



## **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

It is the policy of the LABBB Collaborative to provide learning and working atmosphere for students, employees and visitors free from bullying, hazing, and intimidation. Such action may occur on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability, or for any other reason.

It is a violation of this policy for any administrator, teacher or other employee, or any student to engage in or condone bullying and cyberbullying or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of bullying.

This policy is not designed or intended to limit the school's authority to take disciplinary action or take remedial action when such harassment occurs out of school but has a nexus to school, or is disruptive to an employee's or student's work or participation in school related activities.

Reports of cyberbullying by electronic or other means, occurring in or out of school will be reviewed and, when a nexus to work or school exists, will result in discipline. Parents of students alleged to have engaged in cyberbullying will be invited to attend a meeting at which the activity, words or images subject to the complaint will be reviewed. A student disciplined for cyberbullying will not be re-admitted to the regular school program until his or her parent(s) attend such meeting.

It is the responsibility of every employee, student and parent to recognize acts of bullying and take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of this school district are implemented.

Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been subjected to bullying or cyberbullying has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.

The Building Principal, Program Director or Designee shall be responsible for assisting employees and students seeking guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of bullying.

### **I. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

LABBB Collaborative will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses and at school bus stops or in school-related activities. Programs 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. LABBB Collaborative will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement. Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

**A.** 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 through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district, and

**B.** 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, 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, § 370, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

### **A. BULLYING DEFINED**

Massachusetts General Law, Ch. 71 Section 370 defines bullying as, the repeated use by one or more students or member of 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 himself or of damage to his 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 cyberbullying.

### **B. CYBERBULLYING**

Under the same law is defined as, "bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium

that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.”

**C. Hostile Environment:** is defined as 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 the student’s education.

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working/educational environment.

**D. Aggressor:** A student or member of 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 who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

**E. Retaliation:** 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.

**F. 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.

**G. Target:** A student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

### III. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING BULLYING

All reporting procedures regarding bullying will be brought to building Principal or designee by LABBB Program Director or designee. If a reported incident of bullying occurs the following actions will be taken:

Staff will use the LABBB Collaborative Bullying and prevention Reporting forms.

**A. Bullying incident Complaint Form** will be filled out detailing facts of the verbal allegations of the complaining party. The building Principal or LABBB designee shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The action being taken to prevent further actions of bullying shall be discussed.

**B. Investigation:** The Principal / LABBB Program Director will conduct interviews with both parties and other students who may have witnessed incident, patterns of past incidents or behaviors, and relationships between parties. The Principal / LABBB Program Director will implement a safety plan to restore safety to the alleged target. All accommodations such as scheduling, seating arrangements will be taken into consideration to keep all parties safe.

**C. Within five school days** the Principal and LABBB Program Director will take necessary actions. The

parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results. The report provided to parents or guardians shall include whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. The Principal or LABBB designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation. Students may be recommended for remedial actions including but not limited to training, education, or counseling. Students may also be subject to discipline including, but not limited to reprimand, detention, suspension, expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration.

**D. Retaliation** in any form against any student who has filed a complaint relating to bullying will not be tolerated. No student will be subject to any form of coercion, intimidation, retaliation, or discrimination for filing a report of bullying. The consequences for retaliation will be the same as for bullying. On the other hand, false accusations made in bad faith will not be tolerated.

**E. Law enforcement** will be notified if when appropriate. A referral to the police department will be made by the Principal or LABBB Program Director of collaborative if they believe criminal charges should be pursued against the aggressor. Consultation with school office will be taken into consideration.

**F. Anonymous reporting:** Each program will have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

**G. Target assistance:** LABBB shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, or appropriate family members of the involved students affected by bullying as necessary.

**H. Special Education: 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.

**I. Faculty and Parental Notice:** Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians in age appropriate terms. Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The staff at each program shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan. LABBB will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and social competencies.

LABBB will annually inform parents or guardians about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This includes information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. LABBB will post the Plan and related information on its website.

#### **IV. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

The LABBB Collaborative has responded promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, by putting in place policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures will ensure that members of the school community, students, parents, and staff know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan details procedures for staff reporting of incidents, processes for communicating to students and families how reports can be made (including anonymous reports), and procedures to be followed by the principal or designee once a report is made. The following is based on the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 370.

**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 LABBB Collaborative has made available to all members of the school community an Incident Reporting Form.

- The LABBB Collaborative will: 1) make a copy of the Incident Reporting Form 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 the Incident Reporting Form 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 LABBB Collaborative 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, LABBB Director or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or collaborative website, and in information about the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

#### **B. 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, LABBB Director 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.

#### **C. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others**

The collaborative 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.

**D. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.**

**1. Safety**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director 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. (Include locally established student safety planning policies and procedures here.)

**2. Obligations to Notify Others Bullying Prevention and Intervention**

a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director 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 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and with applicable school and/or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

d. Investigation. The principal, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal, LABBB Director or designee 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 principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

e. Determinations. The principal, LABBB Director or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director 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 will comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal, LABBB Director 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.

f. Responses to Bullying.

#### 1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal, LABBB Director 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, LABBB Director or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the LABBB Collaboratives 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

If the principal, LABBB Director or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary Bullying Prevention and action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal, LABBB Director 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 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and with LABBB Collaboratives 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 principal, LABBB Director or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

## 3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

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

## V. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LABBB Collaborative will provide ongoing professional development that will build the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

### A. Annual staff training on the Plan:

Annual training for all school staff on the LABBB Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will include staff responsibilities under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the program director 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 building. 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 professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- 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;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying.

All students attending LABBB Collaborative have Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Therefore, professional development will emphasize 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 programs for professional development includes:

- 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:**

Each school will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the LABBB Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff responsibilities, in the school employee handbook.

## **VI. COUNSELING AND RESOURCES**

The LABBB Leadership team in conjunction with the LABBB Clinical Team which includes: School adjustment counselors, Social workers, Behavior specialists, and Board certified Behavior analysts will provide counseling and crisis management for targets, aggressors and bystanders, including their families.

The LABBB administration team will also utilize state resources to build and modify researched based curriculum to be implemented and used as prevention measures for all targets, aggressors, bystanders and their families.

The LABBB Collaborative has many support related services to provide intervention, risk assessment, crisis intervention, IEP development Goals and Objectives. LABBB Clinical staff and support related service providers offer one to one counseling, group counseling , social groups, self advocacy, development of behavior plans and work as a multi-disciplinary team to meet student needs.

LABBB staff is also available to provide support to LABBB parent group.

## **VII. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

The law requires each school or district to provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the school's or district's curricula. Curricula must be evidence-based. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be presented within the classroom or in a small-group setting. The 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.

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;
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- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
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- 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;
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- using the Internet safely; and
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- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

### **VIII. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the LABBB Collaborative, 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 Bullying Prevention and Intervention 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 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 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan covers the behavior.