



The Massachusetts Aggression  
Reduction Center

Bridgewater State College

***MARC***  
***Administrators'***  
***Guide***

***2<sup>nd</sup> Edition***





**MARC Anti-Bullying Program**  
**Guide for K-12 Administrators in the**  
**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**SECOND EDITION**

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Center*  
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# MARC Anti-Bullying Program

## Guide for K-12 Administrators in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State College offers K-12 schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts a comprehensive, high-quality, Anti-Bullying Program. This Guide, intended for administrators in K-12 schools who are interested in implementing this or any bullying prevention program, reviews how the program works and offers sample policies. The role that administrators play in spearheading their school's efforts to change climate are nothing less than critically important. As a school administrator, you have the power to greatly improve the lives of your students, if you choose to make the effort and believe that it can be done. I hope you find this Guide informative. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

You can download more information, research, resources, documents and help from our website: [www.bridgew.edu/marc](http://www.bridgew.edu/marc).

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# **Description of the MARC Anti-Bullying Program**

## *Goals and Objectives*

The goal of the MARC Anti-Bullying program is to effectively alter the culture and climate in a school, to change the attitudes of adults and children and thereby make bullying behaviors socially undesirable.

Educators, and many other adults in middle-class America, have become increasingly adept at coping with physical aggression and equal-power conflict (e.g., quarrels) in schoolchildren. Conflict resolution training, and education and awareness regarding how to help children mediate and resolve conflicts, has become much more common-place knowledge. One desirable result of this situation has been a more sophisticated and adept response on the part of adults to conflict between children.

Bullying, however, is qualitatively different from conflict. Bullying is a behavior characterized by one powerful, abusive individual using that power to humiliate, degrade, or dominate over another, less powerful person. Bullying is frequently psychological or verbal in nature; it may involve physical aggression but often does not. Unlike equal-power conflicts, it does not respond well to mediation and negotiation between parties. This is because mediation works best when both parties are motivated to change, and bullies are typically not motivated to change their behaviors. Direct adult intervention

and limit-setting is the most effective approach when dealing with bullying behaviors.

Perhaps partly because of this otherwise-positive emphasis as a society on mediating and negotiating conflict, bullying behaviors have sometimes been given short shrift by the adult community and one result may be that they have become increasingly common. As bullies wield their powers in schools, two results tend to emerge: first, they tend to gather around them “friends” who help support them by egging them on to abuse their victims and by providing social support, and second, children who witness bullying fear becoming victims themselves and so grudgingly admire and inadvertently support bullying behaviors.

The ultimate goal of the MARC program is not to “fix” bullies; rather, we try to change attitudes among the adults and the children in a school and in a community to:

- (a) persuade children who witness bullying to regard it as offensive and deviant behavior, which they should *not* want to emulate;
- (b) persuade children who befriend and directly support bullies to seek other children as friends; and
- (c) help adults react *promptly* and *effectively* to facilitate these social changes among the children.

To accomplish these goals, MARC acknowledges that everyone in a community must be involved, and that no “quick fix” is realistically possible. To that end, we provide training for teachers and support staff;

guidance for administrators; programming for students, and presentations for parents and community groups. For anything to change, the majority of the people in a school community must become involved. It is not necessary for this involvement to be extremely time-intensive or education-intensive; rather, some education and awareness across a broad range of people seems to be a critical element in success.

Finally, it is worthwhile to note that a number of legal decisions have focused on the failure of a school to adequately respond to, or protect, a victim of bullying. MARC believes that for this reason, schools should adopt policies, training, and procedures which will aid them in effectively helping victims and which will demonstrate to the community their commitment to protecting children.

**Important note:** Many of the schools we work in are also engaging in the use of other conflict-resolution programs and/or bullying prevention programs. MARC is thematically different from most other programs in our emphasis on concrete skill-building and peer helping programs, and thus our program will never seek to replace your existing efforts, but rather to supplement them.

### *Faculty and Support Staff training*

Faculty and support staff (e.g., lunchroom staff, playground monitors, librarians, secretaries, etc.) are “on the ground” in a quest to change a school. Many teachers report that they feel uncomfortable when faced

with bullying situations but are not certain how to respond effectively. Recent research in the United Kingdom found that *78% of educators felt that they needed more training on how to handle bullying.*

MARC's emphasis is on developing common language and concrete, practical skills that can be applied immediately. Our focus groups with educators revealed that they primarily require:

- (a) knowledge about how to respond to likely scenarios that occur between children;
- (b) disciplinary support from school administrators;
- (c) feedback about situation outcomes, even if that feedback is only to inform a teacher that steps are being taken, although they cannot be told more; and
- (d) knowledge about school policy and consequences for reported behaviors.

MARC Faculty and Support Staff training focuses of these four goals. We ensure that faculty and staff know the language and basics about what bullying is (and what it isn't), and then we walk attendees through a series of situations which they are most likely to encounter in a school setting. The situations are age-appropriate, as different aged children react differently in bullying situations. The goal is for teachers to walk out of the training feeling that they now know how to handle situations as they arise.

It is important to be sensitive to the subjective sense of pressure and high workload currently being experienced by many classroom teachers in the Commonwealth. Teachers need to know not only that they are being trained, but that such training is highly hands-on and

*practical* and that it will ultimately reduce the time they must spend disciplining children.

### *Parent and Community Presentations*

Parents and communities must, if possible, be encouraged to play a part in a school's effort to change their school climate. Many parents express frustration because they do not understand their school's response to their child either being bullied or being accused of bullying behaviors. This problem results from several deficiencies:

- (a) many parents do not understand how to work *effectively* with a school to address their child's victimization or bullying behaviors, as their natural, understandable response may be highly emotional and defensive;
- (b) many parents fail to gather information effectively before approaching school officials; and
- (c) many parents, and the schools they try to work with, suffer because the school community lacks a clear, decisive response policy and plan to respond to bullying reports. In the absence of such a clear policy, no one is certain if their own situation is being dealt with fairly or effectively.

MARC offers presentations for school groups such as PTOs, subject to evening availability. We recognize, however, that many parents are not able or willing to attend such evening meetings. To date we have had wonderful successes with morning coffee or breakfast programs, at which we typically speak to many more parents than in comparable evening programs. We can

also provide communities with a DVD presentation they can have run on their local cable access channel. The DVD presentation is approximately 25 minutes long, describes the MARC program in their child's school, and coaches parents on responding effectively to such a situation with their own child.

### *Student programming*

MARC also works with students, and trains teachers to work with students, as the change in student attitudes towards bullying is the ultimate goal of the program. Several principles are at work in our student programming:

- (a) Student programming must be an ongoing presence in the school. A one-time school assembly presentation is interesting and may promote positive discussions, but ultimately students must address bullying behaviors on a continual basis for real social change to occur.
- (b) Student programming must respond to the realities of life as a child. Encouraging children simply "to tell" does not acknowledge the reality that doing so may result in severe repercussions for the reporting child. Children reporting must be encouraged, but it should be done so in the context of support from other students and anonymity if possible. Children should also know that anonymous reporting is to be encouraged and respected, and they will not be "dragged into" the disciplinary action of a bully they report on.
- (c) Different aged children require different types of programs. While adult-led efforts may be very



effective with young children, adolescent children respond best to peer-led efforts. The MARC program therefore emphasizes peer-led efforts in Middle, Junior, and High Schools.

- (d) For older students, high-status peers can be the most effective teachers – much more effective than adults, who are perceived as having little credibility when it comes to understanding adolescent social problems.

MARC is currently developing assembly programs for both bullying prevention and for cyberbullying. These assembly programs are led by MARC faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students, who are often powerful and interesting speakers to high school teenagers. We recognize, however, that assemblies are one-time events and that other, ongoing programming should also occur if schools are truly interested in changing their climate.

