

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan



Priority Statement

Foxborough Regional Charter School 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.

Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, 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, and
2. 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 or school, 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.

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Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Foxborough Regional Charter School (FRCS) is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities and a safe learning environment free from bullying. This policy is an integral part of the Foxborough Regional Charter School's comprehensive effort to promote learning and eliminate all forms of violent, harmful and disruptive behavior. Foxborough Regional Charter School will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including bullying, (i) on school grounds, 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 the school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school and (ii) 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 the school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a 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. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological, or emotional power. Bullying actions will include, when appropriate, referral to law enforcement agencies. FRCS will support this policy in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parental involvement.

FRCS prohibits all forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination and hate crimes based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability. The protection of the civil rights of all school community members is of utmost importance and a priority of the school. Furthermore, FRCS will not tolerate retaliation against persons who take action consistent with this policy.

Violation of this policy is a serious offense. Violators may be subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective action to stop the conduct and prevent its reoccurrence. FRCS is committed to protecting the complainant, the other similarly-situated individuals, from bullying in the future. A Bully Prevention and intervention Plan containing responsibilities of staff and students, reporting procedures, complaint process, resolution, and protection against retaliation shall be in place at the school.

Definitions of Peer Aggression and Bullying

PEER AGGRESSION

Verbal Aggression involves words that hurt and/or humiliate, including but not limited to teasing, name calling, and/or insulting. The following are categories of verbal aggression.

1. *Careless hurtful remarks* appear to be thoughtless rather than malicious; repetitive “careless hurtful remarks” are probably not thoughtless, but in fact may be “verbal or written teasing/taunting.”
2. *Verbal or written teasing/taunting* is the expression of language which is deliberately hurtful to a target’s feelings, and can either be made directly to the target or within his/her or other children’s hearing or sight.
3. *Verbal or written threats or taunts* are explicit remarks threatening future harmful behavior.
4. *Encouraging such aggression* is also a type of verbal aggression.

Physical Aggression involves physical actions that are hurtful. The following are categories of physical aggression.

1. *Physical threats* include physical gestures used to convey to a target that he/she will be hurt, such as but not limited to raising a clenched fist or drawing a finger across the throat.
2. *Physical harassment* involves physically touching a target in a hurtful way that is unlikely to cause injury, including by not limited to pinching, pulling off hats, grabbing books, and/or blocking one’s way.
3. *Physical attacks* include, but are not limited to, pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting, punching, or pinning down.
4. *Taking or damaging someone’s property* is another form of physical aggression.

Relational Aggression involves convincing one’s peers to exclude or reject certain persons and cut them off from their social connections.

BULLYING

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a 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.

Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological, or emotional power.

CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying 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 if they create any of the conditions outlined in the definition of bullying. 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. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of 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 outlined in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying can be as simple as continuing to send e-mail to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender, but it may also include threats, sexual remarks, racial remarks, ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums, and posting false statements as fact aimed at humiliation.

Cyber-bullies may also send threatening and harassing emails and instant messages to the victims, while others post rumors or gossip and instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target.

OTHER IMPORTANT TERMS

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 a student's education.

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

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

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

Assessing Needs and Resources

Effective bullying prevention and intervention is based on established district policy and an annual collection and analysis of data that guides decision-making and the practices of the district to encourage positive conduct and address bullying and other harmful behaviors. Foxborough Regional Charter School is committed to continually assessing the needs of the students, the school and its environment.

Data Collection The following are the various types of data the school will collect and analyze for patterns indicating prevalence of bullying or related behaviors.

- **Behavior Data:** Sources for behavior data include discipline referrals, anecdotal records, observation data, etc. Behavior infraction analyses might include: number of discipline referrals, locations, times, staff involved, students involved, days of the week, months of the year, etc.
- **Achievement Data:** It is helpful to notice patterns in academic achievement data for students or groups of students.
- **Perception Data:** Perception data may be obtained from responses on surveys, questionnaires, or focus groups and may include beliefs, attitudes, behaviors experienced or observed, feelings of safety, etc.
- **Program Data:** Program data examines issues or impact of the various academic programs (high ability learners, special education programs, etc.) and specialized programs (after-school programs, breakfast programs, etc.)
- **Demographic Data:** Demographic data may include enrollment, attendance, drop-out rates, ethnicity, gender, grade levels, activity participation, or other factors unique or of interest to a school district.

