

BULLYING PREVENTION PLAN

The Millis Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. The Millis Public School District is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to create a culture that is respectful to all and to prevent issues of bullying. We take a pro-active approach through Peer Leadership programs and many other initiatives to create a culture that respects and values all. This plan was developed by Millis' Bullying Prevention Committee to clearly define the manner in which the Millis Public School will develop and implement the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to ensure the emotional and physical safety of our students. Members of the team include the Millis School District Administration and the members of the Millis School District Faculty. We are soliciting public comment through Millis School Councils and broadly through our website and list serves. In the future, parents will access our plan/curriculum through our website, www.millisps.org. In addition, parents will be made aware of the plan at Open Houses, Back-to-School Nights, and through newsletters, listservs, etc.

The Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is our system's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. School leaders, with input from families, students and staff, will assess the adequacy of current programs; review current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services.

During the 2016-2017 school year, and every two years going forward, our schools will have utilized surveys to obtain input from students, staff, parents and guardians on school climate and school safety issues through the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey. Data from each school is collected and analyzed on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying (e.g., focusing on identifying vulnerable populations and "hot spots" in school buildings, on school grounds, or on school buses). This information helps to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and informs decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, in-school support services and outreach to families.

Planning and oversight

The Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has identified that the building principal (or his/her designee) as the individual who is responsible for receiving all reports on bullying. The building principal (or his/her designee) is responsible for collecting and analyzing building data on bullying to assess the present climate. This same individual is also responsible for creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors. The Millis Public Schools' Professional Development Committee, under the supervision of the Director of Curriculum, as well as building principals are responsible for planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law. The building principal (or his/her designee) is responsible for planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors as well as for choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use to instruct students about issues of bullying and cyber bullying. Each building principal (or his/her designee) is responsible for implementing the Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan; for amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct; leading parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and reviewing and updating these materials each year, or more frequently if necessary.

The Superintendent (or her/his designee) is responsible for developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and for designating key staff to be in charge of reviewing and updating these policies. The School Committee is responsible for the approval of any new policy. The School Committee updated our policy in June of 2016 to adhere to new laws and regulations.

The Millis Public Schools' Priority Statement:

The Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying, and each school in the district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for creating respectful cultures and for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The building principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan. Each school in the district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

DEFINITIONS

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

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim 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.

Cyber bullying 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 cyber bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, 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 a student's education.

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

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.

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

Collaboration with Families**Advice for Parents and Adults About How To Deal With Bullying**

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, 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
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Kids who are bullied are more likely to

- Do poorly in school
- Have low self-esteem
- Be depressed
- Turn to violent behavior to protect themselves or get revenge on their bullies

Kids who bully are more likely to

- Do poorly in school
- Smoke and drink alcohol
- Commit crimes in the future

Parents can play a central role to preventing bullying and stopping it when it happens. Here are a few things you can do.

- Teach kids to solve problems without using violence and praise them when they do.
- Give children positive feedback when they behave well to help their build self-esteem. Help give them the self-confidence to stand up for what they believe in.
- Ask your children about their day and listen to them talk about school, social events, their classmates, and any problems they have.
- Take bullying seriously. Many kids are embarrassed to say they have been bullied. You may only have one chance to step in and help.
- If you see any bullying, stop it right away, even if your child is the one doing the bullying.
- Encourage your child to help others who need it.
- Don't bully your children or bully others in front of them. Many times kids who are bullied at home react by bullying other kids. If your children see you hit, ridicule, or gossip about someone else, they are also more likely to do so themselves.
- Support the bully prevention program in your child's school.

When Your Child Is Bullied

Many kids are embarrassed to be bullied and may not tell their parents or another adult right away. If your child comes to you and asks for help with a bully, take it seriously. Many times, if kids aren't taken seriously the first time they ask for help, they don't ask again. Even if your child doesn't turn to you for help, you can watch for these warning signs that he or she is being bullied. Kids who are bullied often experience

- Withdrawal
- A loss of friends
- A drop in grades
- A loss of interest in activities he or she previously enjoyed
- Torn clothing
- Bruises
- A need for extra money or supplies
- Child does not want to ride bus, wants to be driven to school