For elementary school students, MARC believes that teachers often have the strongest emotional connection to their pupils and thus can be an important source of support and learning. During the faculty training in elementary schools, we also train faculty in classroom techniques (“Discussion Time”) designed to promote positive social behaviors and reflection among the students. This Administrator’s Guide also offers a section in establishing a brief but regular Discussion Time in class during which students are encouraged to consider how they are treating each other and to make realistic goals for their group behavior.

For middle and high school students, MARC helps schools establish a core group of students to lead the school effort in changing attitudes and behavior. Then

we bring a set of college students (trained Student Facilitators in MARC) to the school to help the core group (a) consider what bullying behaviors they see; and (b) initiate *student-led* programs to begin changing attitudes and behaviors. The Student Facilitators serve as role models, are high-status peers, and teach kids to not simply accept bullying as inevitable but to form action-plans to begin changing their own school climate. *(A more detailed description of the Student Facilitation Process and the Agreement for schools is in the next section of this Guide.)*

### *Administrative support, sample policies, and assistance*

MARC recognizes that a school administration takes a critical role in changing the school climate. Specifically, school administrators must both support others' efforts to help change school culture and spearhead these efforts themselves. Our experience is the more a school administration puts into these efforts, the more effective they are.

MARC attempts to help school administrators by:

- (a) providing sample school policies, including forms, survey instruments, and consequences charts;
- (b) providing a sample protocol for responding to a report of bullying;
- (c) encouraging administration to provide prompt and responsive feedback to reporters (including teachers, parents, and other students); and

(d) helping administrators develop effective responses, including preventative efforts.

This document provides this help and assistance to school administrators.

# Research Bases for the MARC Anti-Bullying Program<sup>1</sup>

The MARC K-12 Anti-Bullying Program brings together several different veins of research in the behavioral sciences, including research from Psychology, Biology, and Criminal Justice. These empirically-based theories and findings form the core of the program, and it is the collaboration of these different approaches which renders the program unique.

## **Critical findings:**

- 1. Children who engage in bullying behaviors do so for different reasons.** Some have cognitive dysfunctions, generally biases towards hostile interpretations of ambiguous social events, and others bully because of poor self-esteem and poor social skills. Ringleaders are called “bullies” in MARC and they generally have high self-esteem but a tendency to not recognize the impact of their own behaviors on what happens to them. “Bullies” are supported by “followers” who participate in bullying behaviors but aren’t ringleaders. These followers are called “eggers” in MARC because they support and “egg on” bullies.

A. Crick, N., and Dodge, K.A. (1994). A review and reformulation of social information-processing mechanisms in child-

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<sup>1</sup> Outcome research evaluating the MARC program during its first two years is available online on our webpage: <http://www.bridgew.edu/marc>.

- ren's social adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin*, 115, 74-101. Dodge, K.A. (1980). Social cognition and children's aggressive behavior. *Child Development*, 51, 1621-70
- B. Dodge, K.A. (1982). Social cognitive biases and deficits in aggressive boys. *Child Development*, 53, 620-625.
- C. Dodge, K.A. & Frame, C.L. (1982). Social cognitive biases and deficits in aggressive boys. *Child Development*, 53, 620-635
- D. Olweus, D. (1978). Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys. Washington, DC: Hemisphere (Wiley).

**2. Most bullying is verbal or psychological in nature (not physical).**

- A. Garbarino, James & deLara, Ellen (2002). *And Words Can Hurt Forever: How to Protect Adolescents from Bullying, Harassment, and Emotional Violence*. New York: The Free Press.
- B. Simons, Rachel (2002). *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Trade Publishing.

**3. Consistent and firm limit-setting is the only thing that works with bullying.** Clear and consistent policies and procedures change behavior most effectively.

- A. Olweus, D., Limber, S., & Mihalic, S. (1999). Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Book Nine: Bullying Prevention Program. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

B. Olweus, D., Limber, S., & Mihalic, S. (1999). Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Book Nine: Bullying Prevention Program. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

4. **Bullies count on adults to ignore bullying behaviors**, and this allows them to continue bullying activities.

A. Steiner, A. (2002). Bullies: ignore them and they *won't* go away. *The Link*, 18(2), retrieved from <http://education.umn.edu/alum/link/2002Winter/bullies.html>

B. Cohn, A. and Kanter, A. (2003). *Bullying: Facts for Schools and Parents*. National Association for School Psychologists, retrieved from [http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/bullying\\_fs.html](http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/bullying_fs.html)

5. **Males and females bully differently.**

A. Nansel, T.R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R.S., Ruan, W.J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association With Psychosocial Adjustment. [Journal of the American Medical Association](#), 285(16), 2094-2100.

B. Olweus, D. (1993). Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., p. 19.

**6. The most effective programs are those that teens lead for themselves.**

- A. Alcaraz, R. (2004). Bullying In Schools. Southern California Center Of Excellence On Youth Violence Prevention, University Of California, Riverside.
- B. Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth (Boston, Massachusetts): Youth Leadership for Development Initiative Case Studies. Retrieved 2005 from: <http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/pressroom/casestudies.html>.

**7. Intervene immediately and separate bully & victim – do not use mediation or attempt to force them to confront one another.**

- A. Steps for Intervening in Bullying Situations. Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System of the London Family Court Clinic. Retrieved November 2005 from: <http://www.lfcc.on.ca/>.
- B. Englander, E. (2005). When should you hesitate to mediate? Models of Respecting Everyone, 1(1), 2-5.

# In-Depth Description of the Student Facilitation Process used with Middle & High School Students<sup>2</sup>

For students, MARC offers schools several options:

1. Assembly programs, designed to heighten awareness dramatically. These are not theatrical in nature, but are engaging and interesting to teenagers.
2. For elementary schools, faculty are trained on in-class techniques designed to raise awareness; and
3. For Middle and High schools, schools are assisted in launching student-conceived, student-run, and student-led anti-violence and anti-bullying programs and campaigns.

**This page is the explanation for (3)** – launching student-led, student-run programs to reduce bullying in Middle and High Schools.

Excellent bullying prevention materials and curricula exist, but in-class, adult-led curricula is only one approach to raising awareness and education in adolescents. Another approach to adolescent education, separate from curricula, is the use of peer helpers.

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<sup>2</sup> The MARC Student Facilitation process as described here is simplified for easy reading and comprehension. Any school attempting to re-create the process based on this description does so at their own risk, as the training process and several important preparation steps completed by MARC prior to every visit are *not* described here.



*Peer helping* is a model wherein teens are trained to become educators and counselors for their peers, and Benard (1990) pointed out that while peers can destroy a child's sense of safety they are also among the most powerful providers of support. Benard's (1990) study found that peer helping was a valid intervention strategy resulting in reduced at-risk behaviors. The Innovation Center released a review (2005) of peer helping programs which identified important characteristics that made such programs successful. These were, among others:

- being "youth-run and led";
- raising awareness in young people without taking too much power from them;
- "meeting young people where they are;"
- "when young people have full ownership, they step up to the tasks;" and
- "teen trainers are more effective than adult trainers."

Because MARC seeks to supplement and not replace other types of bullying prevention programs, we opted to develop student materials for teenagers based on the peer helping model, instead of the on the in-class curriculum model. This approach is particularly attractive for an academic Center, which has a ready pool of college students to serve as high-status peer models for high-school and middle-school children.

MARC trains groups of undergraduate students every year in the technique we refer to as a "Student Facilitation." Please note that these facilitations are *different* and *separate* from our Assembly programs,

which are also staffed (partially) by college undergraduates.

A Student Facilitation in your school will help you successfully launch a student-initiated program, or programs, designed to reduce violence and bullying or accompanying problems (as an example, such a program might work to reduce gossiping or cyber-bullying).

