

Randolph Public Schools
Randolph Community Middle School

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed into law comprehensive legislation to address bullying in public and non-public schools. [*An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*](#), Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010,¹ requires school leaders to create and implement strategies to prevent bullying, and to address bullying promptly and effectively when it occurs. The following Plan represents Randolph Public Schools response to this legislation.

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APPENDIX A:	BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM	

¹ The law, in its entirety, may be found at <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw10/sl100092.htm>. You may also consult the Massachusetts General Laws for information described in this memorandum.

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Public involvement in developing the Plan.

Public involvement for this plan has been an on going process. Input and feedback is both encouraged. Teacher and staff input have been done both formally through staff meeting and team meetings as well as informally through verbal communication. Parent input was elicited and received in various settings, including: formal School Council meetings, a specific meeting scheduled to address Bullying Prevention, and informal feedback. The RCMS Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan is posted for public comment.

B. Assessing needs and resources.

A District Task Force was established in July 2010, to assess what procedures, resources and curriculum were currently in place to address Bullying in Randolph Public Schools, and to ascertain what additional steps were required to meet the requirements of the law. Representatives from each level (elementary, middle school and high school) assessed current procedures, resources and curriculum available in their schools and identified need areas. Principals were trained in the requirements of the law and convened working groups in their schools to develop their own school Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan.

At RCMS, procedures for reporting and intervention were reviewed. We presented a summary of these procedures to all constituents and sought feedback and comment. Reporting procedures, with some minor revisions were viewed as strong and appropriate.

RCMS took a proactive approach to address bullying by providing presentations to students in culture altering events. Data indicates that the bystanders make the difference in all bullying cases. Therefore, in conjunction with the Norfolk Sheriff's department, Rachel's Challenge was presented to every student via school assemblies. Following those presentations, a series of activities and events were organized by school staff to encourage acts of kindness and compassion. These various activities in the form of "clubs" were introduced to students in an after school presentation. At the conclusion of the presentation, students could sign up for one or more of the offerings. These activities were specifically designed to improve school and community culture.

Ongoing informal evaluations of incidents have helped initiate changes in procedures at the Middle School. Administrators constantly are available and accessible to hear input and feedback from students, parents, staff, and the larger community concerning opportunities to decrease bullying activity and increase student participation.

Future activities will include surveying parents and students on the effectiveness of programs and suggestions for new programs.

C. Planning and oversight.

Randolph Public Schools participated with the Attorney General's Office in a Safe Schools Planning Initiative in 2006. One outcome of that planning group was the development of documentation and reporting protocols, which remain in place. These protocols, now routine in RPS, include Bullying behaviors as a category requiring report, investigation and documentation by Principals. The documentation in place in RPS meets the requirements of the law. At each school, the principal tracks incident reports for individual students. These are also submitted to the Director of Students Services, who maintains a confidential

District database. At the Middle School, staff and students are instructed to immediately report any suspected bullying incidents to the nearest adult. Reports are channeled to the Assistant Principal who reviews, investigates, mediates, and assign consequences. The Assistant Principal monitors our student informational system daily for incidents that may not be directly verbally reported, but are documented. The Assistant Principal informs the Principal on a daily basis of events and incidents. Human resources available to the Assistant Principal to help in the mitigation of problems are Social Workers, Guidance, Team Leaders, Psychologist, and Special Education personnel.

A district team including the Middle School Administration, attended professional development opportunities, informational workshops and seminars, and participated in evaluating the most recent research for bullying prevention and intervention. The collaborative group developed a district wide presentation, which was then modified by the Middle School, to include site specific information for staff professional development and training.

D. Developing priority statements.

At the Randolph Community Middle School, we have a pledge which is read and recited everyday by students and staff. Our pledge is:

As responsible members of the Randolph Community Middle School, we pledge to honor the values we hold most important:

Respect for ourselves and others

Opportunities for all

Community commitment

Knowledge as power

By building our school upon this **ROCK**, we will lay the foundation for our success.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Annual staff training on the Plan.