If you think your child is being bullied or if your child has told you that he or she is being bullied, you can help. Parents are often the best resource to build a child's self-confidence and teach him or her how to best solve problems. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Talk to your child's teacher about it instead of confronting the bully's parents. If the teacher doesn't act to stop the bullying, talk to the principal.
- Teach your child nonviolent ways to deal with bullies, like walking away, playing with friends, or talking it out.
- Help your child act with self-confidence. With him or her, practice walking upright, looking people in the eye, and speaking clearly.
- Don't encourage your child to fight. This could lead to him or her getting hurt, getting in trouble, and beginning more serious problems with the bully.
- Involve your child in activities outside of school. This way he or she can make friends in a different social circle.
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Some children seem to be bullied all the time, while others rarely get picked on. Why do some kids seem to attract all of the bullies? Kids who are bullied often:

- Are different from other kids, whether by size, race, sexually, or have different interests
- Seem weak, either physically or emotionally
- Are insecure
- Want approval
- Won't tell on their bullies

Through various ways, the staff of the Millis Public Schools will support students who may be more vulnerable to being targets of bullying and provide them with the skills and strategies they need to prevent or respond to bullying.

Parents or guardians seeking assistance or wishing to file a claim/concern may access the Massachusetts Department of Education's problem resolution system at atcompliance@doe.mass.edu. For more information please see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/prs/>

When Your Child Is a Bully

It's hard for any parent to believe that their child is a bully, but sometimes it happens. But just because your child bullies doesn't mean that he or she will bully forever. Parents are one of the best resources to help their child stop bullying and start interacting positively with their classmates.

Your child may bully if, he or she

- Lacks empathy and doesn't sympathize with others
- Values aggression
- Likes to be in charge
- Is an arrogant winner and a sore loser
- Often fights often with brothers and sisters
- Is impulsive

What you can do to stop your child from bullying

- Take it seriously. Don't treat bullying as a passing phase. Even if you're not worried about long-lasting effects on your child, another child is being hurt.
- Talk to your child to find out why he or she is bullying. Often, children bully when they feel sad, angry, lonely, or insecure and many times major changes at home or school may bring on these feelings.
- Help build empathy for others and talk to your child about how it feels to be bullied.

- Ask a teacher or a school counselor if your child is facing any problems at school, such as if your child is struggling with a particular subject or has difficulty making friends. Ask them for advice on how you and your child can work through the problem.
- Ask yourself if someone at home is bullying your child. Often, kids who bully are bullied themselves by a parent, family member, or another adult.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Millis Public Schools ongoing professional development plans reflect the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O and provide annual professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

Annual staff training on the Plan:

Annual training for all school staff on the Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes staff responsibilities under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school building. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

Ongoing professional development:

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying.
- Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.
- Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development include:
 - promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
 - fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
 - building relationships and communicating with families;
 - constructively managing classroom behaviors;
 - using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
 - applying constructive disciplinary practices;
 - teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
 - engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
 - maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

Written notice to staff:

Each school provides all staff with an annual written notice of the Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff responsibilities, in the mandated training.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of all students are addressed. These students include targets, aggressors or bystanders of bullying or cyber bullying. Schools will also address the emotional needs of these students' families. The Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the schools' capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets, aggressors and bystanders. The schools provide counseling or referral to appropriate services for students who are aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

Identifying resources:

School counselors, together with building administrators, will work to identify the school's capacity to provide counseling, case management and other services for these students (targets, aggressors, bystanders) and their families. Schools will conduct an annual review of staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments, focusing on early interventions and intensive services, and develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. The Millis Public Schools work in collaboration with local and state agencies to adopt evidenced-based curricula and to provide additional preventative services to students, parents and guardians, and faculty and staff.

Counseling and other services:

Guidance counselors, nurses, school adjustment counselors and special educators provide a variety of skill-based services to students within the educational setting that include on-going emotional support, risk assessment, crisis intervention, and help with community based counseling referrals when appropriate. School counselors meet with parents and teachers as needed to help address students' academic, emotional and behavioral concerns as collaboratively as possible. School counselors work with administrators to provide linguistically appropriate resources to identified families. School counselors maintain up-to-date information on community based mental health referrals as well as Community Service Agencies (CSAs) within the local vicinity, providing services to Medicaid eligible students. Guidance counselors, adjustment counselors and intensive special needs educators work collaboratively to develop behavior plans and social thinking groups for students with social skill weaknesses. In addition, school counselors and special education professionals work together to educate and support parents, conduct parent workshops and apprise parents of outside resources to enhance parenting skills and provide for the needs of children.