Data Analysis A team of school will analyze the data and review data for patterns, concerns, trends, and questions which would impact bullying prevention and intervention plans. Results of the data analysis will guide the school in its decision-making process for establishing or reviewing bullying prevention and intervention programs or lead to new questions to be addressed by additional data collection.

Data Reporting The school will report out updates, findings, and changes throughout the school year through the FRCS Spirit, the website, memos, etc.

Annual Review The school will compile an annual collection and analysis of the data which will provide feedback on successes to celebrate and policy or program modifications that may be needed.

Oversight and Responsibilities

All school stakeholders, including staff, students, and parents share the responsibility of ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment. Foxborough Regional Charter School is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders to create a safe learning environment. The following are specific roles within the school building.

<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Person</u>
Receives reports on bullying	School Culture Personnel
Collects and analyzes building and/or school wide data	Director of Students and Families
Creates a process for recording and tracking incident reports	School Culture Personnel
Plans for the ongoing professional development of staff	Director of Students and Families
Plans supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors	Division of Students and Families
Chooses and implements curricula	Director of Students and Families
Develops or revises current policies and procedures	Director of Students and Families
Amends student handbook to reflect policies and procedures	Director of Students and Families
Amends staff handbook to reflect policies and procedures	Human Resources Coordinator
Leads the parent engagement effort and drafts parent information and resources	Family Network Liaison
Reviews and updates plan annually	Director of Students and Families

Training and Professional Development

Foxborough Regional Charter School is committed to the ongoing professional development. The School provides opportunities for our faculty and staff to improve their knowledge and skills and, ultimately, improve teaching, student learning, student safety and student success.

Annual staff training on the Plan: Annual training for all school staff will occur during Orientation Week prior to school starting on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Director of Students and Families 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 will be required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

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. During scheduled Professional Development days, monthly staff meetings, and other days designated for training, staff will be trained on topics required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.

- a. developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- b. developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- c. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- d. 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;
- e. information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- f. 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.

Access to Resources and Services

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. Foxborough Regional Charter School provides supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance our school's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services will reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors.

Identifying resource: The school will continually identify its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This will include a review of current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services. The school currently has a Director of Students and Families, two School Adjustment Counselors, one School Psychologist, one Behavior Specialist, two School Culture Liaisons, two Guidance Counselors, two school nurses, one Family Network Liaison. In addition the health teacher and Integrated Arts Instructional Leader are integral members of the team who help develop curricula and supports for students.

The school has adopted new curricula, including Steps to Respect (grades K-5), Second Step (grades 6-8), Get Real program (grades 10 and 12), and effective problem solving and conflict resolution strategies (grades 9 and 11).

The school has an established Crisis Team and Student Intervention Team which help in establishing safety procedures and protocols for the school and how to respond to crisis and concerns within the school community.

Throughout each school year, the Director of Students and Families will collaborate with the School Resource Officer, the Crisis Team, the Student Intervention Team, School Leadership, students, teachers, parents, and other outside resources to identify additional needed resources, including but not limited to curriculum, procedures, staffing, and budget.

Counseling and other services: The school has created an additional position, Support and Enrichment Instructional Leader. One of the responsibilities of this position is to oversee the English Language Learners program. The Support and Enrichment Instructional Leader and the full time English Language Learners teacher will work with the Director of Students and Families to make sure all materials, procedures and information is available to all families in our district. In addition, the school utilizes an outside web based resource to help translate material as needed.

The school has an established Crisis Team and Student Intervention Team which help in establishing safety procedures and protocols for the school and how to respond to crisis and concerns within the school community. In addition, the Division of Students and Families, along with the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan summer project team worked to develop plans for social skills programs to prevent bullying. These participants used resources from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center and the Committee for Children to help develop curriculum for students in grades K-12.