**The process is as follows:**

- Your school contacts us to express interest in the process.
- We work together to find a day and time which is possible to do the actual facilitation (typically 1.5 hours long).
- **Prior to the actual facilitation**, your school...
  1. Reads and understands the MARC Student Facilitation Agreement. This is to ensure that your school understands your role in the process and to maximize effectiveness.
  2. Decides which faculty/staff member will lead/teach/ coordinate/supervise the student group.
  3. Decides how the group will function. It can be a class for credit; a school club; an afterschool club; a “special” or in-school activity; etc.
  4. Assembles the student group. This is typically between 15 and 25 students. Critically, they **must** be drawn from a diverse set of student cliques or groups. If students are primarily from one source (e.g., student

council) then they will not be able to effectively “reach” many of the students in school. All students in the group should know why they are there and should want to be part of this leadership effort. Students who evidence bullying behaviors *may* be included in this group, and can in fact be very effective, provided that they demonstrate real leadership potential.

5. Consider permitting the students in the group to complete a brief online pre-facilitation survey. This survey, which can make the Facilitation a much more meaningful process, can be found on the next page.

➤ **On the day of the facilitation**, here is the procedure we follow.

1. The student group, the MARC faculty member and MARC facilitators, and the teacher/coordinator/supervisor all meet at the school.
2. The MARC faculty member begins by orienting everyone to what will happen. S/he discusses what facilitation is, that they are there to hear what the students are seeing happen in their school and to think of ways to work on it, etc.
3. The MARC student Facilitators introduce themselves to the younger students and may briefly share personal stories which underlie why they believe this process is so important.
4. If we have data from the student group, we will share it with them (see #5, above).
5. Next the younger students are divided into small discussion groups of approximately 3 to 7 students each. Each small group sits down

with one or two MARC facilitators. One student is asked to take notes. The facilitators begin by asking the students to describe what kinds of violence or bullying they are seeing or experiencing, and what kinds of problems they believe occur in their school.

6. Most of the time, at this point the younger students are interested in disclosing to the MARC students. Occasionally they need to be drawn out. The facilitators are trained to do this, but the MARC faculty member is always nearby in case of particular challenges.
7. The note-taker in each group notes the topics which are discussed.
8. Then the entire group re-assembles and each group's note-taker describes the group's conversation to the larger group.
9. The MARC faculty member writes down the topics of conversation on a flipchart or whiteboard (flip charts are better).
10. Once the topics are all written down, the faculty member demonstrates to the younger students how the list can be "boiled down" to a few topics. For example:

<b>“Raw” List</b>	<b>“Boiled Down” List</b>
<p>Girls gossip too much</p> <p>People say mean things about each other behind their backs</p> <p>People are prejudiced against certain types of students</p> <p>Athletes beat up other kids</p> <p>Girls talk to other girls about each other too much</p> <p>Kids who speak another language are picked on</p> <p>Teachers don't pay attention when bullying happens</p>	<p>Intolerance, Prejudice</p> <p>Gossip, rumors</p> <p>Trouble engaging adults in the problems</p> <p>Cliques don't get along, pick on each other, fight</p>

11. The “boiled down” list is kept up in sight while the students once again break out into their small groups.
12. This time, the facilitators coach the students to brainstorm about creative programs that they could accomplish to begin changing the “boiled down” list of issues/problems. Students usually have many ideas, and facilitators are careful not to dismiss any of

them, but to guide them towards practical or realistic goals. The critical point here is that the students must feel that they themselves have thought up these programs and that they will be the ones to implement them.

13. Back again in the entire group, the ideas are put through the same boiling down process.
14. Finally, the students have created a list of two or three very practical, concrete programs they can accomplish. It is very important for this list not to be too ambitious or impractical. It needs to be do-able, but also owned by the students themselves.

### **Critical elements in the process:**

1. The teenagers must feel able to disclose freely without fear of punishment or censure by adults. For this reason, MARC facilitators usually ask administrators to leave the room during the facilitation (although faculty group supervisors may remain).
2. The Facilitators should be **high-status peers** (college students are ideal for this)
3. During facilitations in middle schools, it is ideal for high school students to accompany the college-aged facilitators. MARC Facilitators can prepare high school groups for this trip down to the middle school in their town.
4. The “boiling down” process is important because it shows the students how to convert free-floating ideas into concrete, usable concepts.

## *School Agreement*

For this process to succeed, several factors are important:

1. Because it's critical for the teens to feel able to disclose freely, school administrators or "extra" faculty should not attend the facilitation. It may be helpful for the faculty/staff member who will be the group's supervisor to attend, however.
2. The facilitation should not be broadcast or otherwise distributed to the school unless the student group decides that doing so would be helpful.
3. The school needs to make a sincere effort to diversify the group. While it's easier to simply gather one group of students, it's much more effective to gather students from different groups.
4. If the students in the group are permitted to complete the brief, anonymous survey found on the next page, it can make the experience a more personal and important one for them.

## MARC Student Facilitation Pre-Survey

### ***(Bullying Prevention Facilitation)***

	Some- times	No	Yes
1) Have you skipped school in the last month because you were afraid to come to show up?			
2) Have you felt depressed in the last month on more than two occasions because of things other people at school have done to you?			
3) Do you think that other people at your school care about you?			
4) Do you think other people at your school understand you?			
5) Is bullying a real problem at your school?			
6) Is bullying worse online than in school?			
7) Do you think your classmates realize that their actions can really hurt others?			



# MARC Student Facilitation Pre-Survey

## *(Cyberbullying Facilitation)*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Giving out information such as true name and class schedule can put you in danger on the internet?					
2. The right to create “fake” blogs or profiles is protected under the First Amendment’s Freedom of Speech provision.					
3. Police officers frequently monitor chat rooms posing as teenagers.					
4. Once a profile is set to private there is no way for an uninvited guest to view it.					
5. Social networking sites are strictly used by high school and college students, most adults don’t know about them.					
6. Massachusetts					

doesn't have a specific law that they use to prosecute people who bully others online.					
7. Those who bully online are usually unpopular, or unintelligent students trying to get back at other students.					
8. There really isn't any bullying on the internet because no one can get physically hurt on the internet.					

# **MARC Guide to use of Discussion Time for Teachers and Administrators**

(Elementary Schools)

In your efforts to change the climate of your school to be less accepting of bullying and harassment behaviors, it is important that students be given regular forums within which they can express their concerns and discuss problems they are seeing and experiencing among their peers. The forum or technique described here is called Discussion Time.

One common issue is that students are reluctant to be “tattle-tales” or “rats” and so would resist such a forum. The response to this problem is that Discussion Time is a time to teach children to discuss problems *in the abstract*, that is, not discussing any specific person (“I saw Joey push Sally off a swing”) but rather learning how to identify problems in the abstract (“Sometimes I see kids push other kids off the swings if they want to use them”). This technique, of discussing problems in the abstract, emphasizes that awareness rather than revenge, and reduces dramatically the issue of being a “rat” or “tattle-tale.”

With the goal of changing the school climate in mind, MARC recommends that all elementary (and possibly middle) schools, in addition to the anti-bullying curriculum, institutionalize a Discussion Time. This Discussion Time would ideally occur once or (perhaps) twice a week, for 10-20 minutes, if possible right before

recess so children have the experience fresh in their minds and can discuss it socially on the playground. I recommend that every school set aside 10-20 minutes Monday or Tuesday morning. Discussion Time should be a school-wide implementation, if possible. It is not difficult to implement but will work best if done school-wide. Any bullying prevention or prosocial curriculum can be conducted during this time, or, children can simply discuss behaviors they are seeing, why they think such behaviors occur, and set goals to improve the group behavior. Children may often discuss what they are seeing and set goals for their behavior. The next Discussion Time is often linked to the one before it, so the children can then discuss successfully their goals were met and what revisions or additions are needed.

