

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY

The Torrington Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on 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 local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

For purposes of this policy, "**Bullying**" means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:

- 1) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- 2) places such student 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 such student;
- 4) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
- 5) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

For purposes of this policy, "**Cyberbullying**" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

Consistent with the requirements under state law, the Torrington Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a Safe School Climate Plan in furtherance of this policy. As provided by state law, such Safe School Climate Plan shall include, but not be limited to provisions which:

- (1) Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which students may make such reports;
- (2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying;
- (3) require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;
- (4) require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section;
- (5) require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- (6) include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying;

- 7) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
- (8) require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;
- (9) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;
- (10) establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
- (11) direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
- (12) prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
- (13) direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;
- (14) require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;
- (15) prohibit bullying (A) on 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 local or regional board of education, or through the use of

an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

(16) require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and

(17) require that all school employees annually complete the training described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220a.

The notification required pursuant to subdivision (8) (above) and the invitation required pursuant to subdivision (9) (above) shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the district's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

The Torrington Board of Education shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to this policy and submit such plan to the Department of Education. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Board, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145a

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145o

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-220a

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-222g

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-222h

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Public Act 13-3, "An Act Concerning Gun Prevention Violence and Children's Safety"

SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN

The Board is committed to creating and maintaining a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe educational environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, the Board has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan, consistent with state law and Board Policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying and sets forth the Board's expectations for creating a positive school climate and thus preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying.

Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The district's commitment to addressing bullying behavior, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a positive school climate in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or school staff.

I. Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

- A. The Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on 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 local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.
- B. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
- C. In addition to prohibiting student acts which constitute bullying, the Board also prohibits discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying.
- D. Students who engage in bullying behavior in violation of Board Policy and the Safe School Climate Plan shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

II. Definition of Bullying

- A. **"Bullying"** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral, or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:
1. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
 2. places such student 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 such student;
 4. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
 5. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- B. Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

III. Other Definitions

- A. **"Cyberbullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.
- B. **"Electronic communication"** means 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, photoelectronic or photo-optical system;
- C. **"Hostile environment"** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;

- D. **"Mobile electronic device"** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;
- E. **"Outside of the school setting"** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education;
- F. **"Prevention and intervention strategy"** may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees, (6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, and (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.
- G. **"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.
- H. **"School employee"** means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public

elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

- I. **"School-Sponsored Activity"** shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Education.

IV. Leadership and Administrative Responsibilities

A. Safe School Climate Coordinator

The Superintendent shall appoint, from existing school district staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator ("Coordinator"). The Coordinator shall:

1. be responsible for implementing the district's Safe School Climate Plan ("Plan");
2. collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying in district schools;
3. provide data and information, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education regarding bullying;
4. meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss issues relating to bullying the school district and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Plan.

B. Safe School Climate Specialist

The Principal of each school (or principal's designee) shall serve as the Safe School Climate Specialist. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying and act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying in the school.

V. Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan

- A. The Principal of each school shall establish a committee or designate at least one existing committee ("Committee") in the school to be responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues relating to bullying in the school. Such committee shall include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, as appointed by the school principal.

- B. The Committee shall: 1) receive copies of completed reports following bullying investigations; 2) identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school; 3) implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan, if applicable, regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying, 4) review and amend school policies relating to bullying; 5) review and make recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the Safe School Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school; 6) educate students, school employees and parents/guardians on issues relating to bullying; 7) collaborate with the Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and 8) perform any other duties as determined by the Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying.
- C. Any parent/guardian serving as a member of the Committee shall not participate in any activities which may compromise the confidentiality of any student, including, but not limited to receiving copies of investigation reports, or identifying or addressing patterns of bullying among students in the school.
- D. The Board of Education shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to Board policy and submit such plan to the Department of Education. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Board, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

VI. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Complaints of Bullying

- A. Students and parents (or guardians of students) may file written reports of bullying. Written reports of bullying shall be reasonably specific as to the basis for the report, including the time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of incidents, the target of the suspected bullying, and the names of potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any building administrator and/or the Safe School Climate Specialist (i.e. building principal), and all reports shall be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with this Plan.

