



# WOODBIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

40 Beecher Road – South  
Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525

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## MEMORANDUM

Jonathan S. Budd, Ph.D. – Superintendent  
[jbudd@woodbridgesps.org](mailto:jbudd@woodbridgesps.org)

TO: Woodbridge Board of Education Policy Committee

FROM: Jonathan S. Budd, Ph.D., Superintendent

DATE: December 9, 2021

RE: Proposed Revision of Policy 5131.911, "Bullying"

Please find attached a proposed revision of Policy 5131.911 to update this mandated policy based on current recommendations of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) that encompass all relevant statutes, including Connecticut Public Act 19-166, "An Act Concerning School Climates." The policy revision, which is total, is represented in red.

## Students

### Bullying

The Woodbridge Board of Education (Board) promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning, that is free from threat, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

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

### Definitions

**"Bullying"** means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent, or pervasive which:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to an individual,
- B. places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, or
- C. infringes on the rights and opportunities of an individual at school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

**"Cyberbullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices, or any electronic communications.

**"Teen dating violence"** means any act of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing, and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

**"Mobile electronic device"** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

**"Electronic communication"** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic, or photo-optical system.

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

**"Outside of the school setting"** means at a location, activity, or program that is not school-related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the Board.

**"School employee"** means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by the Board or working in a District school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a District school, pursuant to a contract with the District.

**"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life based on students', parents', guardians' and school employees' experiences of school life, including, but not limited to, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

**"Positive school climate"** means (a) a school climate in which the norms, values, expectations, and beliefs that support feelings of social, emotional, and physical safety are promoted, (b) students, parents/guardians of students, and school employees feel engaged and respected and work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision, (c) educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning, and (d) each person feels comfortable contributing to the operation of the school and care of the physical environment of the school.

**"Emotional intelligence"** means the ability to (a) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (b) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving, and interpersonal communication, (c) understand and identify emotions, and (d) manage emotions in oneself and others.

**"Social and emotional learning"** means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

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

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process; therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in the Woodbridge School District and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the Woodbridge Board of Education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased, or used by the Woodbridge Board of Education; and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school,

are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

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

The District's program:

1. Requires the development and implementation of a Safe School Climate Plan by the Woodbridge Board of Education to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its schools and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
2. Permits anonymous reports of bullying by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying by parents or guardians and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
3. Requires school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;
4. Requires the Safe School Climate Specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report, and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
5. Requires the Safe School Climate Specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
6. Requires each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with bullying or teen dating violence, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
7. Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
8. Requires each school to notify parents/guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation of the results of such investigation and verbally and by electronic mail, that such parents/guardians may refer to the plan language explanation of the rights and remedies posted on the District's website (available under CGS 10-4a and 10-4b);
9. Requires each school to invite the parents/guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act of bullying was directed and the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying;
10. Requires each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting of the parents/guardians of the student against whom the act of bullying was directed, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;
11. Establishes a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and make such list publicly available; and report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
12. Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
13. Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
14. Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
15. Requires the principal of a school or the principal's designee to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;
16. Prohibits bullying (a) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or

program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased, or used by the Board, and (b) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

17. Requires all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended. Such training shall include identifying and responding to bullying and preventing and responding to youth suicide;
18. Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of the school year of the process by which they may make reports of bullying or teen dating violence;
19. As required, the Board shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, cooperative assistance, and approval; and
20. Requires that, not later than thirty calendar days after approval by the State Department of Education, the Safe School Climate Plan shall be made available on the Board's and each individual school in the District's Internet website and such Plan is to be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of bullying and teen dating violence. The Safe School Climate Specialist of each school is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying and teen dating violence. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and teen dating violence promptly.