Information about the requirements of MGL c71, & 370, on Bullying was integrated in the District's annual mandated staff training presentation and provided to all staff within the first week of school. Annual training for Van Drivers included information about Bullying and a process for reporting incidents to school based personnel. School based staff members are provided with insight to responsibilities in accordance with the state law. At the start of the year, staff members are presented a presentation that includes recognizing bullying, a review (or introduction) to the established school procedures, and are provided with the appropriate reporting documents. They are also provided a tutorial on our student information system which is where incidents are officially reported and documented.

B. Ongoing professional development.

Annually, on a scheduled professional development early release day, a presentation on Bullying prevention & intervention will be provided to all RCMS staff, including educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals, to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. The content of this professional development shall include, but not be limited to:

(i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

C. Written notice to staff.

RCMS Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan will be posted on the school & District websites. Any additional staff duties resulting from updated Bullying prevention & Intervention planning will be distributed in writing to all staff and amended to the Employee handbook and code of conduct.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Identifying resources.

The staff is currently evaluating the Second Step curriculum for appropriate implementation. This will provide a seamless transition for students, as all RPS elementary schools are currently using the primary level Second Step curriculum. The curriculum would be integrated into our Health program. A School Resource Officer is available on staff at the Middle School. The officer is an invaluable resource in providing accurate information about the law and how it pertains to bullying and aggression violations. The officer is also a resource to students and families who need advice, appropriate strategies in dealing with issues, and as an additional adult resource with problems that extend beyond the school boundaries.

Within the community, we are investigating the availability of grant opportunities and available resources from our local chapter of the ADL. Many businesses and local merchants offer financial support for programs which improve the culture within the school and larger community.

B. Counseling and other services.

Randolph Public Schools employs licensed Social Workers in all of its schools. Social Workers provide both individual and group counseling for students. When necessary, they develop Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans for students and work with staff to implement them effectively. The District employs a full time Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who works with staff, students and families to develop social skills goals for students with communication and social skills deficits. RPS also partners with local counseling agencies to provide counseling services in other languages when necessary.

School based counseling is assigned by building based Administrators and/or as a result of IEP Teams. Although students might be issued consequences, time is invested with students to problem solve incidents and discuss alternative solutions, which would not result in future consequences for the aggressor and harm to the target. If additional counseling is needed, students are referred to individual Social Workers and/or the Guidance Counselor for additional support. The District employs multi-lingual Liaisons, to translate and assist with

communications for non-English speaking students and families.

Emerging trends of bullying or bullying related occurrences will be assessed individually. If community resources become available, or if approved programs are determined to best address the identified concerns, the school administration will continue to assess and integrate all necessary support systems.

C. Students with disabilities.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. At every RPS Annual Review the special education Team will determine the need for specific Goals or interventions necessary for the student

D. Referral to outside services.

Randolph Public Schools employs licensed Social Workers in all of its schools, who refer students and families to outside agencies as needed. If individual students or family members require additional counseling, social services or legal services, referrals will be made to proper agencies. Social workers will consult with Principals prior to making referrals to legal agencies.

IV. **ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches.

Anti-bullying programs currently in place:

The focus in addressing bullying has been two fold. One is the continuation of existing programs such as comprehensive Health education, individual counseling by social workers, ongoing vigilance in less structured areas such as hallways and cafeteria. The second initiative is to positively influence the school culture with the inclusion of such programs as Rachel's Challenge support groups and clubs, high school peer mentors, developmental Guidance programs which focus on individual and group needs, hosting programs from the Norfolk Sheriffs Department, and continued collaboration with the Randolph Police Department and Norfolk District Attorney's office. As teachers become more skilled at recognizing *Gateway bullying behaviors*, they will continue to develop strategies for intervention and prevention. Students who are the most important group in preventing bullying are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying, cyber bullying, and aggression in a safe, non retaliatory environment.

RCMS is currently evaluating the Second Step program for inclusion in our Health curriculum. This program is fully integrated in our elementary schools and would be a logical continuation and could be seamlessly included in our program.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts.

