

# **The Community Therapeutic Day School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Community Therapeutic Day School (CTDS) provides an educational and therapeutic multi-disciplinary program for children, ages 3-12 with the most serious neurologic and psychiatric disabilities. These disabilities include the following:

- Autism (including Autistic Spectrum Disorders, PDD, Asperger's Syndrome)
- Behavior Disorders
- Learning Disabilities
- Communication Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Psychosis
- Neurologic Disabilities (including Sensory Integration and Seizure Disorders)
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorders
- Pediatric Character Disorders

The strengths of the Community Therapeutic Day School are wide-ranging and comprehensive, far exceeding the federal and state special education requirements in providing a highly efficient program for its students and families.

The Mission of the Community Therapeutic Day School (CTDS) is to provide an educational and therapeutic environment where young children with neurological and emotional disabilities can reach their intellectual, physical, linguistic, social and emotional potential.

Through careful and intensive observation we are able to develop an in-depth clinical understanding of each child and his individual perception of the world.

With an open mind and curiosity we join the child in exploring the complexities of his world.

The significant connection between the child and staff enhances the child's capacity to engage more fully in his social and emotional development and learning.

By providing the safety of a holding environment children are encouraged to take risks in areas where their disabilities impact their lives.

In the process of learning from our children about their disabilities we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and collectively we have created a knowledge base, which has become a strength in our teaching.

Our collaboration with the child's family in conjunction with a multidisciplinary approach is critical to the success in the integration of the child's world.

## **I. Leadership**

A. Public Involvement in developing the Plan. The Community Therapeutic Day School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan") will be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, administrators, community representatives, students, parents and guardians.

Discussions regarding the school's efforts to promote a positive school climate, teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference are ongoing.

The Community Therapeutic Day School will give notice to and provide a comment period for families that have a child attending the school.

B. Assessing needs and resources. The Plan is the Community Therapeutic Day School's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, the Community Therapeutic Day School's leaders with input from families and staff will assess the adequacy of its current programs; review its current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents, and assess the school's resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This process will assist the Community Therapeutic Day School in identifying resource gaps and our most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, the Community Therapeutic Day School will revise or develop policies and procedures; establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

The Community Therapeutic Day School will have ongoing discussions with students, staff, parents, and guardians on school climate and school safety issues.

### C. Planning and Oversight

The Executive Director or designee of the Community Therapeutic Day School is responsible for the following tasks under the Plan: 1) receiving reports on bullying; 2) collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes; 3) creating a

process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; 4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use; 7) developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them; 8) amending and staff handbooks and codes of conduct; 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and 10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.

#### D. Priority Statements

The Community Therapeutic Day School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The Community Therapeutic Day School is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We understand that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The Community Therapeutic Day School takes great care in creating a safe, supportive environment for our student population and provides all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the Community Therapeutic Day School 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 preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan.

## **II. Training and Professional Development**

Under the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O ongoing training and professional development for all staff at the Community Therapeutic Day School will be provided.

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Executive Director 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. This training will occur in the Community Therapeutic Day School's Orientation and Behavior Management In-service trainings at the start of each school year. 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.
- B. 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 staff professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:
- (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
  - (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
  - (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
  - (iv) 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;
  - (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
  - (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

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 Community Therapeutic Day School 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.

- C. Written notice to staff. The Community Therapeutic Day School will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in our employee handbook.

### **III. Access to Resources and Services**

A. Identifying Resources. The Community Therapeutic Day School provides comprehensive educational and therapeutic multi-disciplinary supports and services to meet the needs of each of our 30 children, which enhances our capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying and to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors and their families. Current staffing supports the creation of a positive school environment and focuses highly on ensuring the social, emotional and behavioral needs of each child. Each classroom is staffed with a licensed counselor and special education teacher as well as counseling psychology graduate student interns. In addition, we have a consulting psychiatrist, two psychologists and two social workers on staff as well as several other administrative clinical staff. The significant connection between the child and staff enhances each child to engage fully in his social, emotional and behavioral development.

