THE GOVERNOR'S
Prevention
Partnership
for safe, successful & drug-free kids

Quality Standards for Comprehensive Bullying Prevention

<u>PLEASE NOTE</u>:

These standards for bullying prevention recommend not a "program," but a comprehensive, multi-faceted effort that aims to prevent NOT ONLY behavior that meets the state of Connecticut's definition of bullying, BUT ALSO behavior representing the full spectrum of inter-student cruelty, ranging from minor teasing to criminal behavior (e.g., hate crimes), and including verbal, social/emotional and physical aggression.

Prior to implementation, all quality standards and recommended practices/tools should be evaluated in terms of their cultural and developmental fit with your students and school.

<u>Standard 1</u> - Bullying prevention efforts are comprehensive and include:

➢ A "top-down" commitment from administrators to take the issue seriously.
➢ Modeling of appropriate behavior by school staff; staff properly trained in effective classroom management; interventions to reduce staff stress and encourage appropriate responses to student behavior challenges.
➢ A multi-level, multi-component approach that unites for a common purpose the following elements:
  ▪ Bullying prevention curricula and related curricula/activities for ALL students
  ▪ Interventions aimed <u>specifically</u> at youth who bully and youth who are targets
  ▪ School rules, policies and procedures to address bullying behavior
  ▪ Efforts to promote school-wide norms for positive behavior (including non-tolerance of bullying) and foster positive youth development and youth developmental assets
  ▪ Family involvement procedures and activities; and
  ▪ Linkages from the school to relevant community resources.

RESOURCES:

✓ The Canadian Public Health Association's Assessment Toolkit for Bullying, Harassment and Peer Relations at School includes an excellent diagram (p. 24) that shows how multiple components of a comprehensive anti-bullying initiative complement each other.

✓ The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is the most comprehensive evidence-based model available; it includes school-level, classroom level and individual-level interventions as well as a parent involvement component. Please note, however, that implementation of this program is not sufficient for meeting all of the quality standards.

✓ The Search Institute offers tools for schools to build developmental assets and encourage positive behaviors among their students.

✓ Schools can use this "primer," fact sheet and editorial on positive youth development (PYD) to help brainstorm ways of promoting PYD among students.

✓ The National Education Association offers many resources on classroom management and educator stress management.

Standard 2 - A school leadership team guides planning, implementation and evaluation of bullying prevention efforts within the context of an overall plan to promote positive school climate.

> ➢ The group can agree that bullying (as distinguished from isolated, minor acts of inter-student cruelty) is not simply "kids being kids," but is behavior that harms school climate and can have significant negative consequences for both youth who bully and those who are targets of bullying.
> ➢ The group comes to consensus on a definition of bullying that is understandable to them (i.e., you know it when you see it) and also meets legal requirements.
> ➢ The team educates itself on why youth bully, as well as why youth who are targets of bullying often don't report it or seek help.
> ➢ Team members identify the school's current level of readiness to implement anti-bullying efforts, steps needed to increase readiness, and school assets/needs.
> ➢ The team obtains the buy-in of all school personnel and raises school/parent awareness of the issue.
> ➢ The team is structured and functions like a community coalition, with adequate representation from "sectors" including administrators, school counseling/support staff, parents, community members (esp. those representing typical community activities for students such as after-school programs, mentoring, clubs, scouting, sports, etc.), grade-level teachers, and non-teaching staff (bus driver, custodian, cafeteria/playground monitors).
> ➢ The team follows best practices for leadership teams/coalitions (effective meetings, engaged members, strategic planning, etc.) and finds an efficient team structure/purpose that coordinates well with other school leadership teams. For example, a school may form a combined Positive Behavior Supports and Bullying Prevention Team that is responsible for:
>   - Administering the annual climate/bullying/substance use & risk behaviors survey
>   - Working with administrators to set school behavior/disciplinary policy
>   - Designing efforts to promote school-wide norms for positive behavior
>   - Tracking school-level disciplinary data
>   - Investigating reports of bullying incidents
>   - Documenting bullying incidents and school responses in order to meet legal requirements
>   - Sending one member to join the principal in meetings with parents/guardians following bullying incidents
>   - Coordinating with the Student Assistance, early intervention (e.g., EIP) and/or Response to Intervention (SRBI) team(s) to track data on (and inform action plans for) individual youth
>   - Evaluating effectiveness of bullying prevention and Positive Behavior Supports

RESOURCES:

✓ "Partnership for Respect" is an excellent model for forming and preparing bullying/school climate-related leadership teams and assessing school readiness (contact The Governor's Prevention Partnership, the new home of Operation Respect CT, for more information).