Discussion Times are probably most appropriate for grades 3 through 7. Grade 2 teachers might try this technique if they believe their class could tolerate 10 minutes of group discussion. The younger the children, the shorter the period generally is. Older children can sustain longer group conversations.

Ideally, Discussion Times would be instituted school-wide and at a set time, the beginning of each Discussion Time would be announced over the loudspeaker or PA system. The purpose of institutionalizing these discussions school-wide is to emphasize to students their importance and legitimacy.

**Goals of Discussion Time are as follows:**

1. to provide children with a safe time to discuss their concerns and troubles with their peers;
2. to model appropriate give-and-take discussion behavior;

3. to identify ways to reduce psychological abuse and bullying;
4. to encourage and reward prosocial group behavior;
5. to address persistent social problems in the group (e.g., to help one child who is frequently the target of bullies); and
6. to empower children to work on and address their own difficulties with their peers.

**During Discussion Times, the following procedures are recommended:**

1. Have children sit together on the rug on the floor or rearrange their desks into a circle.
2. The teacher(s) is a full participant and is there to guide the discussion and to model appropriate behaviors:
  - a. listening quietly and attentively
  - b. not talking to your neighbor out of turn
  - c. being respectful
  - d. keeping on topic
3. The teacher begins the Discussion Time with a review of the rules. They are:
  - a. **No names;** students should not mention or complain about other children's behavior by names. This time is not used to identify disciplinary targets.
  - b. Every child has the right to raise their hand and speak.
  - c. Every child should listen when other children are speaking.
4. At the beginning of each week, the teacher poses this question to the class:
  - a. How can we improve how we get along and do our work in school? Can anyone

tell me how they would like this class and this school to be better? Think especially about how we treat each other. How can we treat each other better?

- b. Identify a goal from this discussion; for example, “Our goal this week is to include anyone who wants to play, even on the playground.”
  - c. The goal should be specific, rather than general (“To be nicer”).
  - d. The teacher should write a brief version of the goal on a poster or in a corner of the whiteboard and have it in a prominent place.
  - e. If there is time, ask the children what consequences should occur if someone violates the goal. Guide them towards an appropriate consequence (e.g., “Violators will take a time out for 3 minutes.”) Post this as well. Do not worry if you don’t discuss consequences.
5. At the end of the week, the objective is to see how well the goal was reached and what problems and successes occurred during the week.
- a. Don’t worry if the goal was not reached. In that case, the objective is to try to identify what went wrong. (“We saw this week that four times people didn’t include others on the playground, even though that was our goal. Why do you think we had so much trouble doing this?” and “How can we help each other to reach this goal in the future?”)

- b. If the goal was reached, set up some reward structure to reinforce positive social behavior.
- c. Don't be afraid to use the same goal next week, if the children want to continue working on it. However, if they've easily reached their goal encourage them to form a new one the following week.

### **Questions:**

1. What if the children aren't quiet and attentive?
  - a. Use a special visual or auditory cue to help maintain order, for example, asking a child to blink the lights or ring a bell which is used only during Discussion Times.
2. What if the Discussion doesn't seem to be working?
  - a. You always have the option of terminating the Discussion Time early if the process does not seem to be working. Tell the children, "It doesn't seem as though you are able to have a discussion today. We'll try again later in the week." Then stop the session.
3. What if one child is particularly disruptive?
  - a. While you can always ask one child to excuse himself ("Harry, since you aren't interested in this, could you please go sit and read at your desk until the class is done?") it is preferable *not* to do so, since that child might attempt to portray being excused as a desirable goal. Rather, you might try posing the issue back to the class ("Do you think our goal this week

could be to try to help each other sit still and listen, instead of being disruptive? How do you think we could do that? Does anyone have ideas?”).

4. How do I handle it if one child has a developmental or learning disability which renders them unable to sit still and listen for a full 20 minutes?
  - a. One option is to allow that child to do another task and to make that part of the class’ agreement about how they will use the time. A second option is to encourage that child to do his or her best for as long as possible, and allow them to leave the group discussion when they need to.
5. What if children say things that are silly or just plain wrong?
  - a. An important goal of discussion time is to model sitting and listening respectfully. Encourage children to listen to other people, even when their opinions differ, no matter how silly it may seem to them. Model this for the children by listening to children’s opinions. After the child has spoken, the teacher is never obligated to agree or to endorse that child’s views. You may merely move the discussion on, and call on another child or ask other children for their opinions.



# Forming a Student-Led Initiative Group

**This document is intended to help Middle and High School educators assemble a team of students for the MARC facilitators to work with. Based on our experiences in Middle and High Schools around the Commonwealth, several factors have emerged as important predictors of success.**

1. The educator who is spearheading this project should assemble a group of students who are interested in working on anti-bullying programs within their own school. This can be a pre-existing group (e.g., Peer Mediators or Peer Leaders) or a new group (e.g., students who sign up; an afterschool group; or a group of students assembled by the educator in charge.) These groups can be any size between approximately 7 students to 21 students. Larger groups are possible, but it's not recommended that you go above 28 students.
2. We recommend assembling a **new group**, composed of students from a variety of cliques and student groups. We recognize that this is not always possible, but if it is, the group should be a variety of students with different interests but who all have some leadership qualities.

3. An adult must be assigned as the teacher or coordinator of the group, which should meet regularly (at minimum once a month). MARC cannot run this student group on a continuing basis; the school must do so, although it can be run as a class for credit, as a group meeting during school hours, as an afterschool group or club, or by any other mechanism chosen by the school administration.
4. If the educator in charge assembles a new group of students, we recommend that he or she target students with leadership qualities, including students who may themselves be involved in bullying behaviors if possible. These students can be a powerful addition to the group.
5. The educator should confirm, prior to MARC's visit, that all the kids **want** to be there and **know** why they're there.
6. For Middle School students, please **PRE-ARRANGE** the students into several small groups (ideally, 3 or 4 groups, consisting of no more than 7 students per group). When these small groups are formed, try to **not** put the kids with their good friends in the same group (that seems to distract some students significantly).
7. We ask the schools to keep the small groups to 7 kids or fewer (larger groups often result in students have two "sub-groups", each having its own conversation).

# Sample Comprehensive Elementary School Policy<sup>3</sup>

This Comprehensive Policy is only a SAMPLE. It is intended to give schools, districts, and towns an example to follow, but clearly it will, and should, be altered to accommodate different local needs and resources.

The processes which are presented here can be used for all students, but the Consequences Chart has been designed for use in the elementary schools only. We recommend that similar Consequences Charts be adopted for older students, with age-appropriate consequences.

It is a strong recommendation that one set of processes, forms, and consequences chart be adopted by all the local elementary schools. By developing a standardized system, all children and parents will be exposed to the same language and system of consequences, making it easier for coaches, religious school educators, and middle and high school staff

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<sup>3</sup> This sample policy is adapted from the “Sample Policy” originally authored by Project Respect, Sharon, Massachusetts. Some elements of the Sample Policy put together by Project Respect are originally authored, some are adapted from Stan Davis’ [www.stopbullyingnow.com](http://www.stopbullyingnow.com) (2003), and other elements were assembled with assistance from Dr. Elizabeth K. Englander, 2005. Project Respects’ Sample Policy is used here with permission.

to reinforce the expectation that all children behave in a respectful manner.

These materials should be seen as a DRAFT...that will only be finalized by each individual school, district, and/or town.

