



## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02186

MARY C. GORMLEY  
Superintendent of Schools  
617-696-4808/09

JOHN P. PHELAN  
Assistant Superintendent  
For Curriculum & Personnel  
617-696-4811/12

MATTHEW J. GILLIS  
School Business Administrator  
617-696-5041

To: Faculty, Staff and Parents of Milton Public Schools  
From: Mary Gormley, Superintendent  
Re: Upcoming Events/Bullying Issues  
Date: Monday, November 8, 2010

*It should come as no surprise to the parents and guardians in the Milton Public Schools that we have been actively involved in a major initiative regarding the topic of Bullying.*

*Over the past few years, bullying has become a nationally recognized issue. Legislation has been passed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that has led us to examine our policies -- and just as importantly -- to communicate our thoughts about this issue with the community.*

*We hope to keep the lines of communication open on this topic. There have been, and there will continue to be a variety of lectures, events, seminars, professional development and school-based events tied to our efforts to create a safe and harassment-free environment for our entire student body.*

*We have a very important event tomorrow night at Milton High school that will deal with this topic. We have worked very hard to pull this event together and we are asking for your help to make it a success.*

***Please make every effort to attend the Anti-Bullying presentation by Professor Greg Hall of Bentley University and several Bentley students on Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at 7 pm in the Charles C. Winchester Auditorium at Milton High School.***

*This event is one of a series of events on bullying on our school calendar. We invite you to come to as many of these events as you are able, but whether you attend all or none, please take the time to familiarize yourself with how the Milton Public Schools has approached this issue. – Mary C. Gormley*

### THE PAST:

Dealing with both bullies and their targets is not new to school districts. There is not a school in the country where the issue has not been discussed and debated. Here in Milton, we have been fortunate to have had a wonderful program in place for more than a decade.

Second Step® is a program designed for students in Grades 1-5 and has been funded by a Federal Entitlement grant, Title IV - Safe & Drug-Free Schools. The goal of this program is to create a respectful, peaceful classroom. Second Step teaches elementary students how to solve problems without anger, treat others with compassion and develop strong bonds in school. The Milton Public School system began this program almost ten years ago and we have had plenty of positive feedback from parents and teachers.

During the 2009-2010 school year, we expanded the Second Step Program to include our middle school students, with a more specific message for grades six through eight. Now in its second year, we are pleased with the progress of this initiative and hope to continue working with the Second Step Program.

For more information about Second Step, please visit this link:

<http://www.cfchildren.org/programs/ssp/overview/>

**25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186**

At Milton High School, we have had several different strategies in place to combat bullying. Our Peer Mediation Program has been highly successful, along with Student Leadership initiatives, and topic discussions in Health classes. The Milton High administration also has developed a "Social Pragmatics" class for students who are identified as being at high risk for being targets of bullying. In addition, the high school runs two anger management sessions, one for our female students and one for our male students.

Finally, it is important to note that we have always had general policies in all of our student conduct handbooks to deal with the issue of bullying.

#### THE PRESENT:

In May, 2010, Massachusetts lawmakers signed a new Anti-Bullying Law. The law gives a legal definition of bullying; addresses bullying issues both on an off school property; defines cyber-bullying; prohibits retaliation against those who report bullying; and requires both public and private schools to "develop, adhere to, and update a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention."

In anticipation of this new law our own administrative team, led by Milton High Vice Principal Alan Cron, designed a policy which would comply with the new state law. We were fortunate to have the following people serve on the Bullying Prevention Advisory Committee, including our adjustment counselors from each school -- Natalie Lang from Pierce; Brian Powers from Tucker/Glover; Rich Guarino and Kathy Sullivan from Milton High. Also, Steve Traister, Director of Health & Physical Education; and Second Step Liaisons Lisa Veldran of Pierce, Mary Downey-Tipping of Tucker, Amanda Brink of Glover; Mary Rooney of Cunningham. The committee also included Guidance Counselors Kerry O'Leary from Collicot; Dr. Karen Spaulding, Principal of Cunningham; and Alan Cron, Vice Principal of Milton High School and Chair of the committee.

