

**BLACKSTONE VALLEY  
REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL  
HIGH SCHOOL**



**BULLYING PREVENTION  
AND  
INTERVENTION PLAN**

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The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) created the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan required under M.G.L. c. 71, s.370, in consultation with state agencies, school personnel, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties.

The Model Plan’s format parallels the draft *Behavioral Health and Public Schools Framework*.

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) has adapted the Department model to create the BVT Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The BVT Plan is available for public perusal on the BVT Website. In addition, BVT students, parents/guardians, staff, administration and the BVT School Committee receive a copy of the Plan at the start of each school year.

The Model Plan, DESE Department Publications, and the BVT Plan use the word “target” instead of “victim” and “aggressor” instead of “perpetrator”.

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## I. LEADERSHIP

*Leadership at all levels will play a critical role in developing and implementing Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans (“the Plan”) in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. Leadership should be defined by the school, depending on existing roles and responsibilities and locally identified priorities for this initiative. Leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the Plan.*

### A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

BVT organized a Steering Committee to execute the development of the BVT Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Steering Committee for the 2010/2011 school year included: Administrators Christopher Cummings and Patricia O’Connell; Academic Teachers Rosemary Quirk and Timothy Freitas; Vocational Instructors Dawn Dubois, Barre Lane, and Cynthia Collard; Counseling Staff Jacqueline Martin and Luanne Pehl; Upton Police Officer Erik Mager; and students Elizabeth Belanger, Melissa Burdick and Mollie Letendre.

BVT parents and community members were invited to attend one of three public forums to provide consultation to the Steering Committee regarding the impending plan. The dates of those meetings were October 25, 27 and November 1, 2010. The BVT School Council also reviewed the BVT Plan at their meetings on November 10 and December 8, 2010. In addition, BVT hosted two evening informational meetings regarding bullying and cyberbullying on September 21 and October 10, 2010. The District Attorney’s office presented at the first meeting and Mass Aggression Reduction Center led the second meeting.

The draft copy of the BVT Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was placed on the BVT website on November 15, 2010 for public comment which included feedback from BVT students and their parents/guardians; was presented at a faculty meeting on November 17, 2010 for general input from staff; and was introduced to the BVT School Committee for consideration on November 18, 2010. The reflective product of these postings was requested to be submitted by November 22, 2010. Said product was then reviewed by the Steering Committee and incorporated into the Plan as deemed appropriate by the committee to create a final version of the BVT Plan.

The BVT Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was submitted to the BVT School Committee on December 16, 2010 for their approval before sending to the Department.

### B. Assessing Needs and Resources

The BVT plan is the school’s blueprint for enhancing BVT’s ability to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff have assessed the adequacy of current programs; have reviewed current policies and procedures; have reviewed available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and have assessed available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This “mapping” process, suggested by the Department, was used to identify resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on data analysis, BVT has revised and/or developed policies or procedures; established partnerships with community agencies; including law enforcement; and has set priorities and will continue to do so on an annual basis.

The BVT plan has done the following to allow for initial and periodic needs assessments: 1) surveyed students, staff, parents, and guardians on school climate and school safety issues; and 2) collected and analyzed building-specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying. BVT intends to use this information to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and to influence decision-making for

prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula and in-school support services. The methods BVT has used to conduct needs assessments, including timelines and leadership roles are addressed in Chapter VII.

### C. Planning and Oversight

School Administrators will include, as part of their yearly goals submission to the School Committee, their plan to monitor and respond to Bullying Prevention and Intervention issues in their respective areas. The Administrators' proactive oversight and involvement shall be reflective of the importance this issue commands.

The BVT Assistant Superintendent/Principal and or his designee shall:

- 1) receive reports on bullying;
- 2) collect and analyze building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes;
- 3) create a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
- 4) plan for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law;
- 5) plan supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- 6) choose and implement the curricula that the school or district will use;
- 7) develop new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designate key staff to be in charge of implementation of them;
- 8) amend student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct;
- 9) lead the parent or family engagement efforts and draft parent information materials;
- 10) review and update the Plan each year or more frequently if needed;
- 11) deliver fact based presentations to the full school committee, quarterly or as necessary, to be sure all 13 members are fully aware of school happenings and protocol.