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

### **Prevention and Intervention Strategy**

The District shall implement, as required by C.G.S. 10-222d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which may include, but is not limited to:

1. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education.
2. School rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment, and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
3. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur.
4. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school.
5. Individual interventions with the bully or student who commits teen dating violence, parents/guardians, and school employees, and interventions with the students against whom the acts of bullying and teen dating violence are directed, parents/guardians, and school employees.
6. School-wide training related to safe school climate.
7. Student peer training, education, and support.
8. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings, and individual interventions.
9. Culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness, and self-regulation.

## **District Safe School Climate Coordinator**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying and teen dating violence in District schools;
3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education;
4. Respond to bullying and teen dating violence in District schools;
5. Meet with the Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying and teen dating violence issues in the District and make recommended changes to the District's Safe School Climate Plan.
6. Successfully complete, for the school year commencing July 1, 2014, the mental health first aid training provided by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services. (Such training is only required once.)

## **Safe School Climate Specialist**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in the school; and
3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying and teen dating violence reports in the school.

## **Safe School Climate Committee**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Principal of each District school shall establish a new committee or designate at least one existing committee that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in the school. The committee must include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, appointed by the Principal.

Beginning July 1, 2021, and each school year thereafter, such committee shall also include: (a) school personnel, including, but not limited to, at least one teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining unit representative for certified employees, (b) medical and mental health personnel assigned to such school, and (c) at the high school level at least one student enrolled at the school. The student is to be selected by students in a manner determined by the school Principal.

## **The Safe School Climate Committee shall:**

1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying;
2. Identify and address patterns of bullying and teen dating among students in the school;
3. Implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan (developed pursuant to Section 87 of PA 13-3) regarding the collection, evaluation, and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying or teen dating violence (defined in

Connecticut General Statutes 10-222d) and report such information, as necessary, to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator and to the school's security and safety committee.

4. Review and amend school policies relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
5. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
6. Educate students, school employees, and parents/guardians of students on issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
7. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and teen dating violence; and
8. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification, and response to school bullying and teen dating violence for the school.

Parent/guardian and student members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #3 or any other activity that may compromise the confidentiality of a student.

### **Administrative Responsibility**

The Superintendent shall cause the development of rules, procedures, and forms to carry out the provisions of this policy.

- (cf. 0521 – Equal Opportunity Plan/Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 4131 –Professional Development)
- (cf. 5114 – Suspension/Expulsion; Student Due Process)
- (cf. 5131 – Conduct)
- (cf. 5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
- (cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 5145.5 – Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.511 – Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program)
- (cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination)

### Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student's records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.

10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160, PA 11-232, PA 14-172 and PA 18-15 and PA 19-166

10-22k District safe school climate coordinator. Safe school climate specialist. Safe school climate coordinator (as amended by PA 21-95, Section 14)

PA 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians.

PA 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.

PA 14-172 An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities through Education and Ensuring Safe School Climates.

PA 14-234 An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

PA 19-166 An Act Concerning School Climate

### **Policy adopted:**

## Students

### Hazing

### Bullying

Hazing, bullying, menacing and abuse of students, in any form or format, is not acceptable behavior and is prohibited in the Woodbridge School District.

Any student in the Woodbridge School District who engages in a repeated act against another student in the district that causes physical or emotional harm to a student or such student's property, places a student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property, creates a hostile environment at school for such student, infringes on the rights of such student at school, or substantially disrupts the educational process shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, at any school sponsored or school related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional Board of Education.

Bullying occurring outside of the school setting is also prohibited and will not be tolerated if such bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the targeted student, infringes on the targeted student's rights at school, or substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of school.

Appropriate disciplinary action in response to bullying may include suspension or expulsion. In addition, it is the policy of the Woodbridge Board of Education that school principal or a principal's designee will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when the principal or designee believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.

### Definitions

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

- a. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- b. Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
- c. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
- d. Infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- e. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but is not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Bullying may take many forms, such as but not limited to:

1. physical violence and attacks;
2. taunts, name-calling or put-downs or discriminatory slurs;
3. targeting of a student based upon that person's actual or perceived "differentiating characteristics" such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, national or ethnic background, disability, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, or a student's association with a person or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics;
4. threats and intimidation;
5. extortion or stealing of money and possessions;
6. cyberbullying.

