

# South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan 2023 - 2025

SSEC Board of Directors Approval: 12/8/2023  
To be reviewed and updated in 2025.

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## BULLYING LEGISLATION SUMMARY

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed a new bullying legislation designed to expand a school district's obligations in terms of monitoring, reporting, and investigating all types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. This legislation contains an educational component for all staff and curriculum requirements for all students in grades K-12. This law applies to both public and private schools. (Please reference M.G.L. c.71, § 370 and the amended regulation through Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014.)

All schools are required to create a bullying prevention and intervention plan. The following key components are required by law and are, therefore, contained within the South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan:

1. A professional development plan must be established for all staff
2. Each district or school must establish a bullying prevention and intervention plan
3. A K-12 curriculum on bullying must be adopted for all K-12 students
4. Reporting requirements for all staff who witness or have knowledge of any bullying incident must be implemented
5. Investigation and disciplinary policies must be instituted for the act of bullying
6. When criminal charges may be appropriate, notification of law enforcement is needed
7. Resources and information will be available to parents and guardians including curricula, the dynamics of bullying, online safety, and cyberbullying.

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H½ or 37H3/4, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

## ASSESSING NEEDS AND IDENTIFYING RESOURCES

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed through a collaborative school community process. Representatives from the following groups are a part of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention procedures.

- Administration: Executive Director, Program Directors, Assistant Directors, Clinical Director
- Parents, Guardians and Students
- Facility, Technology, Office and Food Service Personnel

Additional Groups and/or Organizations may provide information and data to assist in identifying the needs of the district as it relates to bullying prevention and intervention. These groups and organizations may include, but are not limited to the following:

- South Shore Mental Health
- Member School Districts
- Massasoit Community College
- Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University.
- Community sites of employment

Additionally, Program Directors meet with student groups to further assess SSEC needs related to bullying prevention and intervention. There is ample time for students, staff, and administrators to assess the collaborative needs.

At least once every four years, beginning with the 2015/16 school year, the Collaborative will administer a survey to both students and to parents to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools.

## PRIORITY STATEMENT

The South Shore Educational Collaborative Values:

- Safety
- Respect
- Relationships
- Growth

The South Shore Educational Collaborative expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a manner that demonstrates respect for individuality and diversity. All types of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation are prohibited. This law extends to circumstances where a student feels bullied by school personnel. Any confirmed instances of bullying will be subject to actions and consequences as outlined in the South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Policy.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length, and protective hairstyles, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

The school programs at South Shore Educational Collaborative use the following approaches to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- ensure ready access to staff members by maintaining strong staff to student ratio
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

The South Shore Educational Collaborative is committed to working with students, staff, families, the community, and law enforcement in preventing all types of bullying. This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has been established for the prevention, intervention, and timely response to reported incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.

## DEFINITIONS

As cited in An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 and A Summary for Parents and Guardians, and Student Handbooks as prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Definition of Bullying: Bullying as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Definition of Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Scope of Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- property immediately adjacent to school grounds,
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds,
- at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school,
- or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school.

Bullying extends to occurrences:

- at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related,
- or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school if the bullying:
  - creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
  - infringes on the rights of the victim at school or
  - materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Definition of Hazing: Hazing is any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization whether on public or private property which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. See M.G.L. c. 269 § 17 for the full definition of hazing.

Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

The legislation broadly defines bullying both on and off school grounds. The South Shore Educational Collaborative interprets this to mean that the school is required to investigate alleged instances of bullying that may occur off school grounds if a connection can be found between the conduct and a hostile environment at school or how the alleged conduct disrupts the “educational process” at school.

## RELATED TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

**Aggressor** is a student or staff member who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

**Hostile environment** is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education.

**Target** is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is directed.

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

**School Staff:** includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All staff will be required to participate in annual professional development training for the prevention of bullying. This training will include both educational and non-educational staff, including but not limited to administrators, teachers, clinicians, building maintenance, office staff, club/activity advisors, and all paraprofessionals.