The School Adjustment Counselors and School Psychologist develop social skills groups to work with identified students on bullying and social issues. These resources, as well as the Director of Students

and Families, Guidance Counselors, School Culture Personnel, Behavior Specialist and school nurses provide intervention and education to students who exhibit bullying behaviors. The Division of Students and Families are trained in creating Behavior Support Plans, Individual Student Success Plans, crisis response strategies, and de-escalation techniques.

Students with disabilities: 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.

Referral to outside service: School Adjustment Counselors with the help of the Director of Students and Families will create and annually revise a protocol for referring students and families to outside services.

Academic and Supporting Activities

Foxborough Regional Charter School will provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the school's curricula. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

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.

Steps to Respect will be incorporated into grades K-5 curriculum. Skills taught with this curriculum are:

- Friendship begins with respect
- Friendship Development
- Making conversation
- Finding things in common
- Finding and making friends
- Conflict between friends
- Joining a group
- Are you mad at me?
- What is bullying?
- Recognizing bullying
- Recognizing conflict
- Standing up for yourself by being assertive
- Put-downs hurt
- Bodies and bullying
- Refusing to be bullied
- Refusing bullying
- Refusing and reporting bullying
- Controlling rumors
- Bystanders can help
- What is a bystander?
- Taking responsibility
- Bystanders can be part of the solution
- Bystanders are the key

- Making it happen
- A class bullying pledge
- Maintaining a safe, caring, respectful school community

Second Step will be incorporated into grades 6-8 curriculum. Topics taught with this curriculum are:

Grade 6

Working in Groups

- Identify behaviors involved in listening and respecting others' ideas
- Apply group communication skills
- Define *empathy*
- Apply empathy skills while identifying feelings

Friends and Allies

- Apply empathy skills
- Apply active listening skills
- Identify ways to make friends and join groups
- Define the term *ally* and identify when and how to be one

Considering Perspectives

- Understand that people's perspectives are based on their feelings, experiences, and needs or wants
- Recognize the value in being able to consider another's perspective
- Apply perspective-taking skills

Disagreeing Respectfully

- Apply perspective-taking skills
- Distinguish between disrespectful and respectful disagreement
- Identify and apply effective communication skills
- Apply skills to give constructive feedback

Being Assertive

- Distinguish differences between passive, assertive, and aggressive communication styles
- Identify and assume the physical and verbal characteristics of assertive communication
- Apply assertive communication skills

Recognizing Bullying

- Recognize and define *bullying*
- Understand how bullying can affect them and their peers
- Empathize with individuals who are bullied
- Understand what they can do if they or someone they know is bullied

Bystanders

- Recognize and define the role of a bystander in bullying
- Understand how a bystander can be a part of the problem or part of the solution
- Apply empathic concern and perspective taking
- Identify ways to be part of the solution to bullying

Emotions—Brain and Body

- Understand what happens to their brains and bodies when they experience strong emotions
- Identify the first three Steps for Staying in Control
- Understand why using self-talk is a key to managing emotions
- Apply self-talk strategies

Calming-Down Strategies

- Apply centered breathing techniques correctly
- Recognize self-talk that intensifies or calms down strong feelings
- Use self-talk to manage emotions
- Identify calming-down strategies that work best for them

Problem Solving: Using the Action Steps

- Analyze a problem by stating what the problem is and identifying the perspectives of those involved
- Generate multiple options for solving a problem
- Understand how to consider each option and decide on the best one
- Apply the first four Action Steps

Making a Plan

- Generate a plan for carrying out an option
- Apply the Action Steps
- Understand how to make amends

Grade 7

Working in Groups

- Understand the relevance of the Stepping In program to their lives
- Identify skills that contribute to successful group work
- Apply communication skills
- Define *empathy* and apply empathy skills

Disagreeing Respectfully

- Distinguish between disrespectful and respectful disagreement
- Apply perspective-taking skills
- Apply skills for communicating their own perspective effectively
- Apply skills for giving constructive feedback

