

FRANKLIN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL

2021-2022 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) created a proposed Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan required under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, in consultation with state agencies, school personnel, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties. Franklin County Technical School will adhere to the recommended model bullying plan as outlined by the DESE and make necessary adaptations to meet the unique needs of students engaged in vocational technical education.

Please note that the Franklin County Technical School in cooperation with DESE will 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.

- A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan was developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Consultation will include notice and a public comment period before the Plan is adopted by the school committee.
- B. Assessing needs and resources. The Plan is the district’s blueprint for enhancing capacity 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 the school council and staff, assessed the adequacy of current programs; reviewed current policies and procedures; reviewed available school/district based data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assessed available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This “mapping process” allowed the district to identify resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, the following plan was developed to address the specific needs of our district.

The Franklin County Technical School will have initial and periodic needs assessments: **1)** surveying students, staff, parents, and guardians on school climate and school safety issues. Data from the “Youth Risk Behavior Survey,” NEASC, Coordinated Program Reviews, Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA), Coordinated Program Reviews (CPR) or other school/district data which will assess school climate and safety; and **2)** collecting and analyzing building-specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying (e.g., focusing on identifying vulnerable populations and “hot spots” in school buildings, on school grounds, or on school buses). This information will help to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services. The Franklin County Technical School’s Bullying and Intervention Plan will describe the methods the school will use to conduct needs assessments, including timelines and leadership roles.

- C. Planning and oversight. The following district leaders are responsible for the following tasks under the Plan: **1)** Assistant Principal/Principal will receive initial reports on bullying; **2)** The Assistant Principal/Principal will collect data and analyze by building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes. This data will be shared with the School Council and FCTS Bullying Task Force. **3)** Referrals and school discipline will be tracked through the Assistant Principal/Principal’s office in conjunction with school information software (SIS). Referral forms will include, data, which identifies alleged targets and aggressors. **4)** Franklin County Technical School will participate in and plan for ongoing professional development to address bullying prevention **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 student 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.

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| 1) receiving initial reports on bullying | Assistant Principal/Dean of Students |
| 2) collecting data and analyzing by building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes | Assistant Principal/ Dean of Students |
| 3) Referrals and school discipline tracking | Assistant Principal/ Dean of Students |
| 4) planning for ongoing professional development | Vocational Coordinators & Principal and/or Director of PPS |
| 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors | Director of PPS |
| 6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use | Vocational Coordinators |
| 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 | School Council/Bullying Task Force |
| 8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct | Assistant Principal/ Dean of Students |
| 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials | Director of PPS |
| 10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year | School Council/Bullying Task Force |
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D. Priority statement.

Franklin County Technical School will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school building, 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.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Franklin County Technical School abides by 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. Franklin County Technical School's Bullying Plan includes the content and frequency of staff training and ongoing professional development as determined by the school's or district's needs. The law lists six topics that must be included in professional development. Additional topics may be identified by the school or district leadership as they consider the unique needs of the school or district community.

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 Assistant Principal and/or Principal 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 or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years. Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) will have annual staff trainings at the beginning of each school year to review and discuss the FCTS Bullying and Intervention Plan.

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 school wide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- i. developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- ii. developmentally (or age-) 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 FCTS 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/shop planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom/shop for all students.

C. Written notice to staff. FCTS will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

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 FCTS Bullying and Intervention Plan describes the strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the FCTS capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services should reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors.

A. Identifying resources. The FCTS Bullying Plan will include the following intervention services from a core outreach group for those students who have been identified as targets or aggressors: All members of the FCTS community are expected to be involved whenever there is a student who has issues or concerns regarding bullying. Aside from the staff, the following faculty have been identified as resources for students who have been targets or aggressors of bullying.

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| * Nathan May: | Director of Guidance and Pupil Personnel Services |
| * John Carey | Assistant Principal |
| * Amber Crochier | Dean of Student (Grades 9 &10) |
| * Justine Ryan | Grades 9 guidance counselor |
| * Anna McCarthy | Grades 11-12 guidance counselor |
| * Taryn Canfield | Grades 11-12 guidance counselor |
| * Michael Bombardier | Student Adjustment Counselor |
| * Tim Murphy: | School Psychologist |
| * Kellie Grybko: | School nurse and peer mediation co-director |
| * Jeremy Mailloux: | English teacher and SAGA (Sexuality and Gender Acceptance) Advisor |
| * Randy Stewart | History teacher and SAGA Advisor |
| * Joseph Gamache: | Athletic Director/physical education teacher |
| * Michael Sevene: | SRO (School Resource Officer) Montague Police |
| * Matt West: | Vocational Director |

*Brian Spadafino

Principal

*Richard Martin:

Superintendent

B. Counseling and other services. Students who have cultural or linguistic needs will have access to appropriate resources through the Franklin County Technical guidance department. The guidance department will utilize their counselors, school nurse, adjustment counselor, or appropriate teacher personnel to support students who are in need of emotional or behavioral support. Identified personnel through the guidance department will help each student in cooperation with their families to develop a safety plan for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, provide social skills training, and follow-up counseling. When deemed appropriate, peer mentors from FCTS diversity club, gay/straight alliance, will be assigned students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation. Peer Mediators and National Honor Society students may be utilized to help those who are targets of bullying, transition from classes, support them at lunch etc. The club advisors and directors will work in collaboration with guidance and administration prior to any interventions. In some cases; no contact orders, behavioral intervention plans, or social skills training will be utilized to minimize future negative interactions among peers. If school-based resources cannot meet the unique needs of a particular student, referrals for appropriate trained personnel will be made. This may include outreach to various community agencies or support services.