To expedite the training process, the South Shore Educational Collaborative will implement a train-the-trainer model to ensure that all staff are trained in a timely manner. Many of our educators and administrators have received instruction in conducting bullying prevention and intervention training through the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC)\*.

Standards: - All staff will receive training that includes the following standards:

1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents
2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents

3. Information regarding power differentials and the often complex interactions that occur between and among an aggressor, a target, and witnesses to a bullying incident
4. Clarification of the duties in responding to incidents of bullying in which the perpetrator is a staff member.
5. Current research on bullying, including
  - a. Students at risk for bullying
  - b. Indicators of bullying behavior
  - c. Categories of students at risk as aggressors
6. Information on the incidence and unique nature of cyber-bullying
7. Information on Internet safety issues related to cyber-bullying

#### Training Schedule:

- Annual in-district training for all staff
- Initial training of 90 minutes minimum for all staff
- Additional training available for targeted staff including, but not limited to administrators, clinicians, nurses, and other personnel more likely to witness bullying or receive reports of bullying
- Training is required for all new hires with review of SSEC's Bullying Policy.
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention training, along with other SSEC Policy review and annual training, is included in the initial stages of the Teacher Mentor Induction Program.

#### Additional Professional Development:

- Specific extended cyber-bullying training
- Distribution of literature related to bullying and cyber-bullying
- Resources / links available on website
- Webinars and teleconferences related to bullying and cyber-bullying
- Out-of-district professional development such as provided by \*MARC, District Attorney's office, legal offices, and other venues
- Additional targeted professional development will be provided based on the needs and/or concerns identified by staff and administration

\* Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC), located at Bridgewater State College, is recognized throughout the Commonwealth as a leader in bullying and cyber-bullying prevention and awareness.

## EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS & CURRICULUM PLAN

Per the legislation, every program within the South Shore Educational Collaborative will implement a curriculum that addresses bullying prevention using age appropriate instruction. A standard, evidence-based curriculum is implemented for all grades, based on the statewide academic standards developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.



In addition, the following curriculum resources and activities are used to guide a bullying prevention program that teaches students about:

1. Types of bullying including cyberbullying
2. Strategies for dealing with aggressors
3. Ways for students to report bullying
4. Conflict resolution
5. Respectful and empathetic approaches to working and playing with those who are different from you

Curriculum Resources, Programs and Activities: The following curricula is used to guide educators in age appropriate bullying prevention and intervention instruction:

Time Frame	When / What	Who	Gr.	Focus
<b>Beginning of school year</b>	Aug / Sept PD	New staff		Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Staff training (attendance must be taken)
	PD	Returning staff		Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Staff training (program preference for time of year and if combined with new staff or not) (attendance must be taken)
	Aug / Sept / Oct	Students	K-12	Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Age appropriate, program specific student trainings (attendance must be taken)
	Every 1 year (Fall/Winter)	SSEC Anti-bullying Trainers		SSEC programs aim to have one staff member receive instruction and certification in conducting bullying prevention and intervention training through the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC)
	Resources and Materials	Parents / Guardians		Parent informational literature is distributed to parents at SSEC's Open House and made available in the main offices. This information will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school district or school plan;</li> <li>- the dynamics of bullying; and</li> <li>- online safety and cyber-bullying</li> </ul>
	October National Bullying Awareness Month	Students / Staff	K-12	Collaborative recognition of National Bullying Awareness Month with the help of SSEC -Administration, SSEC MARC certified trainers and student councils across programs. (Could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Plan for National Stop Bullying Day in Oct.</li> </ul>