Negotiating and Compromising

- Identify how to solve a problem using the Action Steps
- Identify a problem from the perspectives of those involved
- Generate solutions to scenarios using strategies of negotiation and compromise (win-win strategies)
- Apply the Action Steps to problem solving in given scenarios

Giving and Getting Support

- Apply empathy skills
- Understand when and how to give support by being an ally
- Identify when and how to go to an adult for help and when to encourage friends to seek help from an adult
- Apply assertive communication skills

Responding to Bullying

- Recognize and define *bullying* and *bystander* behaviors
- Empathize with people who are bullied
- Identify strategies to deal with bullying and help others who are bullied
- Understand how a bystander can be part of the problem or part of the solution

Cyber Bullying

- Recognize that technology is sometimes used for bullying
- Understand ways they can be “part of the solution” to cyber bullying
- Understand strategies for dealing with cyber bullying

Sexual Harassment

- Recognize and define *sexual harassment*
- Differentiate between flirting or joking and sexual harassment
- Apply assertiveness skills to refuse sexual harassment
- Understand their school’s sexual harassment policy and legal implications

Understanding Anger

- Understand that out-of-control anger can result in destructive outcomes
- Understand what happens to their brains and bodies when they experience strong emotions
- Recognize the physical and mental signs that lead to strong emotions
- Identify and apply strategies for staying in control of their emotions

Staying in Control

- Understand why it is important to check their assumptions
- Understand and apply calming-down strategies
- Apply the Think Twice Step for checking assumptions
- Apply the Steps for Staying in Control for managing emotions

Coping with Stress

- Understand that coping means consciously doing something positive to handle stress
- Understand that avoiding dealing with stress can make feelings worse
- Understand how positive self-talk can change your attitude
- Identify coping strategies (calming down, getting support, taking action)

Grade 8

Working in Groups

- Identify skills, behaviors, and attitudes that contribute to successful group work
- Apply communication and group-work skills
- Define *empathy*

Leaders and Allies

- Understand the importance of being a positive leader
- Identify actions that will inspire younger students
- Apply empathy skills
- Define *ally* and identify how to be one

Handling a Grievance

- Identify skills for effectively communicating about a grievance with someone
- Apply perspective taking to handling a grievance
- Apply assertiveness skills to communicating about a grievance
- Apply constructive feedback skills

Negotiating and Compromising

- Solve a problem using the Action Steps
- Identify a problem from the perspectives of those involved
- Generate solutions using strategies of negotiation and compromise (win-win strategies)
- Apply the Action Steps to problem solving

Bullying in Friendships

- Recognize and identify bullying within social or friendship groups
- Understand what they can do about bullying within relationships
- Understand how a bystander can be part of the problem or part of the solution
- Apply empathic concern and perspective taking

Labels, Stereotypes, and Prejudice

- Recognize that labels, stereotypes, and prejudice can contribute or lead to bullying or unfair treatment of others
- Recognize that all people are individuals beyond a label or stereotype
- Understand that increased empathy can reduce the negative effects of labeling, stereotypes, and prejudice
- Identify and practice empathic skills

Bullying in Dating Relationships

- Recognize and identify bullying within dating relationships
- Understand what they can do about bullying within dating relationships
- Identify strategies to assess risk and safely avoid bullying in dating relationships

De-Escalating a Tense Situation

- Understand what happens to their brains and bodies when they experience strong emotions
- Identify personal strategies to “pause” and calm down
- Understand how self-talk can lead to escalation or de-escalation of anger, aggression, and conflict
- Understand how spectators’ responses can lead to escalation

Coping with Stress

- Identify their individual style of dealing with stress
- Understand that avoiding dealing with stress can make feelings worse
- Understand that coping means consciously doing something positive to handle stress
- Identify steps and strategies for coping with stress

Get Real Curriculum and conflict resolution strategies will be incorporated into the 9-12 grade curricula.

