

# MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Bullying/Peer Aggression Policy

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MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BULLYING / PEER AGGRESSION POLICY  
*DRAFT 5/14/2010*

**PURPOSE** It is the goal of the Milton School Committee and the Milton Public Schools to promote a learning atmosphere for students free from all forms of bullying. Because bullying affects not only students who are targets but also those who participate and witness such behavior, it is detrimental to student learning and achievement and will not be tolerated by the Milton Public Schools.

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

**DEFINITION OF BULLYING** Bullying 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 victim that: (a) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (b) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (c) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (d) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (e) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

**DEFINITION OF CYBER-BULLYING** Cyber-bullying is 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 (a) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (b) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (a) to (g), inclusive, of 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 clauses (a) to (e), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

**SCOPE** Bullying actions will include, when appropriate, referral to a law enforcement agency. The Milton Public Schools will support this policy in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parental involvement. This policy applies to all sites and activities under the supervision and control of

the Milton Public Schools, or where it has jurisdiction under the law., including 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. The policy applies to all students, school committee members, school employees, independent contractors, school volunteers, visitors, parents and legal guardians of students, whose conduct occurs on school premises or in school-related activities, including school-related transportation.

Bullying is also 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 district, if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at school. Or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

The School Committee expects administrators to make clear to students and staff that bullying will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students, and termination for employees.

All staff members are required to report any bullying or harassment they see or learn about. The district will promptly and reasonably investigate all allegations of harassment, including bullying. The Principal or his/her designee of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment or bullying. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying, is prohibited.

Nothing in this policy is designed or intended to limit the District's authority to discipline or take remedial action under General Laws Chapter 71, §37H, or in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this policy covers the conduct. Reports of cyberbullying by electronic or other means, occurring in or out of school will be reviewed and, when a nexus to work or school exists, will prompt disciplinary action.

## PROCEDURES

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for implementation of this policy, consistent with the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 71§37O and related guidelines issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The guidelines will include, but not be limited to:

- A student complaint process,
- A reporting process for staff,
- An investigation process,
- A process for communication with parents/guardians, and,
- Record keeping and reporting

The Superintendent will publish disciplinary policies in Student Handbooks, which shall prohibit bullying and shall include the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by Chapter 71, §37O of the Laws of the

Commonwealth. Student handbooks shall include age-appropriate summaries of the student-related sections of the district's bullying prevention and intervention plan.

PREVENTION/  
INTERVENTION  
PLAN

The school district shall develop and update at least every two years a bullying prevention and intervention plan in consultation with school staff, students, parents and community members. The School Committee will provide an opportunity for public comment prior to approving this plan. The bullying prevention plan shall include: (i) descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation; (ii) clear procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians and others to report bullying or retaliation; (iii) a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report; (iv) clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation; (v) the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior; (vi) clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's needs for protection; (vii) strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about an act of bullying; (viii) procedures consistent with state and federal law for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator; provided, further, that the parents or guardians of a victim shall also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; and provided, further, that the procedures shall provide for immediate notification pursuant to regulations promulgated under this subsection by the principal or person who holds a comparable role to the local law enforcement agency when criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator; (ix) a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action; and (x) a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators and victims and for appropriate family members of said students.

PROGRAMS

The School Committee realizes that students may engage in bullying without understanding the effects of such behavior. Therefore, evidence-based, age-appropriate bullying prevention curriculum shall be delivered at the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

STAFF  
DEVELOPMENT

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall include annual professional development to build the skills of all members of the school staff to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying and to implement the bullying prevention and intervention plan. The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to (1) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (2) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (3) information regarding the complex interactions and power differential that can take place between and among the perpetrator the victim and any witnesses to the bullying; (4) research findings on bullying; (5) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and (6) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying. The school staff shall receive annual written notice of the bullying prevention and

intervention policy.