Included in this section are the following materials:

- 1) Feedback Questionnaire
- 2) Definitions of Peer Aggression and Bullying
- 3) Process for Responding to a Report of Peer Aggression
- 4) Forms:
  - (1) "Incident Report Form"
  - (2) "Follow Up Form"
  - (3) "Parent Communication Letter"/"PCL"
  - (4) "Think About It Form" ("TAIF")

(These forms should be stapled together at first. Parent Communication Letter should be sent home and reattached when signed by parent and returned to school. The "Think About It Form" should be given to student to be completed and reattached when completed to staff's satisfaction.)
- 5) Consequences Chart for Peer Aggression (This should be attached to the Definitions of peer Aggression and Bullying.)
- 6) Introductory Letter to Parents on Guidelines for Addressing Student Aggression
- 7) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Regarding Guidelines for Addressing Student Aggression

These materials have resulted from many hours of research and discussion among the subcommittee members, which includes psychologists, social work-ers, and educators. We hope you find them useful as a starting point.

# Feedback Questionnaire

*You may use this Questionnaire as a starting point. After distributing the Sample Policy, this Questionnaire will help you identify areas which require further work and discussion.*

1. The definitions of peer aggression and bullying are clear.  
agree    disagree

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The “Process for Responding to a Report of Peer Aggression” appears thorough and useable.  
agree    disagree

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The “Incident Report Form” is understandable and asks for the most important information.  
agree    disagree

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The “Follow Up Form” is clear and complete.  
agree    disagree

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The “Parent Communication Form” clearly communicates the pertinent information.

agree      disagree

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The “Think About It Form” appears to be a useful instrument to use with children.

agree      disagree

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. The “Consequences Chart” clearly lists the behaviors and the consequences of each infraction.

agree      disagree

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. The level of consequence seems appropriate to the offending behaviors.

agree      disagree

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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9. The “Introductory Letter To Parents” is one I would feel comfortable sending to parents in my school.  
agree disagree

Comments\_\_\_\_\_

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10. The “Frequently Asked Questions” provide thorough responses to pertinent questions.  
agree disagree

Comments\_\_\_\_\_

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# 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” (see below).
- 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 s/he 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 but 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 a word, action, or other direct or electronic communication or behavior that is:

- 1) Aggressive, cruel, and/or threatening
- 2) Repetitive
- 3) Characterized as an imbalance of physical, psychological, and/or emotional power. Children who engage in peer aggression have more power than the target. The power advantage may be due to social status, age, size, ability, and/or popularity.

A fourth characteristic of "Bullying" that has been cited by some experts is whether or not the potentially

bullying behavior is *unprovoked*. Victims typically experience bullying as unprovoked, while bullies may relate what appear to them to be appropriate justifications for their behaviors, e.g., “I was just showing him that he’s not the boss.” This discrepancy between victim and bully regarding the presence of a provocation has led us to leave this characteristic off the list, but if a school is sufficiently aware to understand that this discrepancy is likely to occur, then that fourth characteristic could be included in the definition above.

Physical, Verbal, and Relational aggression is bullying if it also has the above three characteristics.

# Process For Responding To A Report Of Peer Aggression

## **1. STEP ONE: COMPLETE INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

### **If An Adult Witnesses Incident**

A. All staff should have copies of the Incident Report Form readily available. Playground/Lunchroom Assistants should have forms, pen, and clipboard available at all times.

B. **Adult completes Incident Report** and gives to staff designated to handle such reports.

C. Encourage staff and faculty to report incidents 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 perpetrators should be not making those judgments.

### **If A Child reports incident to an adult**

Adults in the school have access to the forms; Parents should have access to forms from the school's main office, their child's teacher, or the Public Schools website.

Adult affirms the child's feelings, i.e. "you were right to report this. I'm glad you told me."

**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.

**If immediate safety issues exist**, take child to nurse and/or report incident to principal/assistant principal immediately. Follow up by completing an Incident Report with as much information as you were able to obtain from the child.

**If no immediate safety issues exist**, encourage child to complete Incident Report. Help them complete form and give to staff designated to handle such reports.

## **2. STEP TWO: INTERVIEW TARGET OF PEER AGGRESSION**

**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 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 that the target knows that dealing with the aggressor(s) is your job, not his/hers.

\*\*\* It is important to stress that **mediation should not be used with bullying situations**, i.e. conflicts characterized by an inequality of power where one child is being clearly victimized by another. Mediation is the ideal response to equal-power conflicts between children. In order to use mediation effectively, staff must know how to identify and distinguish between run-of-the-mill childhood conflicts versus bullying episodes and how to conduct mediation and conflict resolution.

## 2. **Support target** by:

- 1) Affirming child's feelings, i.e. "You were right to report this. I'm glad you told me."
- 2) Asking the child what s/he has already attempted to do, to stop this situation.
- 3) Making it clear that the aggression was not his/her fault.
- 4) 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.
- 5) Reminding target to always report aggression.
- 6) Brainstorming solutions with him/her after identifying what has and has not worked in the past. Note: even solutions that seem obvious to adults may not be apparent to children, such as merely avoiding the bully.
- 7) Recruiting peers to befriend isolated targets. Adults should do this aggressively

(that is, approach peers you think will be sympathetic and ask them deliberately to befriend the target; even temporarily, this can be a big help).

### **3. STEP THREE: INTERVIEW CHILD ACCUSED OF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION**

- 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 or attribute it to another adult, i.e., “I am disturbed by what I have been seeing..” or “Ms. Soandso saw you...”
- 2) **Focus more on the aggressor child’s behavior than on a 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 wrongdoing, you can tell child that if s/he tells the truth about the incident you can mention his/her honesty when calling his/her parents.
- 4) The procedure differs somewhat, depending on whether the child who is accused of being the aggressor admits wrongdoing or not.

### **IN THE CASE OF DENIAL OF WRONG-DOING:**

- 5) **Be prepared for denial.**
- 6) 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 8 below: “Assigning Consequences”.
- 7) **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 s/he 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 HERE 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 a 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-



sor 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 WRONGDOING:**

**And minimizes the behavior:** respond by firmly asserting that s/he may feel it is “no big deal” but that the school and the community thinks that such behaviors are indeed a big deal.

**If student finally admits wrongdoing after initially denying it,** acknowledge the difficulty of shifting out of denial.

**8. Assign consequence to aggressor.** If the student admits wrongdoing or an investigation leads staff to believe student was engaging in bullying behavior, student should look up consequence on the discipline rubric. Explain that consequences are not arbitrary and that any child who engages in this behavior will in fact experience the same consequence.

**9. Contact parent.** Student should then call parent, in presence of a school staff person, to tell parent what s/he did and what the consequence is. Staff should then complete and send home the Parent Communication Letter.

**10. Document incident and consequence.** Complete Follow Up Form.

**11. Designate a time, place, and person to help student complete the Think About It Form.** The sooner this is done, the more effective it will be. This step of reflection is the first in many that the student can take to change his/her aggressive behavior. Students should either write out answers to open-ended questions or be able to dictate answers to an adult who writes them down for him/her.

Students must make statements that accept the negative effects of his/her behavior on others, e.g., “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. (externalizing)
- I know what I did didn't really hurt her because she didn't have to go to the nurse. (minimizing)

**12. Document action taken/plan developed,** and share with

1. Principal/ assistant principal
2. Support staff (e.g., lunchroom and playground staff) and
3. Teachers who have any contact with the target/bully.

**- Contact parent of the target if deemed necessary. This is almost always advisable.**

**- Monitor safety of target and increase supervision of accused.**

\*\* Note: 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, such as “This is more complicated than it appears, and I can’t by law give you any more specifics,” it assures adults and children that their reporting is not being ignored. A general policy which states that “action will be taken” should never replace specific outcome reporting.

## Incident Report Form

This report must be submitted to the principal/assistant principal/designated staff as soon as completed.

