



Section: Youth Services: Program and Service Structure

Policy: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan – Solstice Day School

Overview:

Bullying is the repetitive use of power (perceived or otherwise) by one or more individuals over another to intentionally cause harm. There are many ways that bullying can manifest itself in wrongful conduct at school. The definition includes but is not limited exclusive to:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Psychological

For participants and observers, bullying and harassment interfere with learning and healthy growth – both emotionally and academically. A safe learning environment is one in which every student develops emotionally, academically, and physically in a caring and supportive atmosphere free of intimidation and abuse.

The Solstice Program has a goal of enhancing and sustaining safe and health learning environments in part by reducing the reported incidence of bullying through a multi-tiered strategy that includes prevention, effective and compassionate intervention and community-wide social promotion.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying, and the school is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of 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 Education Director is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

Prohibition

Bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation are prohibited on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs (whether on or off school grounds), at bus stops, on school busses or other vehicles owned or operated by Solstice, local school districts or their contractors, or through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased or used by Solstice.

Bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation that creates a hostile environment at school for the target(s), infringes on the rights of the target(s) while at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process, or the orderly operation of a school – regardless of whether said bullying takes place on school grounds, nearby properties, at school functions or using school technology, shall also be prohibited.

Policy:

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Biannual update of the Plan and community involvement: This Bullying Plan will be reviewed and updated biannually by the Solstice Leadership Team and Bullying Plan Subcommittee to (a) ensure its effectiveness, and (b) establish strategies and indicators of continuous improvement in the effort to promote a safe and supportive learning environment. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O the Bullying Plan Subcommittee shall include representatives from the following groups:

- Teachers
- School staff
- Para-professional support personnel
- School administrator
- Community representatives
- Local law enforcement
- Students
- Parents/guardians

B. Assessing needs and resources: The biannual update of the plan shall include a review of available data on social and emotional learning, the environment for the delivery of social emotional instruction in school, and data on school climate. This data includes:

- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Student Survey data
 - This survey is to be administered at least once every four years to assess the school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying at Solstice
- Faculty, staff, parent/guardian Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Social Competency Instruction Assessments completed by advisors to document the extent to which evidence-based social emotional learning programs utilized in the advisors' programs are implemented with integrity
- Social Competency Program Checklists completed annually by Education Director to document school capacity to support social emotional learning programs are (a) strong, and (b) need improvement
- Reality Therapy outcomes and/or other school climate data.
- Harassment/Bullying surveys and/other school climate data.

This data shall be used to identify areas of programmatic strength, resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, Solstice will revise or develop policies and procedures as needed; establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

C. Planning and oversight. The Education Director will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of Bullying Prevention Intervention Plan. Specific planning and oversight responsibilities will include:

- Receiving reports on bullying
- Collecting and analyzing building-and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes
- Management of record keeping systems to track data related to targets, aggressor and incidents
- Planning support that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors
- Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them
- Amending parent/guardian and staff handbooks and codes of conduct.
- Leading family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials
- Reviewing and updating the Plan biannually as required by law.

D. Priority statements. Solstice's vision in creating and implementing its bullying prevention and intervention strategies holds these priorities:

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

The school is 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.

We understand that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The school 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.

II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF TRAINING

A. Annual staff training on the plan: Solstice will annually offer Professional staff training to all school staff, relevant community partners and parents/guardians that includes the following topics:

- Orientation to Solstice's plan, including staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Education Director or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and a Bullying Intervention – which shall include: (a) definition of bullying,

- cyber bullying, and retaliation; (b) orientation to Solstice procedures for reporting, responding and intervening in incidents of bullying; and (c) signs and symptoms a student may be a target of bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation
- Cyber safety – which shall include: information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying, and (b) strategies for promoting cyber-safety.
- Overview of the role of Solstice’s advisor/advisee social emotional learning curriculum role in preventing/addressing bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation.

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

Staff members hired after the start of the school year shall be required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

- B. Ongoing professional development: The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

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

Additionally, Solstice will, as resources will allow, offer additional professional development and staff training on topics intended to build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. This will include skills training in bystander empowerment – which shall include:

- (a) complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, target and witnesses,
- (b) research findings on bullying including categories about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment, and

(c) developmentally appropriate strategies for intervening in stop bullying incidents.