- B. Students may make anonymous reports of bullying to any school employee. Students may also request anonymity when making a report, even if the student's identity is known to the school employee. In cases where a student requests anonymity, the Safe School Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall meet with the student (if the student's identity is known) to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact that maintaining the anonymity of the complainant may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action. All anonymous reports shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that does not disclose the source of the report, and is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- C. School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying shall orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one (1) school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The school employee shall then file a written report not later than two (2) school days after making such oral report.
- D. The Safe School Specialist shall be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of bullying and shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. In order to allow the district to adequately investigate complaints filed by a student or parent/guardian, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied should be asked to provide consent to permit the release of that student's name in connection with the investigation process, unless the student and/or parent has requested anonymity.
- E. In investigating reports of bullying, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The Safe School Climate Specialist will interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

VII. Responding to Verified Acts of Bullying

- A. Following investigation, if acts of bullying are verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the students against whom such acts were directed as well as the parents or guardians of the students who commit such acts of bullying of the finding **not later than forty-eight hours** after the investigation is completed. This notification shall include a description of the school's response to the acts of bullying. In providing such notification, however, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of other students, including the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian's own child, may not be disclosed except as provided by law.
- B. In any instance in which bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also invite the parents or guardians of the student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardian of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student/victim and to prevent further acts of bullying. The invitation may be made simultaneous with the notification described above in Section VII.A. The purpose of the meeting is to communicate to parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student involved and to prevent further acts of bullying. Normally, separate meetings shall be held with the respective parents; however, at the discretion of the Safe School Climate Specialist and with written consent of the parents/guardians involved, the meeting(s) may be held jointly.
- C. If bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an act of bullying was directed. Such support plan will include safety measures to protect against further acts of bullying.
- D. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. The written intervention plan may include counseling, discipline and other appropriate remedial actions as determined by the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee, and may also incorporate a student safety support plan, as appropriate.

E. Notice to Law Enforcement

If the Principal of a school (or his/her designee) reasonably believes that any act of bullying constitutes a criminal offense, he/she shall notify appropriate law enforcement. Notice shall be consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law and Board policy regarding the disclosure of personally identifiable student information. In making this determination, the Principal or his/her designee, may consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

- F. If a bullying complaint raises a concern about discrimination or harassment on the basis of a legally protected classifications (such as race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity or expression), the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also coordinate any bullying investigation with other appropriate personnel within the district as appropriate (e.g. Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator etc.), so as to ensure that any such bullying investigation complies with the requirements of such policies regarding nondiscrimination.

VIII. Documentation and Maintenance of Log

- A. Each school shall maintain written reports of bullying, along with supporting documentation received and/or created as a result of bullying investigations, consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law. Any educational record containing personally identifiable student information pertaining to an individual student shall be maintained in a confidential manner, and shall not be disclosed to third parties without written prior written consent of a parent, guardian or eligible student, except as permitted under Board policy and state and federal law.

- B. The Principal of each school shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Consistent with district obligations under state and federal law regarding student privacy, the log shall not contain any personally identifiable student information, or any information that alone or in combination would allow a reasonable person in the school community to identify the students involved. Accordingly, the log should be limited to basic information such as the number of verified acts, name of school and/or grade level and relevant date. Given that any determination of bullying involves repeated acts, each investigation that results in a verified act of bullying for that school year shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of each report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of bullying in each school and shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including, but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.
- C. The Principal of each school shall report the number of verified acts of bullying in the school annually to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

IX. Other Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- A. Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in the nature of the offense and the impact the behavior may have on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying", as defined above, will generally warrant traditional disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (e.g., detention, in-school suspension, suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building principal (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee). No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. As discussed below, schools may also consider appropriate alternative to traditional disciplinary sanctions, including age-appropriate consequences and other restorative or remedial interventions.

- B. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. This plan may include safety provisions, as described above, for students against whom acts of bullying have been verified and may include other interventions such as counseling, discipline, and other appropriate remedial or restorative actions as determined by the responsible administrator.
- C. The following sets forth possible interventions which may also be utilized to enforce the Board's prohibition against bullying:

i. Non-disciplinary interventions

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying. Students may also be subject to other forms of restorative discipline or remedial actions, appropriate to the age of the students and nature of the behavior.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer or other forms of mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

ii. Disciplinary interventions

When acts of bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy. This consequence shall normally be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior.

iii. Interventions for bullied students

The building principal (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address incidents of bullying against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student may include the following:

- a. Counseling;
- b. Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations;
- c. Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;
- d. Peer mediation or other forms of mediation, where appropriate;
- e. Student Safety Support plan; and
- f. Restitution and/or restorative interventions.

iv. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other district actions may ameliorate potential problems with bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. While no specific action is required, and school needs for specific prevention and intervention strategies may vary from time to time, the following list of potential prevention and intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional employees in each school. Such prevention and intervention strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- a. school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts;
- b. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur;
- c. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, which may include instruction regarding building safe and positive school communities including developing healthy relationships and preventing dating violence as deemed appropriate for older students;
- d. Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student, parents and school employees;
- e. School-wide training related to safe school climate, which training may include Title IX/Sexual harassment training, Section 504/ADA Training, cultural diversity/multicultural education or other training in federal and state civil rights legislation or other topics relevant to safe school climate;
- f. Student peer training, education and support; and
- g. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
- h. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;
- i. Respectful responses to bullying concerns raised by students, parents or staff;
- j. Planned professional development programs addressing prevention and intervention strategies, which training may include school violence prevention, conflict resolution and prevention of bullying, with a focus in evidence based practices concerning same;

- k. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
 - l. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping;
 - m. Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of school employees and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;
 - n. Modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
 - o. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
 - p. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.
- D. In addition to prevention and intervention strategies, administrators, teachers and other professional employees may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe mean-spirited student conduct, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "bullying."

