some of our students, and this school year (2010-2011), NCCES has brought in the Training Active Bystanders program (TAB) for 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders, which teaches our students how to deal with different bullying situations they may see in our school or outside in the community. We have also opened up a new position this year and have hired a new staff member, the Student Services Administrative Assistant, who is responsible for supervising all students sent down to the Dean's Receiving office for disciplinary issues while they wait to be processed. In regards to safety planning teams, at NCCES we have a Student Services Team (SST) which meets weekly to discuss our students, any concerns the team members may have about these students, and any other issues that arise in our school community.

<u>B.Counseling and other services</u>. At NCCES we have two school counselors, one who services our 7-9<sup>th</sup> grade population and another counselor who services our 10-12<sup>th</sup> grade population. Referrals to our counselors may be made by parents, staff, and other student allies. Both of our school counselors, along with our Dean of Students, are available to assist students in developing safety plans if they have been targets of bullying or retaliation. As stated above, we also have five outside counselors who come in to meet with several of our students. We have two Social Skills groups, which includes students from all grades, as well. The Social Skills group meets on Thursdays to practice different skills that the involved students can use here in school and in their everyday lives, such as starting conversations, listening, etc.

- C. <u>Students with disabilities</u>. As stated in our student handbook on page 23, "The Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) for every specials needs student will indicate if the student can be expected to meet the provisions of the rules and regulations for students at NCCES. If a student's handicapping condition dictates that a student cannot meet behavioral expectations, a modification will be described in the student's Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.)"
- D. <u>Referral to outside services</u>. Students who are in need of referral for outside services such as counseling or family assistance need to see any member of the Student Support Team (Dean, Counselors, Nurse, Registrar, Special Education Coordinator) to start the process.

That adult will assist the student or family to get the proper documentation needed inorder to help assist them in receiving their outside service. For example, if a student is in need of outside counseling, the student or family will need to bring in all relative information to the Registrar who will contact any available counselor that comes into our school in order to get them set up as quickly as possible.

## IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- A. <u>Specific bullying prevention approaches</u>. Here at NCCES, bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
  - We empower 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. The Training Active Bystanders (TAB) program that we have implemented in our school for our <sup>7th</sup> to <sup>9th</sup> grade students teaches them how to intervene when they witness bullying/retaliation scenarios both in our school and outside in the community. We also have a representative from the District Attorney's Office coming in to meet with all of our students regarding Bullying in January. We also have a very active Student Ambassador program which is a leadership program and it addresses how students need to use their voice appropriately in these situations.
  - We help students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
  - We emphasize cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies by having all students review and sign an Acceptable Use Policy before gaining access to our computer system;
  - We enhance students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications by encouraging them to take part in our social skills group that teaches students necessary and helpful skills to use in social situations both in school and out in the community;
  - We engage students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The plan will be reviewed with students at the time when the District Attorney is making the presentation to each grade level.

B. <u>General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts</u>. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. At NCCES, the following approaches underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- We set clear expectations for students and establish school and classroom routines;
- We strive to create a safe school and classroom environment for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students; We encourage our students to be accepting and respectful to one another both in school and in the community. We also have a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender (GLBT) Group here at school that meets to discuss issues and allows kids to express

their feelings and feel supported by their peers.

- We use appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline, for an example, our Make It Right Approach (MIRA) to discipline, which focuses on helping our children understand what they have done, take responsibility for their actions, and make things right with teachers, staff, members, and their peers has it's base in restorative justice.
- We use positive behavioral supports;
- We encourage adults in our school community to develop positive relationships with students through our advisory program;
- We model, teach, and reward pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- We use the Internet safely and have an Acceptable Use Policy that each student and their families must review and sign in order to have access to computers at NCCES;
- We support students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength. We have several clubs and groups such as GLBT, Social Skills Group, Student Ambassador program, and we also have a variety of school sports that we encourage our students to be involved in.

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

A. <u>Reporting bullying or retaliation</u>. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by NCCES staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be either oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A staff member is required to report immediately to Principal, Tricia May, or Dean of Students, Casey Beaulac, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school staff members, may be made anonymously. NCCES has made a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box (x555), and an email address (bullying@ncces.org).