Person Completing Form:	
Date and Time of Incident:	
Location of Incident:	
Who Reported Incident:	
Child/Children Involved:	
Witnesses:	
<p>Details of Incident. Please check all that apply. ("Written" includes electronic communications.)</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> careless  <input type="checkbox"/> hurtful remarks  <input type="checkbox"/> physical  <input type="checkbox"/> harassment  <input type="checkbox"/> verbal/written  <input type="checkbox"/> teasing  <input type="checkbox"/> physical  <input type="checkbox"/> threats  <input type="checkbox"/> verbal/written  <input type="checkbox"/> taunts/threats  <input type="checkbox"/> physical attack         </p>

	<input type="checkbox"/> aggression encouraged by others <input type="checkbox"/> damage to property <input type="checkbox"/> exclusion <input type="checkbox"/> stolen property <input type="checkbox"/> bullying <input type="checkbox"/> fear of retaliation		
To your knowledge has this occurred before?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="563 651 789 782">YES</td> <td data-bbox="789 651 979 782">NO</td> </tr> </table>	YES	NO
YES	NO		
Are there immediate safety or transportation needs? If yes, specify need(s) and action taken.	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="563 782 789 1022">YES</td> <td data-bbox="789 782 979 1022">NO</td> </tr> </table>	YES	NO
YES	NO		
If needed, describe incident or concerns in more detail.			

## Follow Up Form

To be completed by principal/assistant principal/designated staff.

\_\_\_ **Interviewed target of aggression.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ supported him/her, i.e. affirmed his/her feelings
- \_\_\_ brainstormed on solutions for avoiding aggression
- \_\_\_ reminded him/her to report aggression
- \_\_\_ recruited peers to befriend him/her
- \_\_\_ notified parent of target
- \_\_\_ notified teacher of target
- \_\_\_ notified other staff, including:  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ referred for counseling

\_\_\_ **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 of witnesses.**

\_\_\_ Interviewed witnesses of aggression.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Discussed importance of reporting incidents of aggression.

Confirmation of incident: \_\_\_ yes            \_\_\_  
no

**If aggression is confirmed, is this**

\_\_\_ **1<sup>st</sup> offense**

\_\_\_ **2<sup>nd</sup> offense**

\_\_\_ **3<sup>rd</sup> offense**

\_\_\_ **other**

**Consequence 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 notified, please point out child’s positive behavior, i.e. telling the truth, feeling remorse, etc.)

\_\_\_ notified teacher of accused

\_\_\_ notified other staff, including:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ referred for counseling

To make **Additional Comments**, please use back side.

*\*Once the “Incident Report Form,” “Follow Up Form,” “Parent Communication Letter,” and “Think About It Form” are completed, they should be stapled together and placed in a secure location in the office of a designated staff person.*



## PARENT COMMUNICATION FORM (PCF)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

\_\_\_\_\_,

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 I investigated and what I determined happened:

4) What consequence was assigned for having engaged in that behavior:

5) What will happen if this behavior occurs again:

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

Thank you.

---

Principal/Designated Staff

Date

---

Parent

Date

*\*Once the "Incident Report Form," "Follow Up Form," "Parent Communication Letter," and "Think About It Form" are completed, they should be stapled together and placed in a secure location in the office of a designated staff person.*

## 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're feeling this way, how will you act differently without hurting anyone?**

*\*Once the "Incident Report Form," "Follow Up Form," "Parent Communication Letter," and "Think About It Form" are completed, they should be stapled together and placed in a secure location in the office of a designated staff person.*

## *Sample Consequences Chart*

Behavior	1 <sup>st</sup> time	2 <sup>nd</sup> time	3 <sup>rd</sup> time	
Careless Hurtful Remarks	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF.**	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. PCF*** sent to parent.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. One inside recess. Consider weekly check-in.	After three incidents, go to Third Time, Verbal or Written Teasing.
Verbal or Written Teasing	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.

		One inside recess.	Two inside recesses. Weekly check-in.	
Verbal or Written Taunts or Threats	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Two inside recesses. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Three inside recesses. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.
Encouraging Peer Aggression	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. One inside recess. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Two inside recesses. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.

Taking or Damaging Someone's Property	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Two inside recesses. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Three inside recesses. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.
Physical Threats	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. One inside recess. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Three inside recesses in Principal's office. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Five inside recesses in Principal's office. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.
Physical Harassment	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student	After three incidents, develop individual plan.

	Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. One inside recess in Principal's office. Weekly check-in.	calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Three inside recesses in Principal's office. Weekly check-in.	calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Consider suspension, or five inside recesses in Principal's office. Weekly check-in.	
Physical Attacks	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Three inside recesses in Principal's office. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIF. Student calls parent in staff presence. PCF sent to parent. Five inside recesses in Principal's office. Consider suspension. Weekly check-in.	After two incidents, develop individual plan.	

\* Kindergarten, first, and second grade students receive one additional warning for each offense.

\*\* Think About It Form (TAIF)

\*\*\* Parent Communication Form (PCF)



## *Sample Parent/Child Contract*

Dear Parents and Students:

This year the XXX Public Schools have instituted new guidelines for addressing student aggression. We are committed to providing a positive learning environment for all students that ensures personal safety and promotes respect, dignity and equality among students. High standards are expected of students in regards to both academic achievement and social behaviors and interactions. By providing a supportive environment and helping children to learn positive ways to interact, we will be more successful in attaining our educational goals.

We know that as children develop, they learn how to treat each other kindly and how to meet their needs in a positive way. Children learn this behavior at home by watching and talking with their parents, as well as by reflecting on what they learn at school in the classroom, on the playground, and at lunch. Like all people, children sometimes make mistakes. While it is understandably upsetting to receive notice that your child has been involved in an incident, please rest assured that if this happens, we will work with you to help your child learn in a positive way from his or her mistakes. All children sometimes make mistakes.

To help children who might engage in aggressive behavior learn better from their mistakes, we

have developed a clear, standardized set of policies and procedures to address aggressive behavior. These include:

- definitions of aggression and bullying
- an Incident Report Form that can be completed by staff, parents and children
- a clear set of steps to be taken after an incident is reported
- a consequences chart which outlines what consequences will be received when children engage in hurtful behavior
- a process through which a child can help change his/her aggressive behavior (i.e. the Think About It Form)

According to well researched violence prevention programs, developing this protocol provides a common framework for responding to aggression and is one of the most important things adults can do to decrease bullying.

Please review the enclosed packet of information with your child. Please call if you have any questions. After you have reviewed the information and both you and your children have signed the form, please return it to school.

Thank you for your support of our efforts to make our school a safe and positive place for everyone. If you have any concerns, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact me.

---

Principal

Enclosed is copy of an “Incident Report Form,” the Consequences Chart, the “Think About It Form,” and Frequently Asked Questions.

I have reviewed the enclosed information regarding expectations at school and the consequences for engaging in disrespectful and aggressive behavior.

---

Parent

Date

---

Child

Date

---

Child

Date

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Child

Date

## *Policy Frequently Asked Questions* (FAQ's)

### **1. Where can I get an Incident Report Form?**

Incident Report Forms can be picked up at your school's main office, asked to be sent home via your child's back pack, or can be downloaded from the school's website:

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### **2. Will my child's teacher be notified about an incident?**

Any teacher of a child who is involved in an incident, whether s/he is the target or aggressor, will be notified of the situation.

### **3. Will I always be notified of an incident?**

Parents of targets will be notified if it is determined to be necessary by the designated school staff. Parents of children who have engaged in aggressive behavior will be notified of an incident that took place when stipulated by the Consequences Chart.