**Cyberbullying** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.



## **Other Applicable Definitions**

**"Mobile electronic device"** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

**"Electronic communication"** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

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

**"Outside of the school setting"** means at a location, activity or program that is not school-related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

**"School employee"** means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional Board of Education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional Board of Education.

**"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.

**"Gender identity or expression"** means a person's gender related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth.

## **Reporting and Responding to Bullying**

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigation and response to alleged acts of bullying. Reports of alleged acts of bullying will be addressed and responded to according to this policy and in accordance with Woodbridge School District's Safe School Climate Plan and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program.

Discrimination and retaliation are prohibited against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying.

Immunity will be granted against damage claims in accordance with state law to the Board, and school employees acting within the scope of their duties, students, parents and others who, in good faith, report, investigate, or respond to bullying in accordance with the Woodbridge School District Safe School Climate Plan. The immunity does not extend to gross, wanton, reckless, or willful misconduct.

The Superintendent of the Woodbridge School District will develop regulations to aid in the implementation of this policy. Such regulations shall be designed to improve overall school climate and to address the existence of bullying in the Woodbridge School District and shall provide for a Safe School Climate Plan and a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program as required by law.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-222d Policy on bullying behavior, as amended by Public Act 11-232.

10-222g Prevention and intervention strategy re bullying, as amended by Public Act 11-232.

10-222h Analysis of bullying policies.

**Policy adopted: March 17, 2014**

**WOODBIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Woodbridge, Connecticut

**5131.911**

**Students**

**Hazing**

**Bullying**

## Safe School Climate Plan

It is the shared responsibility of the Woodbridge Board of Education, in consultation with the Superintendent of the Woodbridge School District, the District Safe School Climate Coordinator, Safe School Climate Specialist and Safe School Climate Committee to develop, approve and adopt a Safe School Climate Plan in accordance with state law. The Plan is to be periodically reviewed and revised. The Plan is to be posted on the District website.

The Safe School Climate Plan is a multi-faceted approach to improving overall school climate and to addressing the existence of bullying in the Woodbridge School District. The Plan includes the following elements:

1. Students are permitted to make an anonymous report of bullying or to make an oral or written report of bullying to a Safe School Climate Specialist or to any school employee; a form to aid students in the making of such reports is available on Woodbridge District website, at Beecher Road School, and at the Board of Education offices.
2. Parents and students must be notified annually of the process by which students may make such reports; such notification is to be included in Student Parent Handbooks, Student Code of Conduct, on the District website, and posted in the main office of the school building, at the Woodbridge Board offices, and at other appropriate locations throughout the school district.
3. Parents or guardians of students are permitted to file written reports of suspected bullying; a form to aid parents in making written reports is available on Woodbridge School District's website, at Beecher Road School, and at the Board of Education offices; no anonymous parent reports will be accepted.
4. School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying are required to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report; school administrators receiving such oral or written reports are to share that information with the school specialist as soon as possible without undue delay. In the event of an extended absence of the school specialist from school for a period longer than one school week, the school administrator receiving the report should assume full responsibility for the investigation of the complaint, and for the school's response following all established guidelines and procedures for the investigation of bullying reports, being careful to keep a written record of the investigation; witness statements, copies of any parent invitations for a meeting, parent notifications, or any student safety plans generated. This documentation should be provided to the safe school climate specialist upon his/her return to school. In the event of an emergency situation, the receiving administrator assumes full responsibility immediately in the absence of the coordinator.
5. Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of the Woodbridge School District shall appoint from existing school staff a District Safe School Climate Coordinator charged with implementing the Safe School Climate Plan, collaborating with the Safe School Climate Specialist, the School Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying in district schools. The District Safe School Climate Coordinator is to meet with Safe School Climate Specialist at least twice during a school year to discuss bullying issues in the district and to recommend changes to the plan; the Safe School Climate Coordinator shall develop procedures and guidelines for the acceptance of reports, steps for investigation, and suggestions for resolution of bullying reports including specific deadlines to be followed, and will provide these guidelines/procedures to the principal for dissemination to all school employees at the start of each school year with continued availability throughout the school year. The deadlines set forth in the guidelines/procedures shall provide for a prompt response/resolution to reports taking into consideration all the circumstances of each individual case. The Coordinator will determine, what if any other appropriate methods of dissemination/notification of these procedures are recommended. The guidelines/procedures shall apply district-wide.
6. Requires, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year and each school year thereafter, the school principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist charged with the responsibilities of investigating or supervising the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensuring that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports, of collecting and maintaining records of the school's bullying reports and investigations and serving as the primary person responsible for preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying reports in the school.
7. Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year and each school year thereafter, the school principal shall establish or designate at least one new or existing committee as the Safe School Climate Committee to be responsible for fostering a safe school climate and addressing school bullying. The Committee is to include at least one parent of a current student. Specific responsibilities of the committee include: receiving copies of completed bullying investigation reports; identifying and addressing bullying patterns; reviewing and amending school bullying policies; reviewing the district Plan and making recommendations to the district coordinator based on issues at the school; educating students, parents, and others about bullying; collaborating with the district coordinator to collect data on bullying. A parent member(s) shall not receive copies of completed bullying investigation reports or engage in identifying and addressing bullying patterns or engage in any other activities that may compromise student confidentiality.
8. Beginning July 1, 2012 and every two years thereafter, the school shall assess its school climate using assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the Connecticut State Department of education in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools.

9. The safe school climate specialist shall review any anonymous student reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

10. A prevention and intervention strategy shall be included as required by statute for school employees to deal with bullying.

11. The student code of conduct shall include language concerning prohibition of bullying.

12. The principal or the principal's designee shall notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed, no later than forty eight hours after the completion of the investigation. The notification must include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result for the commission of further acts of bullying.

13. The principal or the principal's designee shall invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying; the invitation is to include information about the school's response to the incident and the consequences for further bullying. It is recommended that two separate meetings be held.

14. A procedure shall be established for each school to document and maintain records related to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education, and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

15. Case by case interventions shall be developed for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline; in all instances, any responsive disciplinary action is to be taken in accordance with district policies including the Student Code of Conduct.

16. Discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying shall be prohibited.

17. Documented student safety support plans shall be developed for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying.

18. The principal or the principal's designee, shall notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.

19. Bullying is prohibited (a) on school grounds, at a school sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (b) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

20. At the beginning of each school year, the school is required to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan.

21. All school employees shall annually complete the training described in C.G.S. 10-220a, which shall include identifying and responding to bullying and preventing and responding to youth suicide.

### **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program**

A bullying prevention and intervention program shall be implemented in the Woodbridge School District that strives to develop a school environment:

☐ which limits unacceptable behavior;

☐ where consequences are consistently applied in cases of violations of rules and other unacceptable behaviors;

☐ where adults act as authorities and positive role models;

☐ and where students are included in efforts to improve the school climate.

In addition, the Superintendent shall develop rules and procedures to carry out the provisions of this policy and to comply with applicable law. The Superintendent shall be responsible for developing a prevention and intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying. Such a "prevention and intervention strategy" may include, but is not limited to:

1. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education;

2. School rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts;

3. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur;
4. Inclusion of grade appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in Kindergarten to grade six;
5. Individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees;
6. School-wide training related to safe school climate;
7. Student peer training, education and support;
8. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
9. School climate assessments using instruments including surveys approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools.