The Millis Administrative Team is committed to a proactive approach to preventing bullying through establishing an accepting, respectful and caring culture and building student leadership capacity in our school district. Clearly, this is the key component to reduce bullying in our schools. We are very proud of the positive contributions of staff members and the accomplishments of each school. Some of these include: numerous high school academic awards, a community-wide drama program, team sportsmanship recognition by the state and individual sports awards, a thriving Spanish Immersion program, and a nationally recognized anti-bullying program in the middle school. These programs were highlighted because they promote a high level of school spirit, student engagement, and more importantly the building of positive relationships with our students that must be maintained to promote a healthy school culture.

Below is a list highlighting activities offered at various schools that, put all together, create a seamless and comprehensive approach to building a healthy and respectful culture:

- One-on-one and small group counseling
- Case management services

Crisis intervention
Social Competency Program (Open Circle)
MARC K-5 Curriculum: Bullying and Cyber bullying Prevention
Facilitating classroom meetings to resolve problems
School counseling curriculum on issues of respect, sexual harassment and student success skills
Leadership Group
DARE
High School Mentor Program
Save one Student Program
Social skills groups
Study skills/time management groups
Parent-teacher conferences
Parent workshops (online internet safety night for parents)
Transition planning
Parent guidance
Behavioral plan development
Classroom observations
Peer Tutoring Program
CAP (Credit Achievement Program/Drop-Out Prevention)
Grade Level Team Meetings
STAT(Student Teacher Assistance Team)
IST(Instructional Support Team) Meetings
AI's Pals to Open Circle

ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Millis Public Schools will provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the schools' evidence-based curricula. Effective instruction includes classroom approaches, whole-school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

Specific bullying prevention approaches:

- Bullying prevention curricula is informed by current research, which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference; and
- providing parents and guardians with information regarding the schools' bullying prevention curricula
- Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan through school assemblies and/or small group meetings at the beginning of each school year.

Policies and Procedures for Reporting

This process applies to only situations where bullying is alleged. Disciplinary incidents will be reported using the school disciplinary action process.

Step One: Complete Incident Report Form

If a staff member or other adult witnesses or reports incident:

- Staff member completes incident report and gives to the building Principal
- **If a student reports incident to staff member:**
- Acknowledge student's feelings
- Determine if there are safety issues that must be addressed immediately
- Staff member completes incident report and gives to the building Principal

Step Two: Conduct Investigation

Interview Target of bullying:

- Interview the target first, then the alleged aggressor
- Target and alleged aggressor should be separated
- Do not ask to see target in the alleged aggressor's presence
- Encourage target to report any additional incidents with the alleged aggressor

Interview the student accused of bullying:

- Identify the problem
- Focus more on the alleged aggressor's behavior, protecting the target's confidentiality
- In case of denial or if further information is needed, interview witnesses.
- Document the witness account
- Make the alleged aggressor aware of consequences of retaliation against target and reporter