### **4. Who is the designated school staff person?**

The designated school staff person is that person assigned to follow up with Incident Report

Forms. It may be the principal, assistant principal, school psychologist, or other staff person.

**5. Are *Think About It Forms* completed after any hurtful act?**

Completing the *Think About It Forms* is an important part of the reflection process which helps a child recognize his/her hurtful behaviors and avoid engaging in such behaviors in the future. Therefore, the *Think About It Form* is completed after every hurtful act.

**6. What does indoor recess entail? Who supervises indoor recess?**

This can vary school by school, but typically it means a child sits in the Assistant Principal's Office during recess.

**7. If a child has engaged in a specific aggressive behavior multiple times, and then engages in a different hurtful behavior for the first time, what is his/her consequence?**

In order to ensure consistency and fairness, the consequences chart is strictly followed unless immediate safety needs or the law warrant otherwise. Therefore, for example, even if a student has engaged in making careless hurtful remarks twice, if s/he then makes a verbal threat, s/he will receive the consequence for making a verbal threat for the first time.

**8. What would lead to a child getting suspended?**

[Insert school policy for suspensions here]

**9. What would cause a child to be expelled?**

[Insert school policy for expulsions here]

**10. Can school staff tell parents what consequence was received by a child who engaged in hurtful behavior?**

What happens to your child or any child at our school is a confidential matter and cannot be shared with any other parent. Please be assured that situations will be dealt with according to the guidelines stipulated by these newly adopted procedures. If your child continues to be hurt in any way, an Incident Report Form should be completed and returned to school immediately.

**11. What is an “individual plan” that is developed after a second or third offense?**

An individual plan is a plan of action developed by school staff and parents to help a student change his/her aggressive behavior. It may, for example, include a home-school contract, referral to an outside counselor or program, or contact with the school’s safety team.

**12. What is a school safety team?**

School safety teams include several school staff, possibly guidance counselors, school psychologists, and principals, who meet on an as needed basis. The purpose of the team is to work with students to change inappropriate behavior.

**13. How can I learn more about these guidelines?**

If you have any further questions, please contact your school's principal. S/he would be happy to discuss this further with you.

# Sample Procedures for developing system-wide Bullying policy

M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools<sup>4</sup>

The M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools is more than a year into a several-year process of developing a comprehensive, system-wide policy to define, address, and prevent bullying behaviors in the school system. The following contains information about how they proceeded with this task and the tools they developed.

**Step 1:** Form a committee system-wide to develop policy. In this example, the Committee consisted of administrative and/or guidance representatives from every school in the system and the Assistant Superintendent of the system.

**Step 2:** Met all year long. Worked with Dr. Englander, MARC, and the Office of the Attorney General, and attended a series of workshops at MARC. Dr. Englander met with the Committee to provide direction and feedback regarding the development and implementation of the policy and the protocol, and MARC helped develop a training schedule including parent, student, and staff training.

The Committee accomplished the following:

- Revisions made to work during the process

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- Developed common vision
- Developed policy
- Developed protocol
- Developed training implementation plan

**Step 3: Overview of the MPSD Bullying Policy...**

- Used a template provided by the Office of the Attorney General
- Worked with Dr. Englander to develop a policy and protocol that were reflective of best practice and process

M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools

**BULLYING POLICY**

**I. GOALS**

The M\*\*\*\*\*d Public School Department is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities, and a safe learning environment free from bullying. This will be possible when all members of the M\*\*\*\*\*d school community treat each other with respect, appreciating the rich diversity in our schools. This policy is an integral part of the M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools' comprehensive effort to promote learning and eliminate all forms of violent, harmful and disruptive behavior. All students require this support to achieve their personal and academic potential.

The M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including bullying, in our schools or during school-related activities. All reports of bullying will be promptly investigated by the M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools.

**Bullying is defined as a verbal, physical, written, or electronic action, or incident or other direct or indirect behavior that is intentionally cruel and repetitive. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical,**

**psychological or emotional power.** Bullying actions will include, when appropriate, referral to a law enforcement agency. The M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools will support this policy in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parental involvement.

## **II. RATIONALE**

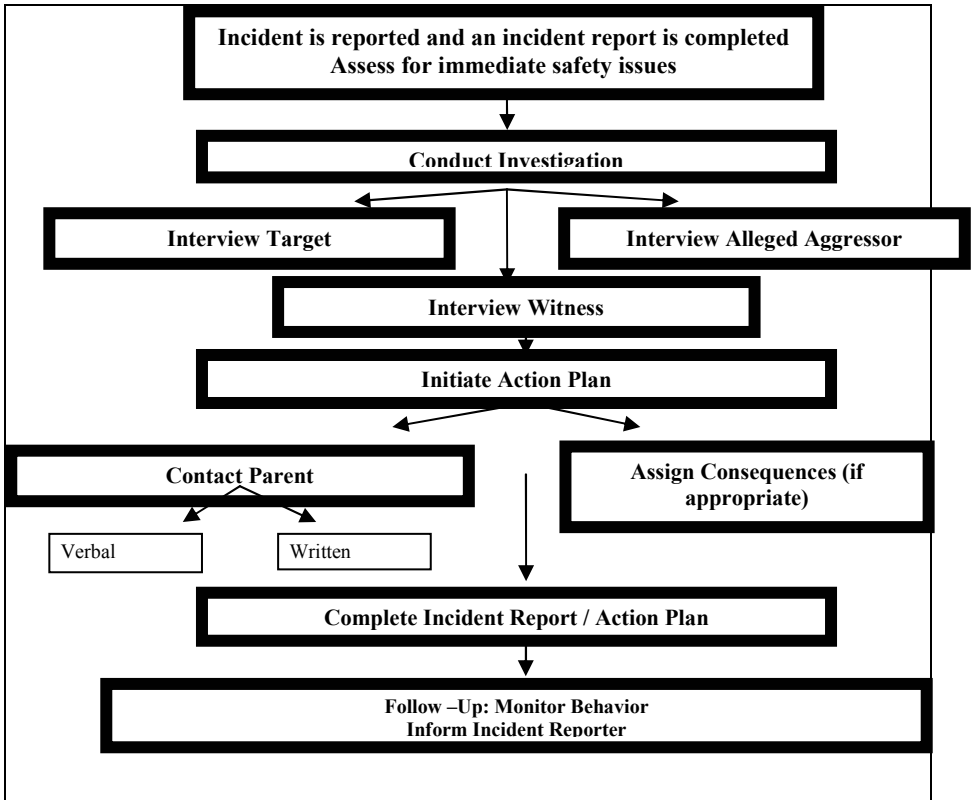
The M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools prohibits all forms of harassment, discrimination and hate crimes based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. The civil rights of all school community members are guaranteed by law. The protection of those rights is of utmost importance and priority to our school district. The M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools also prohibits bullying of school community members for reasons unrelated to their race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. Further, the M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools will also not tolerate retaliation against persons who take action consistent with this policy.

## **III. APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all sites and activities under the supervision and control of the M\*\*\*\*\*d Public Schools, or where it has jurisdiction under the law. The policy applies to all students, school committee members, school employees, independent contractors, school volunteers, visitors, parents and legal guardians of students, whose conduct occurs on school premises or in school-related activities, including school-related transportation. Nothing in this policy is designed or intended to limit the District's authority to discipline or take remedial action under General Laws Chapter 71, §37H, or in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this policy covers the conduct.

**IV. DISCIPLINARY AND CORRECTIVE ACTION**

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. The District is committed to protecting a complainant, and other similarly-situated individuals, from bullying in the future. Procedural manuals containing responsibilities of staff and students, reporting procedures, complaint process, resolution, and protection against retaliation shall be in place at each level. This policy shall be printed in each school handbook.