B. Counseling and other Services. The availability and integration of culturally appropriate educational and therapeutic resources available to the students and families at the Community Therapeutic Day School are wide-ranging and comprehensive. Each child participates in group psychotherapy on a daily basis, facilitated by the therapeutic teaching

staff. In addition social skills and graduate student intern therapy groups are integrated into the weekly schedule. Individual psychotherapy is offered to each student, depending on their individual needs provided by varied licensed clinical staff. Current tools including, but not limited to behavioral intervention plans, additional social skills groups and individually focused curricula are also considered on an individual, as needed basis.

- C. Students with Disabilities. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- C. Referral to outside services. The Community Therapeutic Day School has a wide-ranging resource list of outside experts from diverse fields such as neurology, psychopharmacology, psychiatry, developmental pediatrics, specialized behavior management and risk assessment specialists, who are called in for consultation and collaboration on an as needed basis. The protocol for referring students and families to outside services so that they may access appropriate and timely additional services if needed, is for the administrative clinical team of the school to meet and discuss appropriate referral options followed up by a meeting with the parents to discuss such options.

#### **IV. Academic and Non-Academic Activities**

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches.

Bullying prevention curricula will be 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 cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and

- respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Community Therapeutic Day School will review the Plan with students at the beginning of each school year through a Fall Social Studies unit on Bullying. Therapeutic teachers will continue to support this curriculum throughout the year in already established daily group psychotherapy and weekly social skills groups. Due to the size and population of the school and current staffing throughout the school as well as the intensive therapeutic services provided, any form of bullying behavior is closely monitored on a moment-by-moment basis. The significant connection between the child and staff enhances each child's capacity to engage more fully in his social and emotional development and foster's student's skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communication.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral 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;
- 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.

## **B. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation**

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A staff member is required to report immediately to the Executive Director or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or staff members, may be made anonymously. The Community Therapeutic Day School will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The Community Therapeutic Day School will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office and other locations determined by the Executive Director or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the Community Therapeutic Day School will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Executive Director or designee, will be incorporated in staff handbooks, on the school website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

### **1. Reporting by Staff**

A staff member will report immediately to the Executive Director or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Executive Director designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with the Community Therapeutic Day School's policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

## 2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The Community Therapeutic Day School 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 Executive Director or designee. 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 Executive Director or designee.

### B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

#### 1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Executive Director or 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 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 Executive Director or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Executive 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. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Executive Director or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Executive 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 Executive Director or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal 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 Executive Director or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Executive 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 Executive 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 aggressor.

In making this determination, the Executive Director will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school policies and procedures, consult with any other individuals the Executive Director or designee deems appropriate.

- C. Investigation. The Executive 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 Executive Director or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Executive Director or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Executive Director or designee, other staff members as determined by the Executive Director or designee, and in consultation with clinical staff, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Executive

Director or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Executive 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 Executive Director or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

- D. Determinations. The Executive Director or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Executive 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 Executive 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 Executive Director or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or 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 Executive 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 Executive 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.

E. Responses to Bullying

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the Executive Director or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district 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 Executive Director or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/ anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with counselors and other appropriate school staff;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for evaluation or additional services.

## 2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Executive Director or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Executive 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 Community Therapeutic Day School's code of conduct.

Disciplinary action and behavior management at CTDS is driven by the needs of the individual child. The approach to understanding and managing a child's behavior at CTDS involves an eclectic use of approaches and techniques that are determined to be helpful based on careful observation of a particular child and implementation of individualized strategies.

The primary focus of the school is relationship building and much of the focus on behavior takes place within the context of the relationships the child establishes with the teachers and therapists. Disciplinary action in response to a bullying or retaliation incident might include time out or establishing a behavioral plan and/or employing a reward system that would reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and would help the child understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals. A child in time out would be supervised by an adult who, once the child is able, would process the bullying or retaliation event, using language to help the child recognize what had happened, what the precipitating incident might have been and in the co-development of some language as an alternative to their problematic behavior. Further systems of incentives, such as planned rewards for self-mastery of behavior would be created and implemented.