### D. Developing Priority Statements

The BVT priority statement for communicating BVT's vision in creating and implementing its bullying prevention and intervention strategies, is as follows:

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High 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. Central to the safe learning environment established at BVT is the understanding that it is everyone's responsibility to act respectfully, to model exemplary behaviors, and to challenge offensive behaviors when they occur.

## II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*DESE has stated that The Plan must reflect the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O to provide ongoing 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. The Plan should state the content and frequency of staff training and ongoing professional development as determined by the school's or district's needs, and list other topics to be included in these staff programs. The locally identified additional areas of training should be based on needs and concerns identified by school and district staff.*

*The law lists six topics that must be included in professional development. Additional topics may be identified by BVT leadership as they consider the unique needs of the BVT community.*

### A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan

BVT schedules at least seven in-service programs per school calendar year for staff professional development, of which two primarily deal with educating the staff on the issues contained in bullying and cyberbullying. BVT utilizes a Moodle Module Service for most mandatory staff trainings, including the state requirements regarding bullying and cyberbullying. New vocational and academic staff participate in a two year mentoring program which incorporates these topics. In addition, BVT uses Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) to focus on the areas of concern identified within the state guidelines for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying. BVT staff are encouraged as well to attend outside professional development programs, such as The Safe School Summit sponsored by Worcester District Attorney Joseph Early's Office.

### 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 BVT professional development is informed by research and includes information on the following six topics:

- (i) strategies to prevent bullying;
- (ii) 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.

BVT professional development also addresses 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 includes a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by BVT 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

BVT provides all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the BVT staff handbook and the code of conduct. Staff will be required to sign their receipt of the BVT Plan.

### **III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

*A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. The BVT Plan describes the strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance BVT's capacity to prevent, to intervene early, and to respond effectively to bullying, available services reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. The BVT Plan includes a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.*

#### A. Identifying Resources

The BVT Plan includes the school's process for identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. Administration continuously reviews current staffing and programs which support the creation of a positive school environment by focusing on early interventions and intensive services. Following the mapping of resources, BVT continually develops recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps.

#### B. Counseling and Other Services

The BVT plan has identified the following resources available to the school community:

- School counseling resources are school counselors, school adjustment counselors, a school psychologist, a student review team, social skills groups, special education liaisons, and a behavioral specialist.
- Scheduled enrichment classes are taught by counselors and specialized instructors who discuss special interest topics such as bullying and prevention.
- Available health resources include the BVT school nurses, the Milford Regional Hospital School Based Health Center, The Wellness Corporation, and the Upton Board of Public Health.
- The Behavioral Resource Center provides a space and services designed to address the needs of the targeted student.
- The available culturally and linguistically appropriate resources are: an Equity Specialist, an

ELL Coordinator, and ELL Teachers, a Speech and Language Pathologist, Adaptive Technology (e.g. Kindle, Kurzweil and other translation devices); and a GLBT/Multicultural Club.

- Safety Resources are: a Memorandum of Agreement with the Upton Police Department which includes a school resource officer; hall monitors, school safety officers; and round table meetings that address bullying issues.
- Vocational and Academic Instructors are available to facilitate referrals to the appropriate administrative or counseling resources.
- A safety planning team evolved as a result of the M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370.

#### 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.

BVT has inserted the following paragraph to N1 letters:

The team discussed programs in place to address anti-bullying. These programs provide elements of the school-wide **Bullying Intervention Plan** that encompasses clear procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians and others to report bullying or retaliation; provisions for anonymous reporting; clear procedures for responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation; and strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation. This is in addition to any social skill goals/benchmarks that may have been deemed necessary by the Team and included in this IEP.

In addition, BVT has added bullying as a topic to Team meeting agendas, meeting notes, additional information, and may be addressed in goals and services if applicable.