Curricula in grades 9-12 will Emphasize the principles of Social and Emotional Learning, addressing five core competencies and focuses on their application in common life situations

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Problem solving strategies

At the beginning of the school year, grade level assemblies will be held with each grade. During this time, the Director of Students and Families will educate the students on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and review appropriate student behaviors. Procedures and safety protocols will also be addressed.

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
- supporting students’ interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Reporting Bullying

A staff member is expected to report immediately to the School Culture Personnel when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The 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 School Culture Personnel. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Written reports can be by e-mail, letter, or using the Incident Report Form. This form is located on the school's website. Oral reports made to a staff member will be recorded in writing by the staff member. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. However, no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Anonymous reports may be made by downloading the Incident Report Form and returning it to the School Culture Personnel. Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. Oral reports and other written reports will be treated as Incident Reports and will be investigated. Students will be provided safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member.

Process for Responding to a Report of Peer Aggression and Bullying

Step 1: Complete Incident Report Form (all faculty)

If an adult witnesses an incident:

- a. All staff should have copies of the Incident Report Form readily available and they can be found on the S Drive in the Students and Families Info folder.
- b. The adult who witnessed the incident needs to complete the Incident Report Form and submit the form as soon as possible to a member of Students and Families.
- c. Staff and faculty are to report incidences even if they are unsure if the child wants the incident reported. Adults in the school should make decisions regarding the seriousness of incidents, and children who are victims or aggressors should not be making those judgments.

If a child or parent reports an incident of bullying or retaliation to an adult:

- a. The adult should affirm the child's feelings, i.e. "you were right to report this. I'm glad you told me."
- b. Determine if there are immediate safety issues that must be addressed right away. Note child's level of distress and/or the presence of injuries, damaged/torn clothes, etc.
 1. If immediate safety issues exist, take child to nurse and/or report the incident to the School Culture Staff immediately. Follow up by completing the Incident Report Form and submitting to the School Culture Staff.
 2. If no immediate safety issues exist, complete the Incident Report Form and submit to a member of Students and Families.

Step 2: Interview Student Who is Target of Bullying or Retaliation (Students and Families)

1. *Interview the target rather than the aggressor first.* This addresses the urgency of the targeted child's need to talk to someone as well as allows you to assess if immediate danger or safety issues exist and must be dealt with right away. **Do not ask to see the victim in the alleged aggressor's presence and emphasize that the victim will not be mentioned to the aggressor and will not be part of the discipline. Make sure the target knows that dealing with the aggressor(s) is your job, not his/hers.
2. *Support student by:*
 - Affirming child's feelings, i.e. "you were right to report this. I'm glad you told me."
 - Asking the child what he/she has already attempted to do to stop the situation.
 - Making it clear that the aggression was not his/her fault.
 - Thinking carefully before giving advice, as often times the targets have already tried and failed to stop this aggression by the strategies we usually suggest, i.e. walk away, tell aggressor to stop, etc.
 - Reminding the students to always report aggression.
 - Brainstorming solutions with him/her after identifying what has and has not worked in the past.

Step 3: Interview the Child Who is Accused of Bullying or Retaliation

1. *Identify the problem* and diffuse reporting responsibility, i.e. "I have been hearing that..." "I have an Incident Report that states...." Alternatively, own reporting responsibility to another adult.
2. *Focus more on the aggressor child's behavior than on the particular incident.* For example, "I have a report here that you are calling kids names," rather than "I have a report that you called Susie Smith a bad name."
3. *Provide incentives for honesty.* For example, if the aggressor denies any wrong doing, you can tell the child that if he/she tells the truth about the incident you can mention his/her honesty when talking with the parents.

In the case of denial of wrong doing:

- Be prepared for denial.
- If there is any corroborating evidence or witnesses, tell the child that. Do not mention the victim or the witnesses by name (unless they are adults), if possible. Go to number 4 below: "Assigning Consequences."
- If there is zero corroboration and the "aggressor" continues to deny everything—one child's word against another's"
 - a. Tell the aggressor that you hope he/she is right and that nothing happened, and that you will be keeping a very close eye on the situation and so will the other adults in the

school. The critical element is to be sure the children know that there will be a response to this report, even if there is no immediate disciplinary action.