Other complementary professional development topics will be identified and developed annually.

- C. Written notice to staff: Solstice will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan through the print and electronic versions of the student and staff handbooks.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The school-based Intervention Team shall be responsible for helping to create and monitor the safe and supportive learning plan for targets and/or perpetrators of bullying/cyber bullying/retaliation. This shall include monitoring referrals to counseling as needed to address underlying issues of trauma and other difficulties that may contribute to the problem. Specific activities that will support the I Team efforts will include:

- A. Referrals to youth and family support services: Solstice has strong partnerships with a variety of health and human service providers that will be accessed as needed to assist families and youth with needs related to incidents of bullying.
- B. Linkage to counseling and other services: The school will identify culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the program and the community. The school maintains a list of counseling professionals who serve adolescents and their families. Students may participate in a social skills group, individual counseling or psycho-social skills groups to learn effective strategies for prevention, intervention and safety.
- 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.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC SERVICES

In the long term, preventing bullying from happening is the goal of Solstice. Instructional activities will focus on helping students develop healthy social relationships with adults and peers, and on creating a positive school culture. Activities will include:

- A. Evidence based bullying prevention instruction: A program of evidence-based social/emotional learning instruction is offered to all students in school. The curricula used include those approved by the federal Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools for their effectiveness in addressing individual risk and protective factor associated with bullying. These include:



Counteract the following risk factors

- Negative labeling by teachers
- Antisocial behavior and alienation/delinquent beliefs/general delinquency involvement/drug dealing
- Early onset of aggression and/or violence
- Victimization and exposure to violence
- Poor refusal skills
- Lack of guilt and empathy
- Cognitive and neurological deficits/low intelligence quotient/hyperactivity
- Mental disorder/mental health problem/conduct disorder

Enhance the following protective factors:

- Good relationships with peers
- Presence and involvement of caring, supportive adults in school
- High expectations of students
- High quality schools/Clear standards and rules
- Opportunities for pro-social school involvement
- Effective parenting
- Good relationship with parents/Bonding or attachment to family
- Individual social competencies and problem solving skills
- Positive/Resilient temperament
- Self-efficacy
- Perception of social support from adults and peers

Solstice will continue to implement these programs with fidelity in order to ensure all students have opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that will (a) prevent bullying and other forms of violence, and (b) promote positive social relationships with community culture. These might include:

- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts: The following approaches are integral to establish a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of Academy bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:



- Setting and communicating school standards for identifying, naming and rewarding good behavior including introducing positive behavior awards as part of the school's recognition awards.
 - Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students and homeless students.
 - Setting and communicating school standards for adult supervision during lunch, bathroom and other unstructured time.
- C. Cyber safety instruction: Students will be provided with instruction and guidance in cyber safety and media literacy skills at the start of each school year. The students are also engaged in project based learning activities which focus on the areas of internet safety, cyber bullying and bullying. Students are oriented to Solstice's Student Internet Use Policy which (a) provides guidelines for the safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies, and (b) specifically prohibits the use of Solstice's computers for cyber bullying and other forms of hostile and anti-social purposes.
- D. Orientation to student responsibilities in bullying prevention: Annually at the start of the school year teachers will review the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with students in their classes. Students new to the school community after the start of the school year will be offered this overview at orientation. In addition, this information will be documented in student handbooks updated regularly.

V. REPORTING, RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of Solstice administration to make clear to students and staff that bullying or harassment in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school sanctioned transportation, or at school sponsored functions will not be tolerated. The Education Director or their designees shall be responsible for implementation of bullying prevention and intervention procedures, including investigating all charges of bullying, cyber bullying and/or retaliation.

Violations of Solstice's Bullying and Harassment Policy will be addressed in conformance with existing disciplinary policies. In addition, all reporting, investigations and response shall be consistent with local, state and federal law regarding the anti-discrimination and the protection of civil and human rights, particularly for vulnerable populations including but not limited to GLBT youth. Consultation with representatives of local, regional and state law enforcement and justice agencies may be required to ensure the rights of targets and perpetrators are maintained.