#### D. Referral to Outside Services

BVT has an established protocol for referring students and families to outside services. BVT has a contract with Riverside Community Care who provides outside counseling within the school setting as well as provides emergency mental health services. The School Counseling Department provides students and their families with a list of outside counseling agencies within the Blackstone Valley. All referrals comply with relevant laws and policies.

### IV. **ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

*The law requires each school or district to provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into BVT's curricula. Curricula must be evidence-based. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.*

## A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches

Bullying prevention curricula utilizes the current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills:
  - Mock trial experience, including preparatory lectures provided by the Worcester District Attorney's Office, using cyber bullying as a topic.
  - Moral dilemmas in literature and history using Lawrence Kohlberg theory.
  - Individual and group counseling sessions include role play related to bullying issues
- Counselor taught classes and seminars and outside programs such as Rachel's Challenge, District Attorney's Office, MARC, and Edgerety.com are used to:
  - Empower 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;
  - Help students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
  - Emphasize cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
  - Enhance students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
  - Engage students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Students will learn about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan on an annual basis during the first week of school through their academic classes. The Plan will be reinforced during scheduled class meetings.

## 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, especially those students from state and federal legally protected classes
- 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.

## V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

*To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, BVT has put in place policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur. BVT’s plan details procedures for staff reporting of incidents, communicates to students and families reporting procedures (including anonymous reports), and the procedures to be followed by the principal or designee once a report is made.*

### 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 BVT staff member is required to report immediately to the principal 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 BVT staff members, may be made anonymously. BVT will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form,<sup>1</sup> a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. BVT will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students, staff, and parents/guardians; 2) make it available in the school’s main office, the counseling office, the school nurse’s office, and other locations determined by the principal 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.

All reports of bullying are taken seriously by the BVT administration. BVT has developed an electronic Confidential Report Tracking System to monitor reports of alleged bullying. Records are maintained on reports claiming “bullying” regardless of the outcome of the investigation. Each file documents the initial report, the investigation, follow-up, and the final determination. Students and staff are identified by their status as reporter(s), target(s) or aggressor(s). The system is designed to differentiate between onetime events and multiple reports as regards individuals who come to the attention of the administration. Only the principal and other designated administrators have access to this system.

At the beginning of each school year, BVT will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents/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 principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the BVT 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 principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with BVT’s policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

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

BVT 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 principal or designee. Reports may be made

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B for Incident Reporting Form.

anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents /guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, and private ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

## B. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

### 1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal 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, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee communicates with Student Services to determine if the involved students fall within the federal or state legally protected classes to ensure that the school district is in compliance with the accommodations afforded to these students.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting 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.

### **BVT Safety Plan for Student Reporters, Witnesses, and Targets**

Once bullying has been determined:

- Principal and/or his designee meets with target(s) and addresses logistics within the building in order to minimize contact between target(s) and aggressor(s).
- Principal and/or his designee communicates with teacher(s)/instructor(s) or other staff who are directly involved with the target(s) and aggressor(s) and requests a heightened sensitivity toward these student(s) and monitoring as needed.
- Principal and/or his designee communicates with targets’ school counselor(s) and/or school adjustment counselor(s) (if applicable) to alert them to the current situation involving their student and to refer target(s) for available supports offered through Student Services.
- Principal and/or his designee advises target as to locations within the building that are designated safe zones. Target(s) are also advised what to do if approached by anyone regarding the specific bullying situation, as well as identifying a list of persons to contact.
- Principal and/or his designee addresses the bullying incident with the aggressor(s), requires aggressor(s) to stay away from the target(s), and informs aggressor(s) of potential legal actions if aggression continues.
- Principal and/or his designee communicates with parents of both parties. All parties are requested to attend a Round Table Discussion with the principal and/or his designee, select school personnel, and the school resource officer. Participation by the aggressor(s) and their parent(s)/guardian(s) is required.