- b. Consider using a non-disciplinary response immediately, such as requiring the child to have a weekly “check-in” with you, so the aggressor child knows that the adults are paying particular attention to his/her behavior. Do not frame the weekly check-in as punishment; rather stress that you want to be sure that the child is doing well and want to hear weekly how he/she is doing.
- c. Note: if the aggressor denies, regardless of whether there is corroboration, begin to conduct an investigation. You may tell the aggressor that you will talk to him/her some more about this matter, but do not mention that you may be talking to other students, as this may result in the aggressor threatening them as well.

If the aggressor admits wrong doing:

- And minimizes the behavior: respond by firmly asserting that he/she may feel it is “no big deal” but that the school and the community thinks that such behaviors are serious.
 - And finally admits wrong doing after initially denying it: acknowledge the difficulty of shifting out of denial.
4. *Assign consequences to aggressor for bullying or retaliation.* If the student admits wrong doing or an investigation leads staff to believe student was engaging in bullying behavior, student should be assigned consequences according to the Discipline Guidelines. The consequences may range from Saturday detention to internal or external suspension, depending on the incident. A referral to the School Resource Officer will be done in every situation. In addition, it will be explained to student and parents/guardians that consequences are not arbitrary and that any child who engages in this behavior will in fact experience the same consequence.
 5. *Contact parent.* Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Director of Students and Families 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. While prior notice of an investigation shall not be required, the Director of Students and Families shall not be precluded from notifying the parents of a target or aggressor prior to completion of the investigation. In notifying the parents of a target or aggressor of an investigation or the findings thereon, the principal shall maintain the privacy and confidentiality of any individual or child who is not the child of the parents to whom the notice is provided. The principal shall ensure that any notice to the parents complies with applicable state regulations including, but not limited to, 603 CMR 49.00, and shall not report specific information to the target’s parent(s) about the disciplinary action taken against an aggressor unless it involves a “stay away” order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations. In addition, the school will inform the parents of the target regarding action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.
 6. *Obligations to Notify Others*
 - a. 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 Director of Students and Families 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.

- b. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Director of Students or Families 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 Director of Students and Families 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 or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.
6. *Document incident and consequence*. Complete Follow Up Form.
 7. *Have student complete the Think About It Form*. Work with the student to complete the Think About It Form.
 - Students must make statements that accept the negative effects of his/her behavior on others, i.e. "I hurt Sam when I called him stupid."
 - The following statements are not acceptable:
 - "I didn't do anything." (denial)
 - "I did something but it wasn't my fault." (rationalizing)
 - "I know what I did didn't really hurt her because she didn't have to go to the nurse." (minimizing)
 8. *Document action taken/plan developed and share with:*
 - Director of Students and Families
 - Director of Teaching and Learning
 - Teachers who have any contact with target and bully
 - Support staff (lunchroom and recess staff)
 - Parents/Guardians of target and aggressor
 9. *Monitor safety of target and increase supervision of accused*. Sharing the outcome of this incident is critical for maintaining a school climate where adults and children feel able to report such behaviors. Even if the information shared is only brief and nonspecific, it assures adults and children that their reporting is not being ignored.

Protection of Students Who Report Bullying, Provides Information During an Investigation, or Who Witnesses or Provides Reliable Information About an Act of Bullying

- The Director of Students and Families 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.
- The Director of Students and Families or designee may choose 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 disciplinary action, the Director of Students and Families or designee will contact the target and others who provided reliable information to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the behavior and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Director of Students and Families or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement these immediately.

False Accusations and Retaliation

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

If the Director of Students and Families or designee determines that a student retaliated against a student who reported bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Incident Report Form

This report must be submitted to the Director of Students and Families, or designee, as soon as completed.