PARENT/  
GUARDIAN  
EDUCATION

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall include provisions for educating parents and guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum at each school, how they can reinforce the curriculum at home, how they can support the district's prevention and intervention plan, the dynamics of bullying and online safety and cyber-bullying.

The district shall provide to students and their parents or guardians in age appropriate terms and in the most prevalent languages of families. Annual written notice of relevant sections of the bullying prevention plan in the student handbook.

LEGAL REFERENCE: MGL General Laws Chapter 71, §37O

LEGAL REFERENCE: Massachusetts Equal Educational Opportunities Regulations, 603 CMR 26.00.

CROSS REFERENCE: Student Handbooks

**MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BULLYING/PEER AGGRESSION  
RESPONSE AND REPORTING PROCEEDURE**

**Reporting**

1. The adult should decide the seriousness of reported or witnessed incident. Children who are victims or perpetrators should be not making those judgments
2. Interview the target first, then the aggressor.
3. Do not ask to see victim in the alleged aggressor's presence, and emphasize that the victim will not be mentioned to the aggressor and will not be part of the discipline.
4. Make dealing with the aggressor(s) your job and not the victim.
5. Mediation should not be used with bullying situations

**Victim interview**

1. Affirm child's feelings, i.e. "You were right to report this. I'm glad you told me."
2. Ask the child what s/he has already attempted to do, to stop this situation.
3. Make it clear that the aggression was not his/her fault.
4. Think carefully before giving advice, as often times the targets have already tried and failed to stop this aggression by the strategies we usually suggest, i.e. walk away, and tell aggressor to stop, etc.
5. Remind the target to always report aggression.
6. Brainstorm solutions with him/her after identifying what has and has not worked in the past. Note: even solutions that seem obvious to adults may not be apparent to children, such as merely avoiding the bully.
7. Recruit peers to befriend isolated targets. Do this aggressively (that is, approach peers you think will be sympathetic and ask them deliberately to befriend the target; even temporarily, this can be a big help).

**Accused interview**

1. Identify the problem and diffuse reporting responsibility, i.e. "I have been hearing that..." "I have an Incident Report that states..." Alternatively, own reporting responsibility or attribute it to another adult, i.e., "I am disturbed by what I have been seeing..." or "Ms. So-and-so saw you..."
2. Focus more on the aggressor child's behavior than on a particular incident. For example, "I have a report here that you are calling kids names," rather than "I have a report that you called Susie Smith a bad name."
3. Provide incentives for honesty. For example, if the aggressor denies any wrongdoing, you can tell child that if s/he tells the truth about the incident you can mention his/her honesty when calling his/her parents.
4. The procedure differs somewhat, depending on whether the child who is accused of being the aggressor admits wrongdoing or not.

5. **Denial** – (be prepared for this) If there is any corroborating evidence or witnesses, tell the child that. Do not mention the victim or the witnesses by name (unless they are adults), if possible. Go to Number 8 below: “Assigning Consequences”.
  - a. If there is NO corroboration and the “aggressor” continues to deny everything – one child’s word against another’s: Tell the “aggressor” that you hope s/he is right and that nothing happened, and that you will be keeping a very close eye on the situation and so will the other adults in the school. The critical element here is that the children know there will be a response to the report even if there appears to be no immediate disciplinary action. NOTE: If the aggressor denies, regardless of whether there is corroboration, conduct an investigation. You may tell the aggressor that you will talk to him/her some more about this matter, but do not mention that you may be talking to other students, as this may result in the aggressor threatening them as well.
6. Feel free to use a non-disciplinary response at first, such as requiring the child to have a weekly “check-in” with you, so the aggressor child knows that the adults are paying particular attention to his/her behavior. Do not frame the weekly check-in as a punishment; rather, stress that you want to be sure that the child is doing well and want to hear weekly how he/she is doing.
7. **Aggressor admits wrongdoing:**
  - a. but minimizes the behavior: respond by firmly asserting that s/he may feel it is “no big deal” but that the school and the community thinks that such behaviors are indeed a big deal.
  - b. if student finally admits wrongdoing after initially denying it, acknowledge the difficulty of shifting out of denial.
8. **Consequences**
  - a. If student admits wrongdoing or an investigation leads staff to believe student was engaging in bullying behavior, student should look up consequence on the **Discipline Rubric**. Explain that consequences are not arbitrary and that any child who engages in this behavior will in fact experience the same consequence.
  - b. Principal or Vice Principal contact parent.
  - c. **Document incident** and consequence.
  - d. Principal or Vice Principal help student complete the **Think About It Form**. The sooner this is done, the more effective it will be. This step of reflection is the first in many that the student can take to change his/her aggressive behavior. Students should either write out answers to open-ended questions or be able to dictate answers to an adult who writes them down for him/her. Students must make statements that accept the negative effects of his/her behavior on others, e.g., “I hurt Sam when I called him stupid.”