				<p>-Plan for Anti-Bullying week in Nov. -Plan for Pink Shirt Day in Feb</p> <p>-MARC center student curriculum (K-12) addressed throughout the month to varying degrees and adaptations across all programs.</p> <p>-Cross program activities to promote role models, kindness and positive behavior.</p>
<b>On-Going throughout the school year</b>	On-going	Staff Training	K-12	On going, staff, Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying professional development via team meetings, clinical reviews and specific situations as needed.
	On-going	Staff Discussion & Review	9-12	High School Staff in SSEC's SSHS and CHS hold daily reviews with program designated staff at the end of the day.
	On-going	Student teaching & training	K-12	SSEC programs (Q/CHS/SSH/MINI/COMM) hold ongoing, social skills teaching and training with students addressing topics such as but not limited to Communication, bullying, social skills, self-advocacy and self regulation to various degrees depending on age appropriateness and developmental level.
	With D.A.R.E. certified SRO	Student training D.A.R.E	MS: 7&8 HS: 9&10	For the 2023-2024 & 2024-2025 school year, SSEC's SRO/D.A.R.E. Officer provides a six week course for HS age students and a twelve week course for Middle school age which includes a class on Bullying.
	1 x per year	Student training	K-12	SSEC Students in Elementary, Middle and HS will have the option to participate in age appropriate presentations by the District Attorney's office on Cybersense
	1 x per year	Student training	K-12	SSEC Students in Elementary, Middle and HS will have the option to participate in age appropriate presentations by the MARC center
	Individual Clinical Meetings	Student	K-12	Clinicians meet with students individually to address concerns and provide supportive measures as needed.
	Program Clinical Team Meetings	Staff		Q/SSHS/CHS hold weekly meetings of clinical team staff and the program director to discuss individual students and the program overall

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The bullying legislation imposes mandatory reporting requirements for *all* members of the school staff to immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation. Staff members must report incidents, which they have either witnessed or become aware of, to the Director, the clinician, or both. The form identified as the “South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form” can be found in the appendix section of this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. It can also be accessed on the SSEC website as a downloadable PDF or in an electronic format as a google doc. A copy of the reporting form will also be available in the following locations:

- Student Handbook
- Main office of each Program
- Clinicians’ Offices
- Nurses’ Offices
- SSEC Website

Anyone can report a bullying or retaliation incident, including students, staff, parents or guardians. Reports may be made in writing or orally to the Director or another staff member. Reports may also be made anonymously to the director of each program, or to Executive Director, Rick Reino at 781-749-7518 ext. 1618, or at [rreino@ssec.org](mailto:rreino@ssec.org). However, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. In the case that the Program Director or Assistant Director is the perpetrator of the alleged bullying, the report would be submitted to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is the perpetrator of the alleged bullying, the report is submitted to the Board of Directors. Contact information is included on the SSEC website.

Data Reporting:

Every Program Director will submit data regarding alleged and confirmed incidents of bullying and the response and interventions. This information will be submitted annually by the close of the school year, to the Executive Director who will submit a compilation of the data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

## INVESTIGATION, DISCIPLINARY POLICIES, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the program director or the designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The program director or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The program director or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

Examples include but are not limited to,

- Potential change in schedule to decrease shared time/space within the program
- Increase in staff supervision during shared time/space
- Potential staff escort during transition time
- Availability of assigned counselor and an on demand counselor (if own counselor is absent or unavailable) if needed during the school day
- Continued education and awareness in Civil rights, Discrimination violations, Bullying and Harassment.
- Continued education and awareness of the impacts of Cyberbullying.
- SRO visibility in the program on a daily basis providing support and resources as needed.

### 2. Obligations to notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the program director or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the student aggressor of this, and of the procedures

for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the program director or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

- b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the program director or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the program director or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the program director or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the program director will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the program director or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

In making this determination, the program director will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the program director or designee deems appropriate.