Person completing form:	
Date and time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Who reported incident:	
Child/Children involved:	
Witnesses:	
Details of incident, please check all that apply ("written" includes electronic communications)	<input type="checkbox"/> careless/hurtful remarks <input type="checkbox"/> physical harassment <input type="checkbox"/> verbal/written teasing <input type="checkbox"/> aggression encouraged by others <input type="checkbox"/> exclusion <input type="checkbox"/> intimidation/bullying <input type="checkbox"/> fear of retaliation <input type="checkbox"/> cyber-bullying <input type="checkbox"/> spreading of rumors
To your knowledge have there been similar concerns between these students?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

Are there immediate safety concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
If needed, describe incident or concerns in more detail.	

Signature

Date

Think About It Form

Name: _____

Date: _____

What did you do? (Please be specific and start with "I")

What was wrong with this behavior? (Whom did you hurt? How did you know you hurt them?)

What made you do this? (What problem were you trying to solve? Did you want attention? Did you want to be left alone? Were you trying to have fun? Were you already mad about something?)

Next time you are feeling this way, how will you act differently without hurting anyone?

Follow-Up Form

This form is to be completed by Director of Students and Families or designee.

___ Interviewed target of aggression

Date: _____

Name(s) of interviewees:

Completed the following steps:

___ supported him/her, i.e. affirmed his/her feelings

___ brainstormed on solutions for avoiding aggression

___ reminded him/her to report aggression

___ recommended options for social networking and programming

___ notified parent of student who is being bullied

___ notified teacher(s) of student who is being bullied

___ notified other staff, including:

___ Interviewed child(ren) accused of aggression

Date: _____

Name(s)

Confirmation of incident (if not witnessed by an adult) ___yes ___no

If no, proceed to interview witnesses.

___ Interviewed witnesses of aggression

Date: _____

Name(s)

___ Discussed importance of reporting incidents of aggression

Confirmation of incident: ___ yes ___ no

If aggression if confirmed, is this:

___ 1st offense

___ 2nd offense

___ 3rd offense

___ other

Consequences assigned:

___ Reviewed what will happen if behavior continues

When and with whom will "Think About It Form" be completed:

___ Notified parent of accused (when parents are notified, please point out child's positive behavior, i.e. telling the truth, feeling remorse, etc.)

___ Notified teacher(s) of accused student(s)

___ Notified other staff, including:

Referred for counseling: ___ yes ___ no

To make additional comments, please use back side.

Collaboration with Families

Foxborough Regional Charter School believes in collaborating with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the school to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration.

Parent education and resources: The Family Network Liaison will work with Parents in Education and Special Education Parent Advisory Committee to host informational sessions during their monthly meetings. Parents will be updated on efforts the school is making to eradicate bullying and other behaviors in school. In addition, the Family Network Liaison will discuss how parents can help at home, strategies to help enforce safety in the home and on the internet.

A parent resource center is being developed. Bullying will be one of the topics that will have extensive resources available to parents. Parent workshops will be held during the school year on cyberbullying what is bullying, and strategies for parents at home. During the Back to School Night in September, information on the bullying curriculum will be available to all parents and the Bully Prevention and Intervention Plan will be explained.

The school website will have a resource page for parents which will include current research, websites, resources etc. dedicated to bullying.

Notification requirements: Through the FRCS Spirit, the school will inform parents on the curriculum and school wide initiatives to help educate students about bullying prevention. Information on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will also be included. This information will also be available in hard copy in the school's main office. All content, including the Plan, will be available on the school's website.

The school has developed a Parent Communication Form to help with keeping the lines of communication open with the school. It is important for families to be aware of issues or possible concerns with their child. It is imperative that students feel safe and comfortable in their environment in order for them to learn to their best potential. Communication between school and families is an integral step in the process.

Parent Communication Form

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As children develop through the elementary years, they are learning how to interact with others and how to meet their needs in positive ways. I am writing to let you know that your child, _____, had a learning experience in school today. We believed it was important to share this information with you.

1. What was reported:

2. How your child described his/her actions:

3. If necessary, how we investigated and what we determined happened:

4. What will happen if this behavior occurs again:

Please sign and return this letter to school in an envelope addressed to the main office as soon as possible. Please don't hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions or concerns.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date