## **Safe School Climate Plan**

### **Purpose/Priority Statement**

The Woodbridge School District is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. The goal is the establishment of a positive school climate in which norms, values, and expectations make students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe. 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. The District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The purpose of the Safe School Climate Plan is to promote consistency of approach and to create a climate in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable. Attitudes and practices can contribute to bullying, to lower levels of confidence, self-esteem and lack of achievement.

The following plan, The Woodbridge School District Safe School Climate Plan, addresses the mandated areas of compliance which are required under C.G.S. 10-222d as amended by P.A. 11-232. In addition to the following current efforts, the administration, faculty and staff of this District commit to continue to improve, enhance, and update both the Plan and its implementation biennially in order to best serve the students, parents, guardians and the community.

The Board of Education (Board) promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

### **I. Prohibition Against Bullying**

The Board of Education (Board) prohibits bullying (a) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and (b) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, (ii) infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

### **H. Definitions**

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

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)

**"Cyberbullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

**"Mobile electronic device"** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

**"Electronic communication"** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

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

**"Outside of the school setting"** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

**"School employee"** means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school Superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional Board of Education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional Board of Education.

**"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. (It is based on people's experiences of school and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)

### **III. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation (Complaint Process)**

#### **A. Publication of the Prohibition against Bullying and Related Procedures**

The prohibition against bullying shall be publicized by including the following statement in the Beecher Road School Parent and Student Handbook:

"Bullying behavior by any student in the Woodbridge School District is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. "Bullying" means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, gender identity, or physical mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- 1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- 2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- 3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

#### **B. Appropriate School Personnel**

All school employees are charged with the responsibility of taking reports of bullying or if witnessing acts of bullying to

notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available. Reports shall be appropriately investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available.

#### **District Safe School Climate Coordinator**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District's safe school climate plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying in District schools;
3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education; and
4. Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying issues in the district and make recommended changes to the District's safe school climate plan.

#### **Safe School Climate Specialist**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying in the school; and
3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying reports in the school.

#### **C. Annual Notification of the Complaint Process**

The process by which students may make formal, informal, and anonymous complaints as set forth below shall be publicized annually in the student handbook of each of the District schools. In addition, this Safe School Climate Plan shall be placed on the District website.

#### **D. Formal Written Complaints**

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file written reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school employee, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator, if the Safe School specialist is unavailable, for review and action in accordance with Section IV below.

#### **E. Informal/Verbal Complaints by Students**

Students may make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to the Safe School Climate Specialist, or to any school employee, as defined, or administrator. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school employee, or administrator or the Safe School Climate Specialist who receives an informal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the school employee, administrator, if not the Safe School Climate Specialist, shall be promptly forwarded to the Building Principal for review and action in accordance with Section IV below.

#### **F. Anonymous Complaints**

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school employee who receives the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the Safe School Climate Specialist, if not the Principal or his/her designee, shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

### **IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies**

#### **A. Teachers and Other School Staff**

School employees who witness acts of bullying, as defined above, or who receive reports of bullying shall promptly notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. A written report must be filed not later than two school days after making such an oral report concerning the events witnessed or reported.

School employees who receive student or parent reports of suspected bullying shall promptly notify the Safe School Climate Specialist of such report(s). If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a school employee, he or she shall prepare a succinct written report of the informal complaint, which shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a school employee, this employee shall verbally report the matter to the Safe School Climate Specialist not later than the next school day.

In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, school employees and other are encouraged to address the issue of bullying in other interactions with students. Teachers and other professionals may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. All school employees including teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "bullying."

## **B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist**

### **1. Investigation**

The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected bullying received by any school employee. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan. All such complaints shall be investigated promptly. The investigation must be completed promptly after the receipt by the Safe School Climate Specialist of any written report. In order to allow the District to adequately investigate all formal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied must complete a consent form that allows their District to release that student's name to those third parties who the District contacts as part of its investigation of that complaint with regard to the investigation of informal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied must complete the above referenced consent form so long as that student has not requested anonymity.

