

SOUTH SHORE VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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INCIDENT REPORTING FORM OVERVIEW OF PLAN

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.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying, and the school or 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, cyber bullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target’s sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

I. LEADERSHIP

Public Involvement

South Shore Vocational Technical High School’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has been designed after Soliciting input from the greater school community, including the School Council, parents, teachers and students. The school utilized current opinions on bullying issues, as well as the results of a bullying survey conducted by the School Council in 2009.

Needs Assessment

The School will review its plan at least annually through the office of the principal to ensure that the plan's tenets are based on current data and that its resources and strategies are current and effective. All community stakeholders will be consulted in the revision of this plan, but the School Council will schedule it as an annual agenda item and will advise the principal and assist with needs assessment instruments.

Planning and Oversight

The principal is responsible for:

- 1) Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law
- 2) Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials
- 3) Reviewing and updating the Plan each year
- 4) Recommending policies and protocols to the superintendent and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them
- 5) Making the determination as to whether an investigated allegation of bullying or retaliation warrants the involvement of law enforcement

The Dean of Students and Assistant Principal are primarily responsible for:

- 1) Receiving reports on bullying
- 2) Collecting and analyzing building and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes
- 3) Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for assessing information related to targets and aggressors
- 4) Amending student handbooks

The Director of Guidance and Admissions is responsible for:

- 1) Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors
- 2) Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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.

Ongoing Professional Development: 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:

- 1) Developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying
- 2) Developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
- 3) Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying
- 4) 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
- 5) Information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying
- 6) Internet safety issues as they related to cyber bullying

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with \ disabilities that must be considered when developing student's 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.

Written Notice to Staff: The school will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan in the employee handbook.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Current Staffing and Programs That Support the Creation of Positive School

Environment

1) **Department of Guidance and Admissions** – Michael Jananki, Director of Guidance and Admissions; Director of Special Education, Ellen Witter-Harrington
Services are provided to assist our students become successful citizens. Services include Guidance, Special Education, School Nurse, Title I assistance and 504 accommodations, assistance and 504 accommodations.

a) **Guidance Department**

Staff:

- 1) Todd Zahurak, Counselor
- 2) Amy Dow, Counselor
- 3) Joseph Madera, Counselor
- 4) Karen Siegel, Secretary

The Guidance Department provides the following services:

- 1) Recruitment, admissions and orientation for students interested in attending South Shore Vocational Technical High School
- 2) Guidance curriculum for all students – career decision making, career planning, Academic counseling, post-secondary school planning and application process, job seeking and keeping skills, etc.
- 3) Student monitoring and counseling
- 4) Student support activities, and groups
- 5) Identification and referral to outside services as needed
- 6) Scheduling and attendance monitoring
- 7) Cooperative education placement

b. **Special Education Department:** The purpose of the Special Education Department is to provide educational support to meet the student's needs as identified on the IEP.

Staff:

- 1) Ellen Witter-Harrington, Director of Special Education
- 2) Instructors: Katherine Berry, Gerald Bova, Suzanne Mathisen, Michael Mahoney, Andrea Doherty and Kristen Stevens.
- 3) Instructional Aides: Robert Francis, Matthew Silvia
- 4) Secretary: Tracy Perakslis

Special Education Services:

- 1) Monitoring of student progress
- 2) Support for regular education and vocational instructors
- 3) Psychological and educational evaluation and counseling
- 4) Speech and language evaluation and therapy
- 5) Other specialties as needed

c. **School Nurse**

Colette Worrall – Coordinates the health and safety of our students

d. Title I
Staff:

1) Instructional Aides: Nancy Angellis, Julie Venturelli

Services: Title I programs provide support at all grade level to assist the students to meet the expectations and the learning standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Students are identified as Title I eligible based on their standardized test results, their MCAS results and their academic achievement.

e. Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is designed to insure access of disabled persons to education and other major life activities.

2. Student Support Team

Staff:

Principal, Asst. Principal, Vocational Coordinator, School Nurse, Special Education Coordinator, Director of Guidance and Admissions and the guidance counselors. (note: school psychologist will consult with the team)

Purpose-the purpose of the support team is to identify students at risk and to develop interventions for those students. These interventions may include outside referrals for services, safety plan development for the student(s), and/or Counseling or other support services for the individual student.

3) Student Senate

Provides student representatives from each vocational program with a student government function to discuss issues that impact students at SSVT.

4) Positive Postcards

This is a program that was developed by staff to recognize students who have modeled “positive behaviors” toward others. Positive postcards are mailed to these students recognizing their behaviors.

B. Counseling and Other Services

- 1) Resources – Linguistic and cultural appropriate Community Service Agencies – we utilize various CSAs by providing referral information to our students and families. As a regional district it is our goal to identify CSAs that provide services to our 8 member towns.
- 2) Development of individual student Safety Plans – The development of individual safety plans may include the Asst. Principal, Vocational Director and the Student Support Team (see section IIIA).
- 3) Social Skills programs that presently exist, include male and female social groups for special education students with identified social disabilities.
- 4) Behavioral Intervention Plans have been written by the IEP team when the student’s disability is emotional and accommodations are necessary.