X. Improving School Climate

Under the direction of the Torrington Public Schools Superintendent of Schools, the district will appoint a Safe School Climate Coordinator. The coordinator's duties include:

- Monitoring and implementing the safe school climate plan;
- Collaborating with the safe school climate specialists on matters pertaining to bullying;
- Providing data to the superintendent, district and CSDE regarding bullying;
- Meeting at least twice annually with the safe school climate specialists to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's safe school climate plan.

Each school will designate a safe school climate specialist. The specialist will be the program administrator or a designee of the administrator. The specialist's duties include:

- Investigating or supervising the investigation of reported acts of bullying in accordance with the district's safe school climate plan;

- Collecting and maintaining records of reports and investigations of bullying in the school and acting as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying in the school;
- Coordinating annual in-service training for their respective school-based program unit, collaboratively with the Safe School Climate Committee, on the prevention, identification and response to bullying and the prevention of youth suicide;
- Chairing the Save School Climate Committee in each school-based program unit.

Each school will establish a committee (or designate an existing committee), that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in school, school-related activities, on transportation vehicles to and from school-sponsored activities. Each school-based program unit administrator must appoint at least one parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the school to the committee. It is recommended that the Safe School Climate Specialist be the chair of the committee. The responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Committee are to:

- Receive copies of completed forms from bullying investigations;
- Identify and address patterns of student bullying;
- Review and amend the school rules and regulations related to bullying;
- Review and make recommendations to the district's Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the district's safe school climate plan;
- Educate all school community members (students, school employees, parents/guardians) on issues related to bullying;
- Collaborate with the district's Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collecting of data (allegations and verified acts of bullying; school climate assessment results); and
- Perform other duties determined by the principal/program administrator related to identifying, preventing and responding to school bullying;

Any parent/guardians serving on this committee may not have full access to information that would compromise the confidentiality of any individual student(s).

Professional Development

Torrington Public Schools will provide at least one annual in-service training program to all school employees that must include information addressing preventing, identifying and responding to bullying and preventing and responding to youth suicide. This professional development will be determined by the Safe School Climate Specialists and the Safe School Climate Committee in each school-based program unit. I may also include:

- Classroom management;
- Positive youth development;
- Positive relationship building;
- Managing the cyber-arena;
- Conflict resolution;
- Cultural and gender diversity training;
- Violence prevention.

Assessment

Each school within the district will be required at least biannually to complete a school climate assessment that will be submitted to the CSDE. While required biannually, the assessment will be completed annually if prior survey data or bullying data support a need for improvement. The assessment will align with the National School Climate Standards which provide a comprehensive and standards-based approach to overall school climate. Torrington Public Schools will utilize the school climate assessment instruments developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The Safe School Climate plan will be monitored using the assessment data from these school climate assessment instruments.

The Safe School Climate Plan will:

- Be included in each school's publication of rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks;
- Require each school/program to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the plan at the beginning of each school year;
- Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in investigating an act of bullying;
- Prohibit bullying from occurring:
 - On school grounds;
 - At school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off school grounds;
 - At school bus stop, school bus or other transportation vehicle owned, leased or used by Torrington Public Schools/
 - Through the use of an electronic device or electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the district.
- Prohibit bullying outside of the school setting, if bullying:
 - Creates a hostile environment for the victim;
 - Infringes on the rights of the victim in school;
 - Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Reporting Requirements

- Enable students to report acts of bullying to any school employee;
- Provide student mechanisms to anonymously report bullying to any school employee;
- Require that students and their parents be annually notified of the process for reporting acts of bullying;
- Encourage parents to call school employees or school/program administrator if they feel bullying has occurred. Ask parents to submit a written request to initiate an investigation;
- School employees who witness act is of bullying or receive reports of bullying must immediately contact the Safe School Climate Specialist not later than one school day after the witnessed act of bullying and must then submit a written report not later than two school days after making their oral report;
- Safe school Climate Specialist investigates or supervises the investigation of all reports of bullying promptly after the receipt of the written report;
- Safe School Climate Specialist must review all anonymous reports provided that no discipline or action be issued solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- School/program administrators or designee must notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when they believe any act of bullying constitutes criminal conduct;
- Program administrator or designee will notify parents/guardians of any student who commits any verified acts of bullying and parents/guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than 48 hours after the completion of the investigation;
- Program administrator or designee will invite the parents/guardians of the perpetrator and victim of the bullying to separate meetings to communicate the measures being taken to ensure the student's safety and prevent further acts of bullying;
- Each school program will document and maintain records related to reports and investigation of bullying using designated log and maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying using designated log (see appendix);
- Verified acts of bullying log must be available to the public in main offices and submitted to the CSDE annually.