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation: A Solstice staff member is required to report immediately to the Education Director or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.



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Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written, face-to-face, via telephone or by e-mail when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Education Director or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Solstice will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address. Use of Solstice's Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition for making a report. The school will:

- Include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students.
- Make the Incident Reporting Form available in the school's main office and counselor's office

At the beginning of each school year, Solstice will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Education Director or designee, will be incorporated into:

- Student handbooks,
- School-Parent/Guardian Compact
- On school website

A1. Reporting by staff: Any staff member that encounters an interaction that may be construed as bullying will first be asked to try to address the incident between the target(s) and aggressor(s). The staff member will then report the incident immediately to the Education Director or designee so the investigation process may begin. This initial report shall ideally include:

- Date, time and location of the incident
- Individuals involved and their roles (e.g. target, aggressor, bystander)
- Information about if/how the incident is part of a pattern of
- Any actions taken by the staff person to defuse the situation

This initial report may be done orally, by email or via a written note. The initial report must be a documented written report using the Incident Reporting Form within 72 hours of the initial report of the incident.

A2. Reporting by students, parents/guardians and others: The school expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware or become aware of an instance of

bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Education Director or designee. This may be done by telephone, face-to-face, by email, in writing, or anonymously.

- a) Students, parents/guardians and others are not required to complete the Incident Reporting Form to complete their report of a bullying incident. If a student, parent/guardian or other member of the school community makes an oral report of a bullying incident the Education Director/designee will complete an Incident Reporting Form to document in writing the allegation. An Incident Reporting Form may also be completed by the Education Director/designee to complement written reports of bullying by a student, parent/guardian or other school community member in those instances where additional data is secured to substantiate or complete the allegation. This form may be completed by school staff to complete the incident file.

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 Education Director or designee.

- b) Anonymous reporting will be managed by Solstice administration. Students, parents/guardians and others will be able to make anonymous bullying reports by telephone, by mail and through an anonymous web interface. Anonymous reports will ideally include at least the following information:

This initial report should ideally include:

- Date, time and location of the incident
- Individuals involved in the incident
- Any knowledge of prior incidents that were reported or not
- The relationship of the reported to the incident (i. g. witnessed firsthand, third party report)

Upon receipt of an anonymous report Solstice will initiate a preliminary investigation. If the anonymous allegation is deemed to have potential merit an Incident Reporting Form will be completed by the investigating staff member, and the investigation process at the school level will proceed.

No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

B1. Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Education Director and Leadership Team 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
- Altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target

The Education Director will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Education Director and Leadership Team will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from further acts of bullying, retaliation and students who (a) report bullying or retaliation, (b) witness bullying or retaliation, (c) provide information during an investigation of allegations of bullying or retaliation, or (d) has reliable information about an alleged act of bullying or retaliation.

Strategies that may be used to create a safer environment for the target(s) and/or aggressor(s) include:

- Increasing adult supervision at times and/or in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.
- Temporarily and/or permanently changing the aggressor(s)’s class schedule and/or seating arrangements to reduce opportunities for retaliation
- Establishing a safe zone for the target to when s/he feels vulnerable.

This is not an exhaustive list. The creation of safe environments for targets, aggressors, and/or other people impacted by the incident will be considered for each individual person and incident.

B2. Obligations to Notify Others: The Education Director has primary responsibility to notify the following constituencies in writing – through a letter or email message – when bullying or retaliation has occurred.

- a) Notice to parents or guardian. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Education Director 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

Education Director or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with the 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 Education Director first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Education Director of the other school(s) of the incident so that each 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 Education Director has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Education Director 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 Education Director 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 Education Director 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 Education Director deems appropriate.

- C. Investigation: The Education Director will investigate promptly all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the Education Director will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Education Director 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 Education Director, other staff members as determined by the Education Director, and in consultation with the Clinical Director, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Education Director will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Education Director will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Education Director will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

C1. Investigating anonymous reports

Upon receipt of an anonymous report Solstice will initiate a preliminary investigation. If the anonymous allegation is deemed to have potential merit Incident Reporting Form will be completed and the investigation process at the school level will proceed.