A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of bullying were verified, and, when acts of bullying are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

The school shall notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and in the case of a divorced/split situation, to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response, measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act was directed, and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complainant. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

### **2. Remedial Actions**

Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the Building Principal or his/her designee that is intended to address the acts of the perpetrator and the needs of the victim and to assure that the prohibition against bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such bullying behavior will end as a result.

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying" as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in-school suspension, suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Building Principal (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee.) The following sets forth possible interventions for building principals to enforce the Board's prohibition against bullying. No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.

The following sets forth permissible interventions for building principals (or other responsible program administrators) to enforce the Board's prohibition against bullying.

#### **a. Non-disciplinary Interventions**

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a

disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

In any instance in which bullying is verified, the building Principal (or other responsible program administrator) shall invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, and the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying. In the discretion of the building Principal or other responsible program administrator, the meeting(s) described in this section may be held jointly or separately, however the Connecticut State Department of Education recommends such meetings be separate.

#### **b. Disciplinary Interventions**

When acts of bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with Board policy. This consequence shall be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior.

#### **e. Interventions for Bullied Students**

The Safe School Climate Specialist/Building Principal (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student may include the following:

- counseling;
- increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations;
- encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;
- peer mediation where appropriate.

### **3. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other District actions may ameliorate any potential problem with bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. A focus will be placed on district and school efforts to improve school climate based upon the National School Climate Standards.

While no specific action is required and school needs for such interventions may vary from time to time, the following list of potential intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional staff members in each school:

- a. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;
- b. A safe school climate assessment on or after July 1, 2012 and biennially thereafter to determine the prevalence of bullying. Such assessments may include, in addition to those approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education, in collaboration with CAS, the National School Climate Standards Self-Assessment Tool and the Connecticut State Department of Education's "Improving School Climate Team Rubric;"
- e. Establishment by the school Principal of a Safe School Climate Committee in each District school or the designation of an existing committee that is responsible for fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in the school.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

- 1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying;
- 2. Identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school;
- 3. Review and amend school policies relating to bullying;
- 4. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
- 5. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying;



6. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and
  7. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying for the school.
  8. Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #2 above and from any other committee activities that may compromise student confidentiality.
- d. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur;
  - e. Inclusion of grade appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through grade six;
  - f. Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student, parents and school employees;
  - g. School wide training related to safe school climate;
  - h. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
  - i. Respectful responses to bullying concerns raised by students, parents or staff;
  - j. Planned professional development programs addressing bully/victim problems;
  - k. Student peer training, education and support. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
  - l. Avoidance of sex role stereotyping (e.g., males need to be strong and tough);
  - m. Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of staff and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;
  - n. Modeling by all school employees of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
  - o. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
  - p. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.

## **V. Reporting Obligations**

### **A. Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Perpetrator**

If after investigation, acts of bullying by a specific student are verified, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation, the Building Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator in writing of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification. In addition, the school shall invite the parent/guardian of a student who commits any verified act of bullying (after the completion of the investigation) to a meeting to communicate to the parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety and measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying. Records will be maintained by the School Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of the bullying reports, subsequent investigations and parental/guardian meetings.

### **B. Reports to the Targeted Student and his/her Parent or Guardian**

If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the Building Principal/Safe Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, as reflected in the student's educational records, shall not be disclosed to the parents or guardian of the victim, except as provided by law (e.g., court order/subpoena). In addition, the school shall invite the parent/guardian of the student against whom the verified act of bullying was directed, after the completion of the investigation, to a meeting to communicate to the parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the targeted student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying. Records will be maintained by the School Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of the bullying reports, subsequent investigations and parental/guardian meetings.

Notices shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and the other parent/guardian if requested. This mailing requirement shall be in effect for as long as the student attends the school in which the original request is made.