- Target(s) is/are invited to participate in the round table discussion in an effort to empower said target(s) in the face of the aggressor, but their presence and that of their parent(s)/guardian(s) is strictly voluntary.
- Following the Round Table Discussion, principal and/or his designee and counselors conduct follow-up meetings with the Target(s) in order to ensure continued safety.

## 2. Obligations to Notify Others

### a. Notice to parents/guardians

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor. He/she will also notify them of the procedures for responding to incident. There may be circumstances in which the principal 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 principal 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 principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the Upton Police Department. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and the Memorandum of Agreement with the Upton Police Department. 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 principal or designee shall contact the Upton Police Department if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will consult with the School Resource Officer and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

## C. Investigation

The principal 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 principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents/guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee 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 principal or designee, and in consultation with Student Services as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter,

the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

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

#### D. Determinations

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal 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 principal 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 principal 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 principal 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/guardians must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal 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 principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, BVT uses 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 principal or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the BVT anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents/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.

##### 2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal 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 BVT's code of conduct.

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

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

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

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

## **VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

*Effective Plans will include strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of BVT to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration. The law requires BVT to include provisions for informing parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district or school including: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyberbullying. Parents and guardians must also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents/ guardians. When working with families, BVT factors the following into account: age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and their parents/guardians.*

### A. Parent Education and Resources

BVT will offer education programs for parents/guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by BVT. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the School Council, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, Athletic Parent Association and the School Committee.

### B. Notification Requirements

Each year BVT will inform parents/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. BVT will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the BVT Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents/guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents/guardians. BVT will post the Plan and related information on its website.

## VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

*The law requires each Plan to include a statement prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The statement must be included in the Plan and included in the student code of conduct, the student handbook, and the staff handbook. The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying.*

**Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:**

- (i) on BVT school grounds and property immediately adjacent to BVT school grounds, at BVT school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions, or programs whether on or off BVT school grounds, at a BVT school bus stop, on a BVT school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by BVT; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by BVT, and**
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not BVT school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by BVT, if the acts create a hostile environment at BVT for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at BVT, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of BVT.**

**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 BVT to staff any BVT non-school related activities, functions, or programs.**

## VIII. DEFINITIONS

*Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below. BVT may have added specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but has not altered their meaning or scope. The BVT Plan also includes additional definitions that are aligned with BVT policies and procedures. Appendix C contains a one page reference of pertinent definitions and reporting procedures.*

**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 materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

**Criminal harassment** is defined in M.G.L. c. 265, s.43A as whoever willingly and maliciously engages in a knowing pattern of conduct or series of acts over a period of time directed at a specific person, which seriously alarms that person and would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress. (At BVT, three or more incidents will result in a referral to the Upton Police for potential criminal investigation.)

**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.

**Harassment** at BVT is synonymous with the definition of bullying from M.G.L. c. 71, §37O for the purposes of disciplinary action, with the exception of sexual and criminal harassment which are governed by state and federal law.

**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.

**Intimidating Behavior** at BVT is 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 another student, that makes that student feel fearful and/or uncomfortable at school or that causes an interruption in the educational process. Intimidating behavior as a code within the BVT Code of Conduct is intended to identify behavior that goes beyond student on student disrespect and suggests that the behavior has the potential to fall into the category of bullying. For the purposes of the BVT Code of Conduct, three or more incidents of intimidating behavior equate to bullying as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, §37O.

**Progressive Discipline** is a behavioral management approach which utilizes a system of levels of predetermined consequences for specific offenses to maintain a safe and secure school environment. The hallmark of progressive discipline at BVT is a balance of preventative measures, respect, and common sense disciplinary values. BVT administrators and staff strive to maintain a disciplinary process which is both fair and consistent and protects the rights of all members of the BVT school community. Central to the BVT progressive discipline approach is the understanding that the disciplinary process is a dimension of the learning environment within our school. It is everyone's responsibility to act respectfully, to model exemplary behaviors, and to challenge offensive behaviors when they occur.