✓ The Massachusetts Department of Public Health provides an extensive guide that helps educate staff about the nature and effects of bullying.

✓ The Governor's Prevention Partnership can provide tips on structuring and strengthening school leadership teams and offers a "map" and position paper to help school staff understand why school climate is important.

✓ The Channing Bete catalog offers many [awareness-raising resources for students and parents](). Note that these do not by themselves represent an adequate bullying prevention effort.

✓ The "[Eyes on Bullying]()" prevention toolkit is an excellent awareness-raising resource for parents or school staff.

<u>Standard 3</u> - School-wide rules/policies about student cruelty and bullying behavior are developed; ALL school staff share a role in implementing these rules/policies.

➢ Rules/policies address the full continuum of inter-student cruelty including: (1) minor, isolated incidents such as one-time teasing; (2) behavior that meets the legal definition of bullying (persistent situations that involve power imbalance between students as well as physical or social aggression [gossip, social exclusion, cyberbullying]); and (3) crimes such as racial/ethnic discrimination, sexual harassment, hazing, and civil rights violations.
➢ Rules/policies specify how incidents can be reported (including anonymous reports and reports from parents) as well as how they will be investigated and how involved parties can file complaints if they are unsatisfied with the school's response.
➢ Rules/policies specify the circumstances under which out-of-school incidents can be addressed (i.e., if the out-of-school incident interferes with school learning) and the circumstances under which law enforcement will become involved.
➢ Rules/policies are consistent with state and federal law as well as accreditation standards. (Consult a lawyer or competent professional to determine whether your rules/policies are appropriate.)
➢ Rules/policies address the behavior of youth who bully as well as youth who are bystanders.
➢ Policies are disseminated in student handbooks and publicized through parent meetings and other appropriate means; staff evaluate the effectiveness of awareness-raising efforts.
➢ Staff monitor the consistency and effectiveness of enforcement practices and incident-related procedures.

RESOURCES:

✓ [Positive Behavior Supports]() is a school-level preventive intervention that helps reduce inappropriate behavior and increase positive behavior. The program does not address bullying specifically, but can support effective bullying prevention through environmental management (changing staff behavior and establishing consistent school-wide behavioral expectations).

✓ The [Good Behavior Game]() is a classroom-level intervention for the lower grades that can reduce inappropriate student behavior.

✓ Design an [assessment flow chart]() like this to help guide your school's response to incidents.

✓ Design a chart like the one on p. 14 of the [Brave Enough to be Kind]() report to help determine incident severity. (<u>NOTE</u>: The laws listed at the end of this report may have been superseded by more current legislation.)

<u>Standard 4</u> - Staff are observant of bullying behavior and are prepared to intervene appropriately.

➢ ALL staff (administrators, counseling/support staff, grade-level teachers and non-teaching staff such as bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria/playground monitors) receive adequate training in bullying prevention; at least a full day of interactive training is recommended.

➢ Staff increase supervision of identified bullying "hot spots" (often these include restrooms, locker rooms and hallways).

➢ All adults are prepared to intervene appropriately on-the-spot, whenever and wherever they observe inter-student cruelty or bullying behaviors.

➢ Students and parents are empowered to report (anonymously, if they wish) bullying behaviors; students know how to respond when they observe a peer being bullied.

➢ The school involves parents as appropriate when an incident occurs.