### **C. List of Verified Acts of Bullying**

The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of each school shall establish a procedure to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school, and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. The list shall be reported annually to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Given that any determination of

bullying involves repeated acts over time, each report prepared in accordance with Section III (1) above that includes verified acts of bullying shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of the report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of such verified acts of bullying in the school, and it shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

## **VI. Prohibition against Discrimination and Retaliation**

### **A. Safety**

Discrimination and/or retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of an act of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

The continuation and perpetuation of bullying of a student through the dissemination of hurtful or demeaning material by any other student is prohibited.

The District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination or retaliation in our school building, on school grounds, or in school related activities. All reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination and retaliation will be investigated promptly and prompt action will be taken to end that behavior and restore the student's against whom such bullying was directed (target's) sense of safety. This commitment is to be supported in all aspects of the school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent/guardian involvement.

Before formally investigating the allegations of bullying, discrimination or retaliation, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged student against whom such bullying was directed (target) and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but are not limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the alleged victim (target) and/or the alleged perpetrator in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the alleged student against whom such bullying was directed (target); and altering the alleged perpetrator's schedule and access to the alleged target. The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will contact the victim to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If determined necessary, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

### **B. Law Enforcement Notification**

The School Principal or his/her designee shall notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal or the Principal's designee believes any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.

## **VII. Training Requirements for School Staff**

A. Certified staff of the District shall be provided in-service training on the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide. (The Board, subject to the approval of the State Department of Education, is not required to offer an in-service program regarding bullying or youth suicide prevention and intervention if it instead implements an evidence-based model approach to this issue.)

B. Beginning teachers shall satisfactorily complete instructional modules as required by C.G.S. 10-145a which shall include a module in classroom management and climate, which shall include training regarding the prevention, identification, and response to school bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide.

C. Non-certified staff of the District will participate in annual training to be provided, within available appropriations, by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The training may be presented in person by mentors, offered in statewide workshops, or through on-line courses. Such training may include, but is not limited to:

1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying among students in school and outside the school setting;
2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate and effective interventions to stop bullying;
3. Information regarding the interaction and relationship between students committing acts of bullying, students against whom such acts of bullying are directed and witnesses of such acts of bullying;

Research findings on bullying, such as information about the types of students who have been shown to be at risk for bullying in the school setting;

4. Information about the incidence and nature of cyberbullying as defined in C.G.S. 10-222d, or

5. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

### **VIII. Notification Requirements**

A. A copy of this District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in written or electronic format to all District employees annually at the beginning of each school year.

B. The District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be made available on the Board's website and on the school website. Such posting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the approval of such plan by the Board.

C. The District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct. The District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be included in the Beecher Road School Parent and Student Handbook.

### **IX. School Climate Assessments**

A. On or after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, the Board requires each school within the District to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education.

B. Completed assessments shall be shared with the Board and then submitted by the Board to the State Department of Education.

### **X. Bullying Through the Use of Technology (Cyberbullying)**

An emerging form of bullying is the use of technology to threaten, intimidate, ridicule, humiliate, insult, or harass. Technology enables aggressive expression toward others and does not rely on physical strength or physical contact. By using a cell phone or the Internet, a student can quickly and aggressively spread rumors, threats, hate mail, or embarrassing photos through text messages, e-mails, or instant messages.

There are a number of social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) available to our students that can be misused and/or abused for bullying purposes. Any alleged misuse or abuse must be reported to any staff member or the Safe School Climate Specialist.

The District's discipline policy states that misuse, on or off campus, of electronic devices, for threatening/bullying/hazing or harassment is a violation and can be the basis for discipline on or off campus. When information is received that a student or students are involved in bullying through the use of technology either as the actor or a member of a group, or the victim, the following will be considered:

☒ If it takes place on campus or at a school sponsored event, disciplinary action will be taken.

☒ If it takes place off campus a school may take disciplinary action if the incident poses a likelihood of substantial disruption to the educational process or the orderly day to day operations of the school.