- Setting clear expectations for students in regards to behavior, classroom routines, and safety
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful student behavior
- Creating safe school and classroom environments that incorporate an appreciation of differences for all students, including students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and homeless students

- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline, with assistance from guidance counselors and social workers
- Implementing techniques that promote positive student-teacher relationships
- Reinforcing positive approaches to behavior, such as collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution, teamwork, and opportunities to practice positive behavior and healthy social and emotional
- Advisory groups and health classes
- Providing students with media and Internet safety information and authentic dilemmas to discuss in guidance, health, and other disciplines
- Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities (particularly in their areas of interest and strength in), after school programs, and clubs and activities

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

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously.

Randolph Public Schools has a clear policy for reporting, investigating and documenting cases of Bullying which is outlined in the District Handbook, which is provided to all Parents and is posted on the District Website. In conjunction with a grant to encourage increased parent involvement, we will create a stipend opportunity for a website coordinator who can quickly disseminate important information as well as be a gate keeper for reports of bullying and inappropriate behavior.

1. Reporting by Staff

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

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

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies 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. Students will be informed and reminded that retaliation towards a reporter of an incident is criminal and subject to both school consequences and possible court involvement.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

C. Investigation.

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

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

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

Principals will forward documentation of Bullying investigations to the Director of Student Services

D. Determinations.

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

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v).

Teaching appropriate behavior through skill-building:

- Once the principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal, teacher, and school counselor will work with students and relevant staff to ensure that the appropriate consequences are issued. In addition, students will receive appropriate counseling to initiate behavior modification. The school principal or designee will follow up and monitor future behavior.
- The principal shall contact the school counselor, social worker, or special education teacher to determine what appropriate intervention(s) and skill building should be put in place for both the target, aggressor, and bystanders.
- Social workers, guidance counselors, teachers, special educators, nurses, and administrators will respond to bullying incidents with a variety of individualized supports, group interventions, and techniques:
 - Individual counseling with social workers/counselors
 - Small group counseling (Lunch Bunch)
 - Other strategies and interventions developed by Student Support Teams (SST)
 - Ongoing support and consultation for students, i.e. check-ins with counselors, teachers, the nurse, and/or administrators
 - Assemblies and special programs that address school climate, bullying, bystanders, etc.

Taking Disciplinary Action

- If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found through investigation by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.
- Disciplinary actions will be consistent with the Plan and with the school or district's code of conduct. If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action as well.
- The special education department will be consulted to ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 504 ADA, and state regulations.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

- The principal or designee will assess the target's needs, and consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others.
- The principal or designee may choose to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

- Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement these immediately.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent education and resources.

The school will continue to include the parents as a vital component in the educational partnership. When parent components are available such as in Rachel's Challenge or when the Norfolk county Sheriff's Department and/or Norfolk County District Attorney's office offers educational opportunities, we will offer to host and coordinate such programs.

Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are presented in Open House forums and necessary community meeting as determined by the principal. Additionally, all information will be posted on our website.

RCMS has a Parent Center which is available to every parent and parent group. This Center has technology to access the internet and has a library of parent help guides. We will continue to stock the parent Center with helpful and informative information about bullying and cyber bullying. Cyber bullying will continue to be at the forefront of bullying incidents with the explosion of social networking sites. We will work with parents to increase their understanding of technology and provide them with up to date procedures on how best to monitor their son/daughters' online activity.

C. Notification requirements.

Each year *Randolph Public Schools - An Internet Use Policy* goes home to all families of students in the Randolph Public Schools as part of the RPS District /School Handbooks. This includes the dynamics of bullying, including cyber bullying and online safety. District /School Handbooks are posted online on the District website

During our annual Open House meeting, we will dedicate a specific time to discuss the components of our anti-bullying curriculum. Teachers will disseminate a syllabus for each subject with a brief description of topics to be taught. Staff is available to answer any questions or address any concerns that parents might have.

All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school

- grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

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

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

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

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

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, and paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

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