**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.

**Round table discussions** are gatherings of target(s), aggressor(s) and their parents/guardians with the principal and/or his designee, select school personnel, and the school resource officer to address bullying and cyberbullying incidents with the purpose of de-escalation of the situation and prevention of further incidents. Participation by target(s) is voluntary.

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

**Student on Student Disrespect** is a single incident of disrespect (e.g. name calling, using profanity, pushing/shoving) that occurs between two or more students. This type of incident does not create a consistently hostile environment or power imbalance in and of itself. Repeated incidents of student on student disrespect between the same students could be deemed as bullying.

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

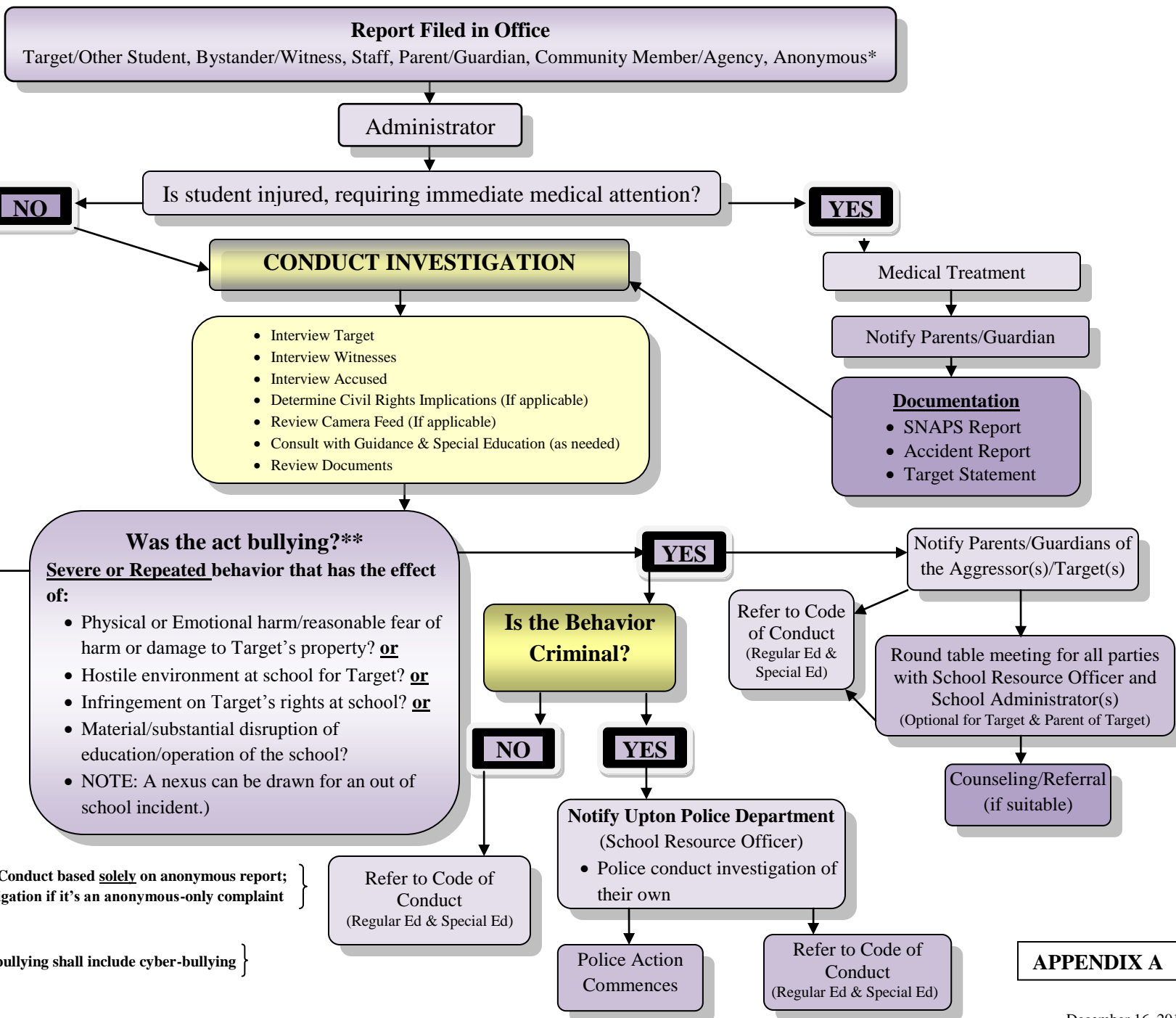
## **IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of BVT, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to BVT or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of BVT on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents BVT 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 BVT policies.