XI. Annual Notice and Training

- A. Students, and parents or guardians of students shall be notified annually of the process by which students may make reports of bullying.
- B. The Board shall provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying.

- C. At the beginning of each school year, each school shall provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan and require that all school employees annually complete training on the identification, prevention and response to bullying as required by law.
- D. After July 1, 2014, any person appointed by the district to serve as district safe school climate coordinator shall complete mental health and first aid training offered by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

XII. School Climate Assessments

Biennially, the Board shall require each school in the district to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The Board shall collect the school climate assessments for each school in the district and submit such assessments to the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-8, Series 2008-2009 (March 16, 2009)

Public Act 13-3, "An Act Concerning Gun Prevention Violence and Children's Safety"

[SAMPLE FORM A]

REPORT OF SUSPECTED BULLYING BEHAVIORS
(School Employees Should File with the School Principal)
(Parents and Students May File with the School Principal or Any Other
School Employee)

Name of Person Completing Report:

Date: _____

Target(s) of Behaviors:

Relationship of Reporter to Target (self, parent, teacher, peer,
etc.):

Report Filed Against:

Date of Incident(s):

Location(s): _____

Time: _____

Describe the basis for your report. Include information about the incident, participants, background to the incident, and any attempts you have made to resolve the problem. Please note relevant dates, times and places.

Indicate if there are witnesses who can provide more information regarding your report. If the witnesses are not school district staff or students, please provide contact information.

Name	Address	Telephone Number

Have there been previous incidents (circle one)? Yes No

If "yes", please describe the behavior of concern, the approximate dates and the location:

Were these incidents reported to school employees (circle one)

Yes No

If "Yes", to whom was it reported and when?

Was the report verbal or written?

Proposed Solution:

Indicate your opinion on how this problem might be resolved in the school setting. Be as specific as possible.

I certify that the above information and events are accurately depicted to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Reporter _____ Date Submitted _____

Received By _____ Date Received _____

[SAMPLE FORM B]

INTERNAL INVESTIGATION NOTES

For Staff Use Only:

Has student reporter requested anonymity? Y N

Does the school have parent/guardian consent to disclose that a complaint as to this student has been filed in connection with the investigation? Y N

Administrative Investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary):

Bullying Verified? Yes ____ No ____

Remedial Action(s) Taken:

(Attach bullying complaint and witness statements. If bullying is verified, attach notification to parents of students involved, invitation to parent meetings, and records of parent meetings).

[SAMPLE FORM C]

TORRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REPORT OF BULLYING FORM/INVESTIGATION SUMMARY

For Staff Use Only:

School: _____

Date: _____

Location(s): _____

Reporter Information:

Anonymous student report _____

Staff Member report _____ Name _____

Parent/Guardian report _____ Name _____

Student report _____ Name _____

Student(s) Reported as Committing Act:

Student(s) Reported as Victim:

Description of Alleged Act(s):

Time and Place: _____

Names of Potential Witnesses:

Action of Reporter:

Administrative Investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary):

Bullying Verified? Yes ____ No ____

Remedial Action(s) Taken:

If Bullying Verified, Has Notification Been Made to Parents of Students Involved?

Parents' Names:

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names:

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names:

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names:

Date Sent: _____

If Bullying Verified, Have Invitation to Meetings Been Sent to Parents of Students Involved?

Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____

Date of Meetings:

If Bullying Verified, Has School Developed Student Safety Support/Intervention Plan?

Y N

(Attach bullying complaint and witness statements. If bullying is verified, attach notification to parents of students involved, invitations to parent meetings, and records of parent meetings).

[SAMPLE FORM D]

Torrington Public Schools
Report of Bullying/Consent to Release Student Information

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

School: _____

To Parent/Guardian:

A report of bullying has been made on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been the victim of bullying. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation of the report, the Torrington Public Schools may wish to disclose the fact that this complaint has been filed in connection with investigation.

(Please check one):

_____ I hereby give permission for the Torrington Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its investigation of that complaint.

_____ I do **NOT** give permission for the Torrington Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its investigation of that complaint.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Name (Please print)