

BULLYING

The Gardner Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. To this end, bullying and retaliation are prohibited.

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) Causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; ~~or~~ (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

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 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
- at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related, or 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, infringe on the rights of the target 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.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”)

The District shall develop, adhere to, and update a Plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, volunteers, administrators, community representatives, law enforcement, students, parents and guardians. The Plan shall apply to students and all school staff members , including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals. The consultation shall include, but not be limited to, notice and a public comment period. The Plan shall be updated at least biennially.

The Principal in each building, or their designee, is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan within his or her school.

LEGAL REFS:; 603 CMR 49 MGL c 71:37O;

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan;

CROSS REFS: AC, Non-discrimination; ACAB, Sexual Harassment; JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment; JICFA, Hazing; JK, Student Discipline Regulations]

[Adopted: January 8, 2001]

[Reviewed: May 2003]

[Revised: June 2007]

[Revised: December 2010]

[Revised: May 2014]

[Revised: May 2017]

[Revised: March 2021]

[Revised: April 2024]