### 3. Investigation

The program director or designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the program director or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The program director or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the program director or designee, other staff members as determined by the program director or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to

investigate and address the matter, the program director or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The program director or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the program director or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

#### 4. Determinations

The program director or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the program director or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The program director or designee will:

- 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and
- 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the program director or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or student aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The program director or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the program director or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The program director or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

#### 5. Responses to Bullying

SSEC's strategies for students' skill building, and other individualized interventions that may be taken in response to remediate or prevent further bullying and retaliation are as follows:

a. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the program director or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (d) (v). Skill-building approaches that the program director or designee may consider include:

- planning individual and/or small group skill-building sessions based on the programs anti-bullying curriculum
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students and/or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand prosocial ways to achieve their goals
- discussions with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- making a referral for evaluation.
- Reinforcement and consistency by way of behavioral intervention plans

b. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the program director or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the program director or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

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

c. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The program director or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the program director or designee may

use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the program director or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the program director or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately

### Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout the reporting, investigation, and disciplinary process. Confidentiality will be used to protect anyone who reports bullying or retaliation, who provides information during an investigation, or who is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

### Special Education

As required by M.G. L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines that a child has a disability which affects “social skills development” or the student is “vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of the child’s disability,” the Team will determine what to include in the IEP to address the skills and/or proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to these issues. Cognitively appropriate resources will be used with special education students to assist in teaching bullying prevention and intervention skills.

### Internet & Electronic Communication Device Use

The South Shore Educational Collaborative has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that guides the use of electronic communication devices and other technologies in the district. The AUP will be reviewed annually to ensure that the content of the AUP reflects the rapidly changing technologies and related safety concerns. All students, employees, and parents will be notified of the policy and will be required to sign the AUP.

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

The South Shore Educational Collaborative is committed to ensuring that our students and staff feel safe and supported within the school community. The SSEC will continue to work with students, staff, parents and guardians alerting all to the need for more heightened observation of bullying behaviors.



The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the program director or designee, or superintendent or designee when the program director or assistant program director is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the program director or designee, or superintendent or designee when the program director or assistant program director is the alleged aggressor.

The program director or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

When deemed appropriate by the director, the SSEC will provide counseling or other support for both aggressors and targets. The SSEC will also assist students and families with access to both school and community resources.

## PARENT/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Parents and guardians will receive annual written notice of student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The SSEC will make resources available to parents and the community to assist in bullying prevention and intervention. The following Bullying Prevention and Intervention links will be available on the South Shore Educational Collaborative website:

[Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center](#)

[Pacer Kids Against Bullying](#)

[StopBullying.gov](#)

In compliance with Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws, any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Problem Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at:

[Problem Resolution System - Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) or email them at: [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the administration office at 75 Abington Street, Hingham.

Parent information will be shared by the South Shore Educational Collaborative, the District Attorney's Office, the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, etc.

## APPENDIX

- A. Summary for Parents and Guardians, and Program Specific Student Handbooks
- B. Summary for Program Specific Staff Handbooks
- C. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
- D. Bullying Reporting Form
- E. List of Resources
- F. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Committee

## Appendix A. Summary for Parents and Guardians, and Program Specific Student Handbooks

The South Shore Educational Collaborative Values:

- Safety
- Respect
- Relationships
- Growth

The South Shore Educational Collaborative expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a manner that demonstrates respect for individuality and diversity. All types of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation are prohibited. This law extends to circumstances where a student feels bullied by school personnel. Any confirmed instances of bullying will be subject to actions and consequences as outlined in the South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Policy.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length, and protective hairstyles, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

The school programs at South Shore Educational Collaborative use the following approaches to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- ensure ready access to staff members by maintaining strong staff to student ratio
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

The South Shore Educational Collaborative is committed to working with students, staff, families, the community, and law enforcement in preventing all types of bullying. The SSEC Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has been established for the prevention, intervention, and timely response to reported incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.

The South Shore Educational Collaborative's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan can be found in the Handbook Appendix.

## Appendix B. Summary for SSEC Employee Handbook

### **Bullying or Retaliation in Schools [MGL Chapter 71, Section 370(g)] and at Work**

Please reference the full Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in the Appendix of this SSEC Employee handbook.

