

**FARMINGTON RIVER
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANTI-BULLYING PLAN**



**“Children may forget what you say,
but they will never forget how you made them feel.”**
Anonymous

APPROVED BY THE FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE –12/6/10

Farmington River Regional School District Anti-Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

***THIS DOCUMENT IS BASED ON THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION'S MODEL BULLYING PREVENTION AND
INTERVENTION PLAN.***

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THE FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT will be referred to as “The District” in this document. The District is comprised of one school, FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Pre-School through Grade 6, which houses 148 students from Otis and Sandisfield, Massachusetts. It will be referred to as “the school” in this document.

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. The District is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take 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.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target’s sense of safety.

The District will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parent or guardian involvement. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“the Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the school district 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, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing professional development will be provided for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and Paraprofessionals.

A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are 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 and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- (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.

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

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

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

C. Written notice to staff. The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of all students are addressed. These students include targets, aggressors or bystanders of bullying or cyber bullying. Schools will also address the emotional needs of these students' families. The Farmington River Regional School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the District's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets, aggressors and bystanders. The District will provide counseling or referral to appropriate services for students who are aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

A. Identifying resources:

Protecting, educating, empowering and restoring a sense of safety and self-confidence are the goals of counseling interventions with targets and their families, as well as with bystanders.

District staff and administrators, together with the District School Committee, will work to identify the school's capacity to provide counseling, case management and other services for these students (targets, aggressors, bystanders) and their families. The District will conduct an annual review of staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments, focusing on early interventions and intensive services, and develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. The District continues to provide early intervention starting in pre-school classes, through the deployment of a counseling consultant who works with families and teachers within and outside of the classroom, addressing behavioral/social-emotional development. The District will continue to work in collaboration with local and state agencies, such as the Berkshire County District Attorney's Office, to adopt evidenced-based curricula and to provide additional preventative services to students, parents and guardians, and faculty and staff.

B. Counseling and other services:

The FRRSD Director of Student Services, special educators, the school nurse, District-contracted counselors and psychologists provide a variety of skill-based services to students within the educational setting that include on-going emotional support, risk assessment, crisis intervention, and help with community based counseling referrals when appropriate. District -contracted counselors meet with parents and teachers as needed to help address students' academic, emotional and behavioral concerns as collaboratively as possible. District-contracted counselors work with administrators to provide linguistically appropriate resources to identified families. District-contracted counselors maintain up-to-date information on community based mental health referrals as well as Community Service Agencies within Berkshire County, providing services to Medicaid eligible students. School counselors, school psychologists and intensive special needs educators work collaboratively to develop behavior plans and social thinking groups for students with social skill weaknesses. In addition, the FRRSD Director of Student Services, District -contracted counselors and psychologists, and special education professionals work together to educate and support parents, conduct parent workshops, and to

apprise parents of outside resources to enhance parenting skills and provide for the needs of children.

Protecting, educating, empowering and restoring a sense of safety and self-confidence are the goals of counseling interventions with targets and their families, as well as with bystanders. Counseling with aggressors explores the roots of the aggressive thinking and behaviors and ultimately fosters the choice of alternative understandings and appropriate words and behaviors. The District expects the mental health professionals servicing District students to:

- maintain state-of-the-art knowledge about anti-aggression research and strategies
- employ this training to intervene on behalf of targets, witnesses and aggressors
- identify and de-escalate potentially harmful interactions, imbalances power, or conflicts

A close referral relationship between the District and the Berkshire County mental health professionals and agencies, including The Department of Children and Family Services, provides further support for targets, aggressors and families that continues interventions outside of school hours and during the summer. The FRRSD Director of Student Services maintains an active referral network with specializing private mental health clinicians who may service students and families with differential needs impacting the aggression cycle.

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 ACTIVITIES

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches.

Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- 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;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

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Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan should include specific information about how and when the school or district will review the Plan with students.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts.

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

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. The district has made a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including an Incident Reporting Form and a dedicated email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or

district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians. *See Appendix A for Sample Incident Reporting Form*

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.

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: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700.

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.

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 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 special educators, counselors, and other support personnel, as deemed 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.

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

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 other support personnel, such as a counselor, special educator, or others, 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:

The Farmington River Regional School District will employ a variety of individualized, differentiated strategies and interventions, available within and outside of the school district that may be used to remediate a student's current skills or to prevent future occurrences of bullying and/or retaliation.

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). Skill building approaches that the principal 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 nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for evaluation.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action for Bullying and/or Retaliation

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found 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. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or District's Code of Conduct.

In addition, the following will be considered:

- The school schedule of the aggressor(s) and/or target(s) may be changed to reduce contact with the target; this includes lunch, recess and lavatory breaks.
- The mode of transportation to/from school for the aggressor and/or target may be changed to eliminate contact between parties.
- Additional trained school supervision will be provided during school-sanctioned after-school activities, such as intramurals, clubs, and shows to reduce the contact between aggressor and target, while allowing both parties to participate in such activities.
- Additional trained school personnel will be utilized whenever the Principal or her designee determine such supervision is needed to keep the target safe and reduce/eliminate any contact with the aggressor.
- Because staff and students have been well-informed about behavior expectations and have been professionally trained and warned about using technology inappropriately, discipline for bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation may include either in-school or out of school suspension.
- Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which will be rendered in compliance with state laws regarding student discipline. (This does not mean that students with disabilities are not subject to consequences for their action with respect to bullying, retaliation, or other negative behavior. It does mean that their disabilities must be considered and IDEA steps followed.)
- If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student will be subject to disciplinary action