C. Disabled Student

IEP development includes social skills development when appropriate. Social Skills program that presently exist include male and female social groups for special education students with identified social disabilities. Behavioral Intervention Plans have been written by the IEP team when the student's disability is emotional and accommodations are necessary.

D. Referral to Outside Services

Referral protocol to outside services for students and families:

Typically, once the student's needs are identified, those needs are brought forward to the Student Support Team or directly to the Director of Guidance and/or principal. The identified needs and the referral are documented. The school requests follow-up information and open communication from the referred agency. When this occurs, the information is presented to the Student Support Team so that the team may develop appropriate follow through services in the school building.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches: bullying prevention programs will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- 1) 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.
- 2) Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber bullying, including the underlying power imbalance.
- 3) Emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies.
- 4) Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications.
- 5) Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The school will review the bullying plan each September.

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:

- 1) Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines.
- 2) Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with Disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students.
- 3) Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline.
- 4) Using positive behavioral supports.
- 5) Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students.
- 6) Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors.
- 7) 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.
- 8) Using the Internet safely.
- 9) 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

South Shore Vocational Technical High School has in place policies and procedures for ensuring that member of the school community – students, parents and staff – know how South Shore Vocational Technical High School will respond to incidents of bullying. South Shore Vocational Technical High School's 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 the procedures to be followed once a report has been made.

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 will be transcribed to South Shore Vocational Technical High School's Bullying Incident reporting form. All district employees are mandated to report immediately to administration 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 district personnel, may be made anonymously. South Shore Vocational Technical High School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan contains a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including the Bullying Incident Reporting Form, a

dedicated voicemail box (#479), website and email access to the Bullying Incident Reporting Form. Use of the Bullying Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. South Shore Vocational Technical High School will (1) include a copy of the Bullying Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets sent to all students and as part of the Student-Parent Handbook, (2) make it available in the school's main office, guidance, nurse's office; and (3) post it at www.ssvotech.org. The Bullying Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, South Shore Vocational Technical High School will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students and parents or guardians, with its policies for reporting acts of bullying or retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in the student and staff handbooks, posted at www.ssvotech.org, and in information about the South Shore Vocational Technical High School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1) Reporting by Staff

A district employee will report immediately to administration when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to administration does not limit the employee from responding to the incident consistent with the district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

South Shore Vocational Technical High School 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 any anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and other may request assistance from a district employee to complete the written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a district employee, or with the principal or designee.

B. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

1) Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of public 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-determined 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 may include altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target.

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 Parents or Guardians

- a. Notice to parent or guardians: Upon the district's determination that bullying has occurred; the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target, and the aggressor of the findings and of the procedures for responding to it. South Shore Vo-Tech High School may

contact parents or guardians prior to or part of an investigation.

- b. Notice to another school or district: If the reported incident involves student(s) from another school, South Shore Vo-Tech High School 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 the investigation, if South Shore Vo-Tech High School has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal or his designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR49.00 and the district's Memorandum of Understanding with the local law enforcement agency.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the South Shore Vocational Technical High School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, consult with other individuals the principal or his designee deems appropriate.

C. Investigation

South Shore Vo-Tech High School 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 his designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee 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 in consultation with a guidance counselor as appropriate. To the extent practical, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigation 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 district practices for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

D. Determinations

The principal or designee(s) will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after an 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 benefitting 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 circumstance, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the student's teacher(s) and/or guidance counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor regarding 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 state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Due to legal requirements regarding confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parents 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

South Shore Vocational Technical High School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan details Strategies for building student's skills, and other individualized interventions that the district may take in response to remediate or prevent further bullying or retaliation.

1) Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the South Shore Vo-Tech High School will utilize a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- a. Offering individualized or small group skill building sessions based upon the school's anti-bullying curricula.
- b. Provide relevant educational activities for students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel.
- c. Implementing academic and non-academic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals.
- d. Meeting with parents or guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home.
- e. Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills.
- f. Making a referral for evaluation.

2) Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee during the investigation, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability while teaching appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the South Shore Vocational Technical High School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan and with the district's code of conduct. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities follow the guidelines set forth in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider 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

South Shore Vocational Technical High School makes every effort to collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the school to prevent and respond to bullying.

- A. Parent Education and Resources:** South Shore Vocational Technical High School offers educational programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying and social competency curricula used by the school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Parent's Association, School Council, Special Education Department, or similar organizations.
- B. Notification Requirements:** Each year South Shore Vocational Technical High School will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula being utilized. This notification includes information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber bullying and online safety. The school will send written notification each year about the student-related sections of the plan and the school's Internet Use Policy. All notices to parents will be made in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. The school will post the plan and relevant information on the website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyber bullying, are prohibited:

- 1) 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
- 2) At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related though the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witness, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

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

VIII. DEFINITIONS

Aggressor/Perpetrator, a student or 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 who engages in bullying or retaliation

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, 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...

- 1) Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property
- 2) Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property
- 3) Creates a hostile environment at school for the target

- 4) Infringes on the rights of the target at school
- 5) Materially or 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 bullying 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.

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, creed, gender, gender identity or expression, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, disability 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, 37H1/2 or 37H3/4, 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.