# Sample Internet Use Policy<sup>5</sup>

## D\*\*\*n Regional Vocational Technical High School Acceptable Internet User Policy for Students

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

This form must be read and signed prior to using the Internet.

### **Student Access to Networked Information:**

Computers are used to support learning and to enhance instruction. Computer networks allow people to interact with many computers. The Internet allows people to interact with hundreds of thousands of networks. It is a general policy that all computers are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner.

As much as possible, access to the school network and the Internet will be designed to point students to resources, which have been reviewed and evaluated prior to use. While students may be able to move beyond those resources to other resources which staff have not evaluated, the student shall be provided with guidelines and lists of information particularly suited to the learning objectives.

Students may pursue electronic research only if they have been granted parental permission and have submitted all required forms. Permission is not transferable and may not be shared.

### **Rules for School Networks and Internet Use:**

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks, just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

The network is provided for student to conduct research and communicate with others. Access to network services is provided

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to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. **Parent/Guardian Permission is required for all students under the age of 18.** Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Individual users of the school computer network are responsible for their behavior and communications over these networks. It is presumed that users will comply with school standards and will honor the agreements they have signed.

Network and computer storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure the students are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school servers and computers would always be private. During school, teachers of students will guide them in accessing appropriate materials. Outside of school, families must bear responsibility for such guidance, as they, also, must with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio and other potentially offensive media.

**The following are NOT permitted:**

1. Sending or accessing offensive messages or pictures.
2. Using obscene language.
3. Harassing, insulting or attacking others.
4. Damaging computers, computer system or computer networks.
5. Violating copyright laws.
6. Using passwords of others.
7. Trespassing in others' folders, work or files.
8. Intentionally wasting resources.
9. Employing the network for commercial purposes.
10. **Unauthorized Installation or Downloading of any Software Programs.**
11. **Chat Rooms, Instant Messaging and Email are prohibited.**
12. **PLAGARISM.**

**Sanctions:**

1. Violations will result in a loss of computer access.
2. Disciplinary action will be taken by the administration.

3. When applicable, law enforcement agencies will be involved.

**I have read and understand D\*\*\*n's Acceptable Internet User Policy and I am aware of the consequences should I violate any of the above rules governing the Internet.**

Student  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent  
Signature  
**(REQUIRED)** \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

*Return this signed form to your English Language Arts Teacher.*

**\*Important points:**

- 1. Expectations for student behavior online**
- 2. Statement that computer & internet use is not private**
- 3. Statement that outlines specific banned behaviors**
- 4. Statement that violations WILL involve contacting parents and law enforcement where appropriate**

# Sample Procedures for Responding to Cyberbullying Incidences<sup>6</sup>

D\*\*\*n Regional Vocational Technical High School  
Fall River – Somerset – Swansea – Westport

- All students and staff must sign an “Acceptable Internet User” agreement
- Student assemblies are held early in the school year to explain the potential dangers of “cyberspace” with sites like MYSPACE.com
- The School Resource Officer is part of the assembly and answers questions from students
- Students are warned that if they “blog” any member of the D\*\*\*n community—Teacher, student, etc.-- it will be dealt with as an attack, assault, harassment, or a threat.
- When evidence is presented, the parent is called in for a meeting with the Principal, the School Resource Office, Guidance Counselor and those named in the “blog”

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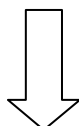
- Punishment and/or legal charges are a real possibility
- Students are urged to “turn-in” those who send them inappropriate messages or pictures.
- Parental involvement is most necessary to prevent further incidences
- In most cases, suspension of the student is the result of the inappropriate message or picture. In some cases, a referral for a further evaluation may be made (ex—anger management, substance abuse – if mentioned in message).

# Sample District Bullying Policy from Office of Attorney General of Massachusetts

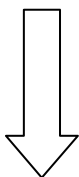
**This sample policy can be downloaded from:**  
<http://www.ago.state.ma.us/filelibrary/CRPolicyMASchoolDistricts.doc>

## Responding to a Report of Bullying Sample Protocol: Report from a Parent

Report comes in. It is routed to the individual from the School Safety Team designated to take Bullying Reports (e.g., Assistant Principal).

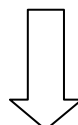


Does the reporter have a high level of specific data in their report? Ask about: Where incident(s) happen, When, Who was present, Repeated, Identity of Alleged Bully(ies). Ask for reporter's identity to ensure against false accusations. Stress confidentiality. Check attendance records of alleged victim. Fill out paper record of Report. Is there a high level of specific information?



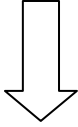
**YES.** Interview alleged victim privately. Do not ask to see him/her in the alleged bully's presence. Emphasize that the victim will not be mentioned to the bully and will not be part of the discipline. Emphasize that this is YOUR problem with the bully's behavior. Can the victim confirm details? Ask victim about attendance record.

NO

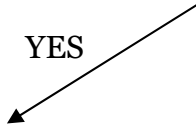


**NO, MORE DATA IS NEEDED**  
Interview other people alleged to be or possibly present, privately. Interview teachers, including teachers who may not teach the victim but who teach in the vicinity of the alleged episode. Interview the alleged victim privately. Do not ask to see him/her in the alleged bully's presence. Ask about attendance. Emphasize that the victim will not be mentioned to the bully and will not be part of the discipline. Emphasize that this is YOUR problem with the bully's behavior. Can anyone corroborate?

YES



YES

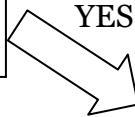


NO

Does the victim feel he/she is in imminent danger? Does he or she feel unsafe being in school today and tomorrow?

Call back reporting parent. Emphasize that no one could confirm and that the alleged victim denies; ask if they can get more specific information and re-report with that specific data. Ask teachers of alleged bully to watch carefully for behavior problems. **\*\*END\*\***

YES



NO



Call emergency meeting of Safety Team. Consider: having meeting with alleged bully and parent in principal's office; keeping alleged bully in principal's office; calling victim's parents; emergency procedures.

Interview alleged bully. Go over Consequences Chart with him or her. Do not mention victim specifically. Emphasize zero tolerance. Consider if evidence is strong enough to warrant disciplinary actions, if so, take such action. Call parents if warranted. Set up meeting with parents if warranted. Call original parent reporter and report on outcome. **Report on outcome to teachers and other interviewees, including victim, but do not do so in front of alleged bully.**

# **CONTACT INFORMATION & FAQ'S**

## **How much does the MARC Anti-Bullying Program cost?**

At the present time, the MARC Anti-Bullying Program is delivered at no cost to schools in Massachusetts. Currently the program is grant-funded. In the future this may change. If they have the resources, MARC requests that schools donate a fee to the Center.

## **Can I choose to use only parts of the MARC program (e.g., the faculty training alone), or do I have to use the entire program?**

Schools can opt for only parts of the program. However, we recommend a full-scale effort for best results.

## **We already use another anti-bullying curriculum in our school. Will it conflict with the MARC program?**

No. MARC works with existing anti-bullying efforts. We do not displace other programs which already exist in a school.

## **How do I get started, and how does the program happen at my school?**

The program usually begins by attending a brief meeting (about an hour) at MARC. In that

meeting, we discuss how the program works, what needs your individual school has, what programs you may already be using, and what resources you have that we can engage to begin addressing bullying in your school.

To book that meeting, please email or call the contacts below. Email is very preferable. When you do email or call, we will respond by emailing you several times when we can meet. You can choose one. After our initial meeting, we can book you for a faculty in-service or other services, depending on what your needs are.

Contact Information:

Phone: 508.531.1784

Email: [MARC@bridgew.edu](mailto:MARC@bridgew.edu)

Director: Dr. Elizabeth Englander  
([eenglander@bridgew.edu](mailto:eenglander@bridgew.edu))