### **XI. Relationship to Other Laws**

A. Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the district and school rules, 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, gender, 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 district policies.

B. In addition, nothing in the "Plan" is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action under applicable laws, or local school or District policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the "Plan" covers the behavior.

### **XII. Immunity for Board of Education, School Employees, Others**

Members of the Board of Education and school employees are protected by statute against damage claims in the implementation of a safe school climate plan and, in accordance with a school district safe school climate plan, report, investigate, or respond to bullying. PA 11-232 also extends this immunity to reports of bullying incidents by parents, students, and others to a school employee according to a safe school climate plan.

To be immune, these parties must act in good faith and, in the case of a school employee or Board of Education, within the scope of their duties. The immunity does not cover gross, wanton, reckless, or willful misconduct.

**Regulation approved: March 17, 2014**

**WOODBIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Woodbridge, Connecticut

**Woodbridge School District**

**ANNUAL BULLYING NOTICE**

~~Bullying behavior by any student in the Woodbridge School District is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. "Bullying" means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:~~

- ~~A. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;~~
- ~~B. Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;~~
- ~~C. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student;~~
- ~~D. Infringes on the rights of such student at school; or~~
- ~~E. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.~~

~~Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or physical, mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.~~

~~Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:~~

- ~~A. Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;~~
- ~~B. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or~~
- ~~C. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.~~

~~Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.~~

**Woodbridge School District**

**Report of Bullying/Consent to Release Student Information**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student \_\_\_\_\_

To Parent/Guardian:

A complaint of bullying has been filed on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been the victim of bullying. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint, the Woodbridge School District may need to disclose the name of your child and/or other information which may otherwise disclose your child's identity.

**(Please check one):**

I hereby give permission for the Woodbridge School District to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the district to adequately and appropriately investigate such complaint, to third parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

I do **NOT** give permission for the Woodbridge School District to disclose my child's name, along with other information necessary to permit the district to adequately and appropriately investigate such complaint, to third parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print)

Woodbridge School District

Bullying Report Form

The Woodbridge Board of Education (Board) promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

Bullying as defined in P.A. 11-232 is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district that: causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property, places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, creates a hostile environment at school for such student, infringes on the rights of such student at school, or substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Complainant (student report may be anonymous) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe relationship to alleged victim(s)/bully(ies) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of alleged incident(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Location(s) of alleged incident(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Names of alleged bully(ies) \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of alleged victim(s) \_\_\_\_\_

List any witness(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the incident(s) as clearly as possible, including such things as: what force or physical contact, if any, was used and any verbal statements such as threats, requests, demands, etc. (attach additional pages if needed)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Complainant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Woodbridge School District**  
**Report of Bullying/Investigation Summary**

School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Location(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Reporter Information**

Anonymous Student Report \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Member Report \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Report \_\_\_\_\_

Student Report \_\_\_\_\_

Student reported as committing act: \_\_\_\_\_

Student reported as victim: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of alleged act(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time and place: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of potential witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Staff Use Only**

Action of Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bullying Verified?  Yes  No

Remedial Actions Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If bullying verified, report sent to parent(s)/guardian(s) of students?

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date sent: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date sent: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date sent: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date sent: \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach bullying complaint, witness statements and notification of parents of students involved if bullying verified)

**Woodbridge School District**

**Beecher Road School**

**Student Acknowledgement of Anti-Bullying Policy**

I understand the policy against bullying at Beecher Road School as explained to me by \_\_\_\_\_ (school personnel).

I am aware that if I engage in any of the actions or behaviors that constitute bullying in school, before or after school on school grounds, on the bus, or at school sponsored events, I can be subjected to school discipline for bullying. This could include: after school detention, school community service, loss of privilege, suspension in or out of school and/or possible expulsion.

I promise that I will not engage in any actions or behaviors that could be considered bullying. I promise to respect the rights of other students and to act appropriately towards other students.

Name: (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (if present) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

School Administrator or designee:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_