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. Nathan May will support students and families through the IEP process and recommend necessary strategies and interventions to help support targets of bullying within the student's IEP.

D. Referral to outside services. Students will be referred to outside counseling supports if it is deemed appropriate by the school psychologist, guidance counselors, or the principal. Guidance counselors or other identified school personnel who are working with a student and/or family on a safety plan and have determined that the situation provides the maximum supports through a referral to an outside counselor/agency, must first refer the student/family to the school psychologist within 24 hours. The school psychologist will assess the emotional and/or behavioral stability of the student, prior to an outside referral. Referrals to outside counselors/agencies will involve a meeting and communication with the student's parent/guardian, as soon as practical. After a student is referred to an outside counselor/agency, the student's guidance counselor will develop a reentry plan in cooperation with the outside counselor/agency. The guidance counselor or identified personnel working with the student and their family will strive to obtain a "sign of release" with the outside counselor/agency, which will promote ongoing dialog and communication between the student and their family with the outside counselor/agency. The sign of release should be obtained prior to a student's referral to an outside counselor/agency.

The FCTS re-entry team will consist of the student's guidance counselor, adjustment counselor, director of guidance, principal/designee, parent/guardian, student, and if possible the outside counselor or representative from the agency. The reentry information will be added within the student's safety plan. A reentry plan will be developed in coordination with the outside counselor/agency and identified FCTS personnel to provide a safe learning environment for the

student. The reentry and safety plans need to be completed as soon as practical and prior to the student returning to the normal daily schedule. If there were changes to the student's safety plan this must be communicated with appropriate staff who are involved with the student, prior to the student attending the next class. If the student is on an IEP or 504 plan and there are new recommendations from the outside counselor/agency, the student's team will need to be reconvened as soon as practical to make necessary changes.

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 the school's or district'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. The Department will publish guidelines for implementing social and emotional learning curricula by June 30, 2011. Other resources are currently available on the Department's website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/bullying/>.

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches.

The Franklin County Technical School has begun the process of implementing a bullying prevention curricula as evidenced by the following new initiatives:

* PE/Health Courses: Physical Education (PE) courses will include units of instruction targeted at helping students increase their knowledge of issues pertaining to bullying & harassment. PE course includes bullying prevention units for all grade levels. These unit helps students identify their roles and responsibilities as bystanders when another student is being targeted. Role-plays and skits help students breakthrough reluctant responses and empower them and others to take appropriate actions. Students gain valuable insights into their feelings and perceptions of the target and an understanding of the thought processes and reasons of the aggressor. Age appropriate presentations raise student awareness about forms of sexual harassment, both peer-to-peer and in dating relationships, and help them to recognize and understand the differences among flirting, sexual harassment, and abusive behavior. This course will also address the issues of sexting and cyber bullying involving multimedia communications found in social networking sites, cell phones, iPods and other electronic forms of communication. Cyber bullying and power imbalances will also be discussed. The goal is to raise awareness about the potential legal ramifications for all those involved in this type of communication. The presentation will discuss the short and long term social and emotional consequences as well as the possible school and civil liabilities and criminal penalties related to this behavior. Students will be presented and educated on elements of the bullying and prevention plan.

* Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA): The GSA club meets on a regular basis to empower students to support each other, develop self-esteem, and confidence with self-identity. Students learn how to support each other and provide appropriate interventions when they witness other students being discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. Students will be introduced to elements of the bullying and prevention plan. GSA students are active in the school environment to promote emotional safety and awareness for students.

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:

FCTS will document all incidences of student harassment and bullying and utilize appropriate responses. Positive behavioral supports and positive behavioral plans will be developed when deemed appropriate. This may include reconvening the student's IEP or 504 team to implement positive behavioral strategies.

FCTS encourages staff to build positive relationships with students through personalization and rapport building. Staff are encouraged to know and build rapport with students outside of their classrooms or shop areas.

FCTS staff teach positive behavioral health within portions of our curricula. FCTS staff model and teach pro social respectful behaviors through our peer mediation, GSA, sports teams, and various extra-curricular activities.

V. RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN BY FRANKLIN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TO ADDRESS BULLYING PREVENTION

September 2009: It has been the routine practice at FCTS to have freshmen only present on opening day of school. This practice was adopted to allow freshmen time to experience the school and their new teachers without other distractions. On this opening day, members of the administrative team and the guidance department met with freshmen in small groups to discuss school climate and solicit student input on the following topics; i.e., feeling safe in school; bullying and how to prevent it.

March 3, 2010: Presentation at FCTS by Dr. Elizabeth Englander, professor of Psychology at Bridgewater State University and expert on cyber-bullying. The presentation was sponsored by the Technology Educators Partnership of Western MA (TEP) and hosted by FCTS. This presentation was well attended by representatives from many of the local high schools, including superintendents, principals, guidance staff, technology coordinators, assistant principals and deans of students.

December 2010: Cindy Boyle, Director of Community Education and Outreach at the Northwestern District Attorney's office, conducted follow-up anti-bullying sessions for 9th and 10th grade students on two separate days.

May 2011: Cindy Boyle, Director of Community Education and Outreach at the Northwestern District Attorney's office, trained the faculty and staff on bullying and its prevention. Cindy Boyle from the district attorney's office provided the FCTS staff of teachers, custodial workers, cafeteria staff, paraprofessionals, secretaries, and support staff on the law and case studies of bullying. She provided teachers with clear guidelines and expectations for dealing with bullying in school and in the classroom.

May 2010: Four faculty members and two students attended a training sponsored by the DESE entitled "Schools as