- D. Determinations: The Education Director will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances.

If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Education Director will take steps reasonable calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefitting from school activities. The Education Director or designee will:

- Determine what remedial action is required, if any
- Determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary

Depending upon the circumstances, the Education Director and a team of people he/she designates may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issues(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The Education Director will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what (a) disciplinary and (b) future prevention action is being taken. All notice to parents/guardians must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

The Education Director or designee shall inform the parent or guardian about the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education Problem Resolution System, and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Education Director cannot report specific information to the target's parent/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: The creation of school environments where every Student feels a sense of belonging is integral to student success. To this end, Solstice will modify or institute procedures by grade level as necessary to provide a safe environment at all times of the school day, including non-classroom times such as lunch, bus rides, recess, and after-school and other out-of-school time, particularly for students who have been targets of substantiated allegations of bullying/cyber

bullying/retaliation, as well as perpetrators of said actions as needed to restore a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

E1. Teaching appropriate behavior through skills-building: Upon the Education Director 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 the appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill- building approaches that the Education Director or designee may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula;
 - Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
 - Implementing a range of academic and non-academic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
 - Meeting with parents/guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
 - Adopting behavioral plans or contract to include a focus on developing specific social skills;
 - Making a referral for any further evaluations as appropriate
- a. If a student who is found to be the target or aggressor in a substantiated bullying incident has an individualized education plan (IEP) and the cause of the incident is related to her/his disability, then the provision of skill building training shall be integrated into that student's IEP.

E2. Taking disciplinary action:

If the Education Director decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Education Director, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with Solstice's code of conduct.

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

If the Education Director determines that a false allegation of bullying or retaliation has been made appropriate action will be taken. This may include disciplinary actions for those incidents where the accuser is a student.

E3. Promoting safety for the target and others:

Upon the completion of the investigation, the Education Director will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and the sense of safety for others as well.

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

VI. COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES AND PARTNERS

Clear communication consistent with staff families, students and community partners is essential to achieving bullying prevention and other health and safety goals within Solstice. Communication with these and other constituents shall include information about the (a) dynamics of bullying including signs and symptoms of bullying/cyber bullying/retaliation, (b) strategies for preventing cyber bullying and promoting online safety, (c) strategies for preventing bullying and or/retaliation in the classroom, across the school community, at home and in the community, (d) information about how to report bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation, and (e) Academy procedures for responding to an investigating bullying, including strategies for creating a safe learning environment for targets and reinforcing positive behavior standards among perpetrators. This shall include communication of Solstice's Bullying Policy, Disciplinary Policies and Internet Safety/Acceptable Use Policy.

- A. Parent/guardian education and resources. The school will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the paternal components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the school.
- B. Parent and community notification: To ensure all constituents understand both intervention and prevention activities Solstice will minimally:
- Publish bullying reporting, response and investigation procedures in (a) student handbooks, and the staff handbooks;
 - Create a bullying page on its website as a resource for (a) anonymous reporting, (b) clarifying procedures for reporting, responding and investigating allegations of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation, (c) communicating positive behavior standards, and (d) expanding access to prevention education resources for families, teachers, students and community partners.
 - Participate annually in No Name Calling Week as declared by the governor every January.

Other communications and social promotion campaign activities will be considered annually by Solstice staff Bullying Plan Subcommittee of Solstice's Health/Wellness Advisory Committee.



VII. DEFINITIONS

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below. Schools or districts may add specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but may not alter their meaning or scope. Plans may also include additional definitions that are aligned with local policies and procedures.

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber bullying, 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.

Cyber bullying, 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 cyber bullying.

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

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

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

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

VIII. Problem Resolution System:

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws to include (g) (v): The Plan shall inform parents or guardians of the target about the Department's problem resolution

system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. This information will be made available in both hard copy and electronic formats:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700.

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Aggressor is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff 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, § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

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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.

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

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



X. 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.