In addition processing the bullying or retaliation incident with the target would occur. If deemed appropriate by the Executive Director or designee, the aggressor and target would also be brought together to process the incident. In addition any and all disciplinary actions and behavior management plans are integrated between home and school. Parents would be informed and may be supported in their efforts to support their child at home. Furthermore, reward systems developed to teach children about the natural consequences of their behavior are often generated by parents and teachers together as a means to create a holding environment for the child. In doing so, the child is then able to experience the consistency between home and school and feel safely held within the relationships in both environments.

Suspension is our way to alert students, their families, the school district and our own school community that safety has been violated.

Any major bullying incident or retaliation demonstrated by a student may be considered grounds for suspension.

1. Upon admission of a student, the school shall provide a written policy on suspensions to the parents, and the school district that placed the student. The clinical education team in addition to the parents will meet to make a determination regarding education and therapeutic recommendations as to the nature and duration of the suspension.
2. Whenever a student is suspended, the school shall immediately notify the parents and the public school responsible for the placement. Within 24 hours, the school shall send a written statement explaining the reasons for the suspension to the parents and the public school district responsible for the placement. The results of the meetings along with the suspension letter will be recorded and kept in the student's file. The Executive Director or designee will track the number and duration of student's suspension on a suspension log.
3. No student shall be sent home unless a responsible adult is available to receive the student
4. Once a student has been suspended for (3) consecutive days or (5) non-consecutive days in a school year, the school, the parents, and the public school, consistent with federal guidelines shall explore together all program modifications within the school in an attempt to prevent total suspension of the student from the program.

CTDS implements the following procedures when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days:

- a. A request is made of the student's responsible school district to convene an IEP Team meeting, which includes representation from CTDS, prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities;
- b. CTDS participates in the Team meeting; (1) to develop or review a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior and to develop or modify a behavior intervention plan; (2) to identify appropriate alternative educational setting(s); and
- c. To conduct a manifestation determination (i.e., to determine the relationship between the disability and the behavior)
- d. If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, CTDS may suspend or terminate the student consistent with policies applied to any other student in the program. The responsible school district must, however, offer an appropriate education program to the student with disabilities that may be in some other setting.
- e. If the Team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, the placing district, in coordination with CTDS, takes steps (with the consent of the parent) to modify the IEP, the behavior intervention plan, and/ or the placement.

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 Executive Director or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to the same disciplinary action as noted above.

### 3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Executive 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 Executive 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 Executive 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 Executive Director or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

## **C. Collaboration with Families**

### **A. Parent education and resources.**

At the Community Therapeutic Day School family involvement is an integral part of a child's program. We recognize that a family with a special needs child appreciates support and guidance on both an emotional and a practical level. The Community Therapeutic Day School will offer support, education and guidance for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the school. This will be accomplished through daily and weekly communication that is already established in the school's policies and procedures. Therapeutic teachers are in constant communication with parents through a daily communication notebook and weekly phone calls. In addition we offer a weekly parent support group as well as grandparent support groups and sibling support groups throughout the year. In addition, we will have resources available in the school library on bullying prevention and intervention. The Community Therapeutic Day School will also collaborate with the school's Parent Advisory Council regarding the Plan.

### **B. Notification requirements.**

Each year the Community Therapeutic Day School will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The Community Therapeutic Day School will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school will post the Plan and related information on its website.

## **D. Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation**

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, 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, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the Community Therapeutic Day School; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the Community Therapeutic Day 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 the Community Day 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.

## **E. Definitions**

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

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

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

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.

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, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

## **F. Relationship to Other Laws**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Community Therapeutic Day School, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to the school or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the Community Therapeutic Day School 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 Community Therapeutic Day School to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.