\*\* Note: sharing the outcome of this incident is critical for maintaining a school climate where adults and children feel able to report such behaviors. Even if the information shared is only brief and nonspecific, such as “This is more complicated than it appears, and I can’t by law give you any more specifics,” it assures adults and children that their reporting is not being ignored. A general policy which states that “action will be taken” should never replace specific outcome reporting.

**MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Bullying/Peer Aggression**  
**Report Form**

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<b>Reporter:</b>	
<b>Date and Time of Incident:</b>	
<b>Location of Incident:</b>	
<b>Who Reported Incident:</b>	
<b>Child/Children Involved:</b>	
<b>Witnesses:</b>	
<b>Details of Incident.</b> Please check all that apply. ("Written" includes electronic communications.)	<input type="checkbox"/> careless hurtful remarks <input type="checkbox"/> physical harassment <input type="checkbox"/> verbal/written teasing <input type="checkbox"/> physical threats <input type="checkbox"/> verbal/written taunts/threats <input type="checkbox"/> physical attack <input type="checkbox"/> actively encouraging aggression <input type="checkbox"/> damage to property <input type="checkbox"/> exclusion <input type="checkbox"/> stolen property <input type="checkbox"/> fear of retaliation <input type="checkbox"/> other:
To your knowledge has this occurred before?	YES NO
Are there immediate safety or transportation needs? If yes, specify need(s) and action taken.	YES NO
If needed, describe incident or concerns in more detail.	
Parent Contacted	Date:  Phone #:
Principal Signature	

\* Please submit completed form to main office immediately.



**MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Bullying/Peer Aggression Discipline Rubric (DRAFT)**

5/13/10

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>1st time</b>	<b>2nd time</b>	<b>3rd time</b>	
Careless Hurtful Remarks	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. ** [Elementary, Middle, and High School consequence goes here ]. Consider weekly check-in.	After three Incidents go to Third Time, Written Verbal or Third Teasing.
Verbal or Written Teasing	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]	Speak privately to Offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop Individual plan.
Verbal or Written Taunts or Threats	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent.	Speak privately to Offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to Offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Three inside recesses]. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.
Encouraging Peer Aggression	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to Offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.

Taking or Damaging Someone's Property	Speak privately to Offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to Offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in..	Speak privately to Offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.
Physical Threats	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.
Physical Harassment	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	After three incidents, develop individual plan.
Physical Attacks	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Weekly check-in.	Speak privately to offending child. Complete TAIIF. Call parent. [Elementary, Middle, or High School consequence]. Consider Suspension. Weekly check-in.	After two incidents, develop Individual plan.	

\*\* [Elementary, Middle, and High School may have different consequence i.e., Office Detention]

**MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BULLYING/PEER AGGRESSION**

**THINK ABOUT IT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**What did you do?**

Please be specific and start with "I."

**What was wrong with this behavior?**

Whom did you hurt? How did you know you hurt them?

**What made you do this?**

What problem were you trying to solve? Did you want attention? Did you want to be left alone? Were you trying to have fun? Were you already mad about something?

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