The comprehensive document drafted by the committee has served as a template for many other school districts in Massachusetts. Members of the Milton School Committee voted to adopt the new Bullying/Peer Aggression Policy in June of 2010.

We encourage all parents and guardians to look at this policy which is posted on our website along with Reporting Procedures, Reporting Forms, a Discipline Rubric which outlines the steps our schools will follow when dealing with bullying issues, and a Think About It form for students to fill out.

All these documents can be found here:

<http://www.miltonps.org/bullying-peer-aggression-info.php>

In addition to our work on the new policy, we have also made every effort to inform both our students and the Milton Public School community in general about the new law, our new policy and how we have been working to create a culture in which bullying is not tolerated.

We recently invited John Halligan to speak to parents about his personal experience with bullying. Mr. Halligan lost his 13-year-old son to suicide after he was cyber-bullied by his peers. Mr. Halligan also spoke to students in Grades 6-12 about his loss and how students can help prevent such tragedies in the future.

We are also very lucky to have a relationship with Dr. Gregory Hall of Bentley University. Dr. Hall, a Milton resident, is a psychology professor with research interest in adolescent development who has lectured extensively on the effects of social media, the Internet and technology in students' lives.

This week we are pleased to present two anti-bullying programs. Designed by Bentley University Students, the *One Goal, One Community: Moving Beyond Bullying and Empowering for Life* initiative is focused on educating community members and soliciting their commitment to help change behaviors and end the culture of bullying.

As part of the effort, Bentley University students will facilitate programs for parents of elementary, middle and high school students on **Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at 7 pm**. The program will open in the Milton High School Charles Winchester Auditorium before moving to smaller interactive breakout rooms. The Bentley University students have researched a plethora of issues associated with bullying over the past two months. They will share their knowledge and personal experiences with the parents. Each session will include bullying dynamics, prevention strategies, tips for parents, the cyber world and social networking.

The following day, **Wednesday, November 10, 2010**, Bentley University students will partner with Milton student leaders to lead assemblies/rallies at each school. These rallies are designed to be upbeat and positive, delivering the message that students have the power to change the culture and end bullying. Students

will be invited to sign a pledge banner and wear a wrist band declaring their support in opposing bullying. The signed banners will be displayed in each school as a daily reminder of the students' collective effort to oppose bullying of all forms.

#### THE FUTURE:

As we mentioned earlier, our Anti-Bullying plan is not a one-event or one-week campaign. We have additional events planned throughout the school year. Among our scheduled events are:

Representatives from Bridgewater State University's MARC Program (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center) will visit Milton High on **Tuesday, November 16, 2010**. This presentation will be held during the school day for students in Grades 9 to 12 and will address Bullying/Cyber-bullying and Peer Aggression.

On **Wednesday, January 26, 2011**, we will be participating in a statewide celebration of "No Name Calling Day." This is intended to make time for activities to help replace verbal bullying with respect. The idea for "No Name Calling Day" was presented to state legislators by students from the Quashnet School in Mashpee, and it was incorporated into the Anti-Bullying legislation.

On **Thursday, February 10, 2011 at 7 pm**, we will be hosting Daniel Feeney from the Norfolk County District Attorney's office. Mr. Feeney is the Director of Juvenile Programs and will speak to parents, guardians and community members about Internet Safety, Cyber-crime and Bullying issues.

We will also be participating in a District Wide Day of Kindness on **Wednesday, April 13, 2011**.

#### INFORMATION HOTLINE

We would also like to make parents aware of our newly-established hotline. To make an anonymous report of bullying, fighting, dangerous or risky behavior, please call 617-696-4470. After prompt, dial 5444 or email: [safestudents@miltonps.org](mailto:safestudents@miltonps.org).

*The Milton Public School system is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the provision of quality educational programs for all students. The Milton Public School system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, genetic information, age or sexual orientation.*