➢ Interventions and consequences take into account the age and developmental level of students involved, as well as the severity of the incident. Inflexible zero-tolerance policies should be avoided, as these can result in (1) disproportionate disciplinary involvement of particular groups of students; (2) the grouping together of students with behavior challenges, whereby behavior is worsened through social influence; and/or (3) suspensions/expulsions of students without a school re-entry plan, potentially putting youth on a negative developmental path.

➢ **Peer mediation is used ONLY to resolve minor, first-time (non-chronic), non-violent incidents, NOT bullying behavior that has occurred over time and involves an imbalance of power between students.**

➢ Staff follow up with children who bully as well as targets of bullying and bystanders. Follow-up with youth who bully addresses empathy and prosocial skills development and positive leadership opportunities; follow-up with targets of bullying addresses social skills and connections, self-esteem.

RESOURCES:

✓ The Preventing Classroom Bullying booklet can provide an initial orientation as part of a more comprehensive staff training series.

✓ Quality standards for peer mediation help to ensure the appropriate use of this strategy.

✓ Zero-tolerance policies are often problematic.

✓ The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program includes counseling interventions for students who bully as well as targets of bullying.

Standard 5 – In-school time involves culturally appropriate messages, lessons and activities that support bullying prevention.

➢ Culturally appropriate, specific bullying prevention content is integrated into the curriculum (at least 10-20 sessions in year 1 and 5-10 annual booster sessions thereafter) but prevention efforts are NOT LIMITED TO curricular components.

➢ Students have the opportunity to build skills and engage in activities that may not have specific bullying content but which support bullying prevention—these include character development, conflict resolution, peer-to-peer mentoring, diversity education, "clique mixing" activities, anger management, perspective-taking, and opportunities for real leadership and genuine problem-solving.

RESOURCES:

"Model" programs specific to bullying:

✓ Success in Stages is a computer-based intervention designed to help students increase respect and decrease bullying behaviors; this program represents only one facet of a comprehensive bullying prevention approach.

- ✓ The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program provides a more comprehensive bullying prevention approach.

  "Model" or "promising" programs not specific to bullying but supporting bullying prevention:

- ✓ Caring School Community is designed to promote positive school climate, particularly a sense of community.

- ✓ Lion's Quest – Skills for Adolescence, Positive Action, Connect with Kids, Building Decision Skills and Too Good for Violence have demonstrated success in promoting character development.

- ✓ Second Step, Al's Pals, PATHS and the Seattle Social Development Project can help reduce antisocial and aggressive behavior.

- ✓ Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways and SMARTteam are proven approaches to conflict resolution.

  Other helpful resources (note that these are not model programs and should not be used in isolation):

- ✓ Don't Laugh at Me is a low-cost curriculum based on the Resolving Conflict Creatively model that is particularly appropriate for younger students and can supplement a more comprehensive bullying prevention approach.

- ✓ The Anti-Defamation League offers several resources to address diversity issues, including the Names Can Really Hurt Us school assembly program, which is appropriate for high-school students.

- ✓ The Flippen Group offers brief classroom sessions on character education for grades K-5 and 6-12.

- ✓ A "Laws of Life" essay contest is a great way to promote character development among high-school age students.

  In addition:

- ✓ The CT Mentoring Partnership offers training and technical assistance to support all types of mentoring and to help programs meet quality standards.

- ✓ The Governor's Prevention Partnership offers technical assistance to support the Student Assistance Program model, which can be used to intervene early with students whose behavior causes concern.

- ✓ The Search Institute offers tools for schools to build developmental assets and encourage positive behaviors among their students.

- ✓ Schools can use this "primer," fact sheet and editorial on positive youth development (PYD) to help brainstorm ways of promoting PYD among students.

<u>Standard 6</u> - **Prevention efforts are continued over time.**

➤ Although a kick-off event is generally held at the beginning of the implementation of a bullying prevention initiative, the effort is sustained over time and does not have an end date.