**Bullying is prohibited at school**, adjacent to school, off school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, in school vehicles, at school bus stops or from any location through the use of technology and electronic devices (cyber-bullying). Retaliation is prohibited against someone who witnesses, reports or provides information related to bullying.

Bullying under the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying law is defined as the repeated use by a student of written, verbal or electronic expressions, or physical acts or gestures, directed at another student that may:

- (a) Cause physical or emotional harm to the victim, or damages to property;
- (b) Cause the victim to have a reasonable fear of harm or damage to property;
- (c) Create a hostile environment for the victim at school;
- (d) Infringe on the victim's rights at school; or
- (e) Substantially disrupt the educational process or the school.

The law mandates that school personnel who become aware of bullying or retaliation report it immediately to a program director/coordinator. Program director/coordinators must be familiar with this law and prepared to conduct an investigation and follow mandated procedures regarding notifications and discipline if findings of bullying or retaliation are substantiated. The SSEC has developed a Prevention and Intervention plan.

### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The bullying legislation imposes mandatory reporting requirements for all members of the school staff to immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation. Staff members must report incidents, which they have either witnessed or become aware of, to the Director, the clinician, or both. The form identified as the "South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form" can be found in the appendix section of this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. A copy of the reporting form will also be available in the following locations: Student Handbook, Main office of each Program, Clinicians' Offices, Nurse's Office, SSEC Website, and included in annual paperwork.

Anyone can report a bullying or retaliation incident, including students, staff, parents or guardians. Reports may be made in writing or orally to the Director or another staff member. Reports may also be made anonymously to the director of each program, or to Executive Director, Richard Reino, at 781-749-7518 ext. 1618, or at [rreino@ssec.org](mailto:rreino@ssec.org). However, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student on the basis of an anonymous report. In the case that the Program Director or Assistant Director is the perpetrator of the alleged bullying, the report would be submitted to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is the perpetrator of the alleged bullying, the report is submitted to the Board of Directors. Contact information is included on the SSEC website.

### **Data Reporting**

Every Program Director will submit data regarding alleged and confirmed incidents of bullying and the response and interventions. This information will be submitted annually by the close of the school year, to the Executive Director who will submit a compilation of the data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### **INVESTIGATION, DISCIPLINARY POLICIES, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Safety:

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the program director or the designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents.

The program director or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. Obligations to notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- b. Notice to Another School or District. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- c. Notice to Law Enforcement. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

3. Investigation

The program director or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. During the investigation the program director or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. Interviews may be conducted by the program director or designee, other staff members as determined by the program director or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the program director or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The program director or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the program director or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

Determinations

The program director or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the program director or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The program director or designee will:

- 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and
- 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

The program director or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the program director or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The program director or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

#### 4. Responses to Bullying

SSEC's strategies for students' skill building, and other individualized interventions that may be taken in response to remediate or prevent further bullying and retaliation are as follows:

- a. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building
- b. Taking Disciplinary Action
- c. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

#### Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout the reporting, investigation, and disciplinary process. Confidentiality will be used to protect anyone who reports bullying or retaliation, who provides information during an investigation, or who is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

#### **Special Education**

As required by M.G. L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines that a child has a disability which affects "social skills development" or the student is "vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of the child's disability," the Team will determine what to include in the IEP to address the skills and/or proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to these issues. Cognitively appropriate resources will be used with special education students to assist in teaching bullying prevention and intervention skills.

#### Internet & Electronic Communication Device Use

The South Shore Educational Collaborative has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that guides the use of electronic communication devices and other technologies in the district. The AUP will be reviewed annually to ensure that the content of the AUP reflects the rapidly changing technologies and related safety concerns. All students, employees, and parents will be notified of the policy and will be required to sign the AUP.