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



# Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School Bullying Incident Reporting Process



{ \*Reports do not lead to Code of Conduct based solely on anonymous report; documentation only after investigation if it's an anonymous-only complaint }

{ \*\*For purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying }

**APPENDIX A**

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

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

2. Check box to indicate whether you are the: Target of the behavior (Person who is being bullied) Reporter of the behavior (Not the target)

3. Check whether you are a: Student (ID#) Staff Member (Specify role) Parent Administrator Other: (Specify)

Your contact information/phone number:

4. If you are a student please indicate the following: Shop: Grade Level: Guidance Counselor: Liaison:

5. Information about the Incident: Name of Targeted Person: Name of Aggressor (Name caller, Bullier, Harasser, etc.): Date(s) of Incident(s): Time Incident(s) Occurred: Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible):

6. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it): Name: Student Staff Other

7. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.

8. Signature of Person Filing this Report Date: (Note: Reports may be filed anonymously)

9. Form Given to: Position: Date: Signature of Recipient: Date Received:

# Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School

## INVESTIGATION

Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

- Interviewed Aggressor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Interviewed Target Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Interviewed Witnesses Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Are there any prior documented incidents by the aggressor?  Yes  No
- If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously?  Yes  No
  - Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION ?  Yes  No

Summary of Investigation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

Finding of Bullying or Retaliation:  Yes  No Finding

Bullying  Recommended Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Retaliation \_\_\_\_\_

Contacts:

Target's Parent/Guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Aggressor's Parent/Guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_

District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Law Enforcement Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Safety Planning:

Follow-up with Target: Scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and Date when Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheduled with \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and Date when Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up with Aggressor: Scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and Date when Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheduled with \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and Date when Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Notice of Report Forwarded to Principal: (If Principal was not the Investigator) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notice of Report Forwarded to Superintendent: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in a Nutshell

### **Definitions for Escalating Behavior:**

- **Student on Student Disrespect** is a single incident of disrespect (e.g. name calling, using profanity, pushing/shoving) that occurs between two or more students. This type of incident does not create a consistently hostile environment or power imbalance in and of itself. Repeated incidents of student on student disrespect between the same students could be deemed as bullying.
- **Intimidating Behavior** at BVT is 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 another student, that makes that student feel fearful and/or uncomfortable at school or that causes an interruption in the educational process. Intimidating behavior as a code within the BVT Code of Conduct is intended to identify behavior that goes beyond student on student disrespect and suggests that the behavior has the potential to fall into the category of bullying. For the purposes of the BVT Code of Conduct, three or more incidents of intimidating behavior equate to bullying as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, §37O.
- **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:
  - v. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
  - vi. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
  - vii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
  - viii. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
  - ix. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- **Criminal harassment** is defined in M.G.L. c. 265, s.43A as whoever willingly and maliciously engages in a knowing pattern of conduct or series of acts over a period of time directed at a specific person, which seriously alarms that person and would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress. (At BVT, three or more incidents will result in a referral to the Upton Police for potential criminal investigation.)

### **Reporting Guidelines:**

**Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written.**

1. Any BVT staff person can receive reports for delivery to administration
2. Reports can also be submitted to the following locations for delivery to administration:
  - Main Office
  - Behavior Resource Center
  - Student Services Office
  - Nurse's Office

For more information and detail, The *Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* can be viewed in its entirety on the school website <http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/>