

JICFB - BULLYING POLICY, PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

PRIORITY STATEMENT

The Wellesley Public Schools expect that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

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

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, 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, or photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

The Wellesley Public Schools are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. 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 Wellesley Public Schools community understands that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing on the basis of their race, color, sex, age, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, housing status, or pregnancy or pregnancy related condition.

The WPS 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.

The Wellesley Public Schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore a 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 WPS Bullying Prevention and Incident Reporting Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. The Wellesley Public Schools are committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of bullying and violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Wellesley Public Schools **Principals** are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at their respective buildings except when a reported bullying incident involves the Principal or the Assistant Principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the **Superintendent** or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the **School Committee**, or its designee, shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school district; and
- At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the Wellesley Public Schools, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the victim or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- As stated in M.G.L. c. [71, § 370](#), nothing in this Plan requires the Wellesley Public Schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972

Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission, codified in 29 CFR § 1604.11

Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

603 CMR [26.00](#) (Access to Equal Educational Opportunity)

M.G.L. [71:37O](#); [265:43](#); [265:43A](#); [268:13B](#); [269:14A](#)

REFERENCES: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Voted: February 9, 2021