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. NCCES will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians, as well as in our Student Handbook; 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 Dean of Students; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, NCCES will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal and Dean of Students will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school website, and in information about our NCCES Bullying Prevention Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the Principal or Dean of Students when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Principal or Dean of Students does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to the behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with NCCES policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

NCCES 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 Dean of Students. 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 Dean of Students.

- B. <u>Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation</u>.
  - 1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal or Dean of Students 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 Dean of Students will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Principal or Dean of Students will implement appropriate strategies for protection from bullying or retaliation, a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

- 2. Obligations to Notify Others
  - a. <u>Notice to parents or guardians</u>. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or Dean of Students 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 Dean of Students contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
  - b. <u>Notice to Another School or District</u>. 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 Dean of Students 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.

c. <u>Notice to Law Enforcement</u>. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal or Dean of Students has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal or Dean of Students 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 Dean of Students shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the Principal or Dean of Students will, consistent with NCCES Bullying Prevention Plan and with applicable school policies and procedures, consult with other individuals the Principal or Dean of Students deems appropriate.

C. <u>Investigation</u>. The Principal or Dean of Students will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the Principal or Dean of Students will among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Principal or Dean of Students (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Principal, Dean of Students or other staff members as determined by the Principal or Dean of Students, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal or Dean of Students will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or Dean of Students will maintain maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with NCCES policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or Dean of Students will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

D. <u>Determinations</u>. The Principal or Dean of Students will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal or Dean of Students will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. Principal or Dean of Students will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal or Dean of Students 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 development.

The Principal or Dean of Students 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 Dean of Students 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.

#### E. <u>Responses to Bullying</u>.

#### 1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the Principal or Dean of Students determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that our Principal, Tricia May and Dean of Students, Casey Beaulac have considered include:

- The Make It Right Approach (MIRA)
- Life Skills Program
- Training Active Bystanders Program (TAB)
- Individualized behavior plans
- Meetings with parent/guardian for support
- Performing a "Kid-Talk" at Grade-Level Meeting or with S.S.T.
- Making referral for evaluation
- Peer Mediation

## 2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Principal or Dean of Students decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Principal or Dean of Students, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the NCCES Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the Principal or Dean of Students determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Principal or Dean of Students will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the Principal or Dean of Students have used is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. One strategy that we already use here at NCCES is having all available staff members in the hallway during passing time throughout our school day.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal or Dean of Students 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 Dean of Students will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

## VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. <u>Parent education and resources</u>. NCCES will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by our school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations. Flyers and handouts will also be available in the school lobby, front office, and in the offices of the Student Support Team regarding bullying/cyberbullying.
- B. <u>Notification requirements</u>. Each year, NCCES will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. Our plan will be added to our Handbook, which every student and family receives prior to enrolling in our school. We will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of our Bullying Prevention Plan and the school's Internet safety policy. All notices and information will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. Our Bullying Prevention Plan will also be made available electronically through our website. The plan will also be distributed and made available at our beginning of the year and mid-year advisory meetings.

## VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

As stated in our Student Handbook on pages 18 and 19, "Bullying will not be permitted on school grounds or at school sponsored events. However, bullying often occurs outside of the school's physical grounds, yet these actions affect the safety of our students as though they have occurred on school grounds. The school will address any bullying behavior demonstrated at school or outside of school affecting our school community. If you believe that you are being bullied, or have witnessed any act of bullying, you should inform the nearest adult, Dean of

Students or Principal. Failure to inform an adult may result in disciplinary action including suspension and/or expulsion. Many options are available to try and solve these matters before it becomes bullying here at NCCES such as Conferencing and Peer Mediation School suspension, parent/guardian contact, and possible expulsion may result from this behavior. Violations of this policy will be referred to the Police and appropriate legal authorities for further action."

## VIII. DEFINITIONS

<u>Aggressor</u> is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

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

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

<u>Cyberbullying</u>, 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, § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

<u>Hostile environment</u>, 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.

<u>Retaliation</u> 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.

<u>Staff</u> 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.

<u>Target</u> is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.