Contact parent of target and alleged aggressor

Step Three: Assign Consequences if needed

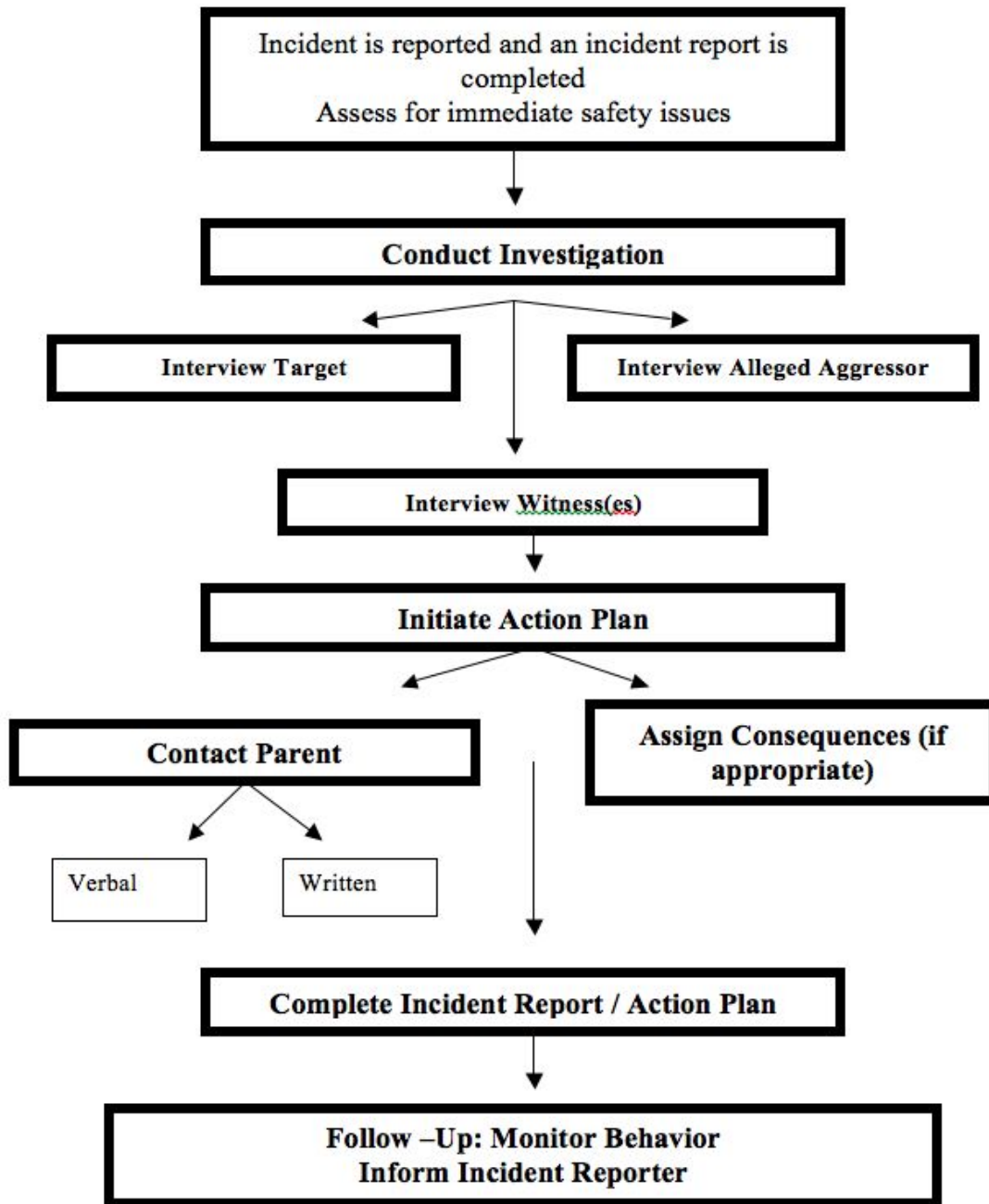
- Assign appropriate consequence
- If the alleged aggressor denies the incident and there is insufficient evidence, tell the alleged aggressor that you hope s/he is right and that nothing happened, but you will continue to monitor behavior
- No discipline will be taken until anonymous reports are verified
- Any student that knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action
- Monitor safety of target

Step Four: Document Incident and Consequences / Follow-up / Implement procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a target, reporter, witness or interviewees

- All names of target, reporter, witness and interviewees will be kept confidential
- Two check-ins by Principal or designated personnel on day immediately following conclusion of investigation
- One check in per day on the two following days

- Document outcome of investigation on the Incident Report Form / Action Plan Form Follow up: provide update to appropriate staff member(s)
- Monitor students' behavior
- Notify teachers who have contact with target and aggressor
- Notify police if the action may be of a criminal nature

PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO A REPORT OF BULLYING FLOW CHART



PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The Millis Public Schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses and at school bus stops or in school-related activities. Schools will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target’s (regardless of student’s legal status) sense of safety. The Millis Public Schools will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

Acts of bullying, which include cyber bullying, are prohibited:

- on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district, and
- the following statement will be included in the student code of conduct, the student handbook, and the staff handbook and will be disseminated widely through student assemblies, newsletters, the news media, on our website and list serves.
- acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:
 - (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
 - (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

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, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention 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 Millis Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention 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 or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this Plan covers the behavior.