#### **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

The South Shore Educational Collaborative is committed to ensuring that our students and staff feel safe and supported within the school community. The SSEC will continue to work with students, staff, parents and guardians alerting all to the need for more heightened observation of bullying behaviors.

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the program director or designee, or Executive Director or designee when the program director or assistant program director is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the program director or designee, or Executive Director or designee when the program director or assistant program director is the alleged aggressor.

The program director or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who



provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

When deemed appropriate by the director, the SSEC will provide counseling or other support for both aggressors and targets. The SSEC will also assist students and families with access to both school and community resources.

## Appendix C. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

### South Shore Educational Collaborative Bullying Policy

The South Shore Educational Collaborative is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected. For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the South Shore Educational Collaborative.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the South Shore Educational Collaborative if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### **Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Executive Director and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Program Director/Coordinator is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

### **Reporting**

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are encouraged to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying. Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the program director or their designee.

### **Investigation Procedures**

The program director or their designee, upon receipt of a report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The program director or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the program director or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Principal shall consult with the Executive Director who may consult with the local law enforcement to determine if criminal charges are warranted.

The investigation shall be completed promptly from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

### **Retaliation**

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

### **Target Assistance**

The South Shore Educational Collaborative shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

### **Training and Assessment**

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated

into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

### **Publication and Notice**

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the South Shore Educational Collaborative website

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended

Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission Title IX of the

Education Amendments of 1972 603 CMR [26.00](#) M.G.L. [71:37O](#); [265:43](#);

[43A](#); [268:13B](#); [269:14A](#)

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

CROSS REFS.: [AC](#), Nondiscrimination

[ACAB](#), Sexual Harassment

[JBA](#), Student-to-Student Harassment

[JICFA](#), Prohibition of Hazing

[JK](#), Student Discipline Regulations

SSEC Board of Directors Approval: 12/08/2023

## Appendix D. Bullying Reporting Form

### SSEC BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the:

\_\_\_ Target of the behavior :  
\_\_\_ Reporter (not the target):

3. Check whether you are a:

\_\_\_ Student  
\_\_\_ Staff member (specify role) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ Parent  
\_\_\_ Administrator  
\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact information/email//telephone number:

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

4. If student, state your school/program: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

5. If staff member, state your school or work site: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

7. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it and circle their title):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student    Staff    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student    Staff    Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student    Staff    Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please attach an additional page if necessary.

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9. Please comment regarding how this incident disrupted the educational process. Please attach an additional page if necessary.

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10. Please describe any physical evidence including photos, text, drawings, or messages (phone, computer, etc.) Please attach an additional page(s) if necessary.

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(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously and you do not need to sign.)

Signature of Person Filing this Report: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Form Given to: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E. List of Resources

### Student Training & Resources

[Cyber Safety Tips for Students](#)

[Assemblies | massachusetts-agg](#)

[Research-Based In Class Curricula | massachusetts-agg](#)

### Staff Training & Resources:

<https://plymouthda.com/prevention/school-based-programs/>

[Faculty Training | massachusetts-agg](#)

[Training Events | massachusetts-agg](#)

### Staff, Student & Family resources:

[Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center](#)

[Pacer Kids Against Bullying](#)

[StopBullying.gov](#)

### Family Resources & Materials:

[For Parents | massachusetts-agg](#)

[Learn More: Bullying & Cyberbullying | stopbullyingnow](#)

[Services, Downloads, Programs | stopbullyingnow](#)



## Appendix F. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Committee

### SSEC's Administrative Leadership team

Executive Director

Director of Student Services

Career High School Coordinator

Community School Program Director

Community School Coordinator

Mini School Program Director

Quest Program Director

Quest Program Coordinator

South Shore High School Coordinator

### SSEC's MARC Certified Trainers for Fall 2023 - Fall 2025

Career High School Clinician

Community School Program Director

Community School Coordinator

Mini School Clinician

Quest Program Coordinator

South Shore High School Teacher