To provide remediation for the aggressor in order to change his/her negative pattern of behavior, the following efforts may be made depending on the needs of the aggressor and the severity of the offense:

- A guidance counselor or school psychologist will meet regularly with the aggressor to discuss his/her attitudes, to address strategies that could be helpful to encourage improved social skills and to help the student to develop deeper empathy.
- The counselor or psychologist will help the aggressor to address the question: What he/she could have done differently?
- The aggressor may be asked to complete some community service or to perform research on the impact of bullying.
- Parents/guardians/supervisors will be asked to monitor the aggressor's use of technology and access to influences that could encourage disrespectful or hurtful behaviors.
- The aggressor's parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the principal and/or guidance staff.

Other strategies that the principal or her 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 aggressor or groups of aggressors, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help aggressors understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- Meeting with parents, guardians or supervisors to engage support, to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home or in the workplace, and to discuss possible outside influences on a aggressor's behavior;
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- Making a referral for a special education evaluation or safety evaluation that the principal her designee may consider to be needed.

NOTE: Lack of response and/or cooperation from the aggressor's parents/guardians may result in the District filing a report with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF).

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others- witnesses, reporters, bystanders:

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is 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 them immediately.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

Notification requirements.

Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety.

The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. 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

The Farmington River Regional School District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including, but not limited to, any form of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, in our school building, on our school grounds, on school buses, at school bus stops, or in school related activities. The District will investigate all reports of bullying and retaliation.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, 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 the district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is 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 school district, 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.

FRRSD Response to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation. Student/Staff 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:

- a) Pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the alleged aggressor in the classroom, at lunch or on the bus.
- b) Identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target.
- c) Altering/limiting the alleged aggressor’s access to the target.
- d) Alert all staff working with the alleged aggressor and target so that they are more watchful of the interaction and are more prepared to intervene if necessary.
- e) Continuing "check ins" with the target to assure that they have a safe place to discuss the incident and any ensuing circumstances.

To assist the target to recover, the following efforts may be made depending on the individual needs of the student or staff:

- A guidance counselor or school psychologist will meet with the target (regularly if needed) to discuss the student’s sense of safety and to address strategies that could be helpful to encourage improved social skills, and/or resilience as needed. If the target chooses not to participate, then the guidance counselor or school psychologist will check in occasionally with the target to see how he/she is doing and to determine whether there

has been any recurrence of the prohibited conduct. If so, the adult will report the information to the principal or designee.

- The counselor or psychologist will also communicate with the target's parents or supervisors about the target's progress.
- The parent or supervisor should be involved in conversations about helping the target to identify and develop positive social skills when necessary.
- The target may be paired with a 'safe person' or 'friend' or older student or mentor if the target is willing to do so.
- Staff and supervisors will be vigilant about the target's presentation and connections to other persons (e.g. Is the student alone at lunch? Is the targeted staff member still concerned?).

To assist the reporter, bystander and/witness: Additionally, the principal or her designee will take steps to promote safety during the course of, and after, the investigation, as necessary. The principal or her designee will implement appropriate strategies, as necessary, for protecting the following from bullying or retaliation, any student or staff who:

- a) Has reported bullying or retaliation,
- b) Has witnessed bullying or retaliation,
- c) Provides information during an investigation or
- d) Has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

These additional protective steps will include assigning additional trained school personnel for supervision as needed, arranging limited contact with the alleged aggressor, changes in the school schedules and activities of the alleged aggressor and reporters, bystanders, and witnesses, and the delineation of *safe persons* within the school to whom reporters, bystanders, and witnesses can speak confidentially at school. Direct, in-going communication between school and home may result in additional protections plans.

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

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below.

Aggressor is any student or staff 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 or 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, § 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 or staff 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 Paraeducators.

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 Farmington River Regional School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan prevents the school 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 Farmington River regional School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention 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.

APPENDIX A:

**FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the:

Target of the behavior_____ **Reporter (not the target)**_____

3. Check whether you are a:

Student Staff member (specify role _____

Parent_____

Administrator _____

Other (specify) _____

Your contact information/telephone number:_____

4. If student, state your school: _____

Grade: _____

5. If staff member, state your school or work site:

6. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior):

Name of Aggressor (Person who allegedly engaged in the behavior):

Date(s) of Incident(s):

Time When Incident(s) Occurred:

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible):

7. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other

Name: _____ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other

8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report:

_____ **Date:** _____

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

10: Form Given to: _____

Position: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____

Date Received: _____

II. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____

Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

☐ Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ Date: _____

☐ Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____

☐ Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the aggressor? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION ☐ Yes ☐ No

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

☐ YES ☐ NO

☐ Bullying ☐ Incident documented as _____

☐ Retaliation ☐ Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

☐ Target's parent/guardian Date: _____ ☐ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____

☐ District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: _____ ☐ Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

☐ Loss of Privileges ☐ Detention ☐ STEP referral ☐ Suspension

☐ Community Service ☐ Education ☐ Other _____

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ **Initial and date when completed:**

_____ **Follow-up with Aggressor:** scheduled for _____ **Initial and date when completed:** _____

Report forwarded to Principal: Date _____

Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date _____

(If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: _____

Date: _____

Investigator will attach any relevant documentation to this form.