<u>Standard 7</u> - **Data drives decision-making.**

➤ Decisions about implementation of program components draw on data about school needs/assets.
➤ Success of implementation is judged based on process/outcome data.
➤ Students, parents and staff participate in an annual survey (of sufficient <u>psychometric quality</u> to show year-to-year changes) concerning their school's climate and behavior norms, including bullying behavior as well as positive behaviors.
➤ Data is tracked on students who bully as well as those who are targets of bullying to determine whether individual-level interventions are effective.
➤ Success is defined in terms of diverse outcome indicators including:
  ▪ Increase or reduction in reported/observed bullying incidents. <u>NOTE: Reports of incidents may temporarily increase as a result of better school awareness and staff sensitivity; an increase may actually represent a positive cultural shift</u>.
  ▪ Positive outcomes for both youth who bully and targets of bullying
  ▪ Parent/student/staff attitude shifts and increased knowledge/awareness
  ▪ Increased parent involvement
  ▪ Student/parent level of satisfaction with school response to incidents. <u>NOTE: Students who are identified as involved in bullying behaviors (and/or their parents) may feel that new, stricter bullying policies are unfair. Prior to implementing new policies, schools should be prepared to address these concerns</u>.
  ▪ More consistent staff implementation of rules/policies
  ▪ Appropriate functioning of leadership team

  RESOURCES:

  <u>NOTE</u>: Many companies offer climate or bullying surveys but do not allow you to view the survey questions prior to purchase. The resources below may not constitute a representative sample of all quality surveys, since they only cover instruments for which survey questions are publicly available.

  ✓ The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program includes a student survey. There is a cost associated with this program.

  ✓ The Canadian Public Health Association's Assessment Toolkit for Bullying, Harassment and Peer Relations at School contains helpful student, parent, teacher and administrator checklists for planning anti-bullying initiatives (Appendix A, pp. 33-36); very comprehensive surveys for multiple informants regarding bullying and related behaviors (including cyberbullying), as well as awareness of various aspects of anti-bullying initiatives (Appendix E, pp. 61); The surveys and an accompanying spreadsheet for data tracking and analysis are available free of charge. Before using this tool, please assess its cultural competence with a U.S. population and your school in particular.

  ✓ California Healthy Kids Survey – High School - Includes questions on general school climate, developmental assets, risk behaviors (ATOD use and attitudes toward/consequences of), harassment, bullying, and violence. There are also versions for other grade levels and other informants. This is a good instrument for capturing bullying within a larger behavioral context, and the survey offers a unique combination of climate, bullying and substance-related questions, although bullying questions are not as comprehensive as those from the Canadian

PHA's surveys. There is a cost associated with collecting/analyzing survey data; contact www.wested.org for pricing.

✓ The World Health Organization (WHO) Psychosocial (PSE) Profile Questionnaire, pp. 26-27 (Quality Area 4: Not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination). This portion of the WHO instrument includes questions that assess stakeholder perceptions about schools' non-tolerance of bullying, awareness about bullying and enforcement of relevant rules/policies. A great tool for determining whether school-level components of a comprehensive bullying prevention effort have been "noticed." The instrument is free and can be self-scored.

✓ Orpinas A2.Modified Aggression Scale (pp. 169-170 of Section III: Behavior Assessments). This short student scale includes questions about aggression, bullying, anger and caring/cooperative behavior. This is not a comprehensive survey but can give a quick snapshot. The instrument is free and can be self-scored.

✓ "Unofficial" surveys available on the Web may not be psychometrically sound but can be used as "checklists" to help plan aspects of your initiative. Examples: QUIA create-your-own-quiz site, survey created by a school PTA, parent survey for students with disabilities.

Major sources for this document:

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Limber, S.P. (2005). *Bully Prevention and Intervention in a Post-Columbine Era*. Presentation at Power and Empowerment: Iowa Governor's Conference on Bullying and Harassment. Available at: http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/scb/index.php?page=bc-bullying

Parker-Roerden, L., Rudewick, D. and Gorton, D. for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and other partners. (2007). *Direct from the Field: A Guide to Bullying Prevention*. Available at: http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Consumer&L2=Family+Services&L3=Violence%2C+Abuse+or+Neglect&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dph_com_health_violence_c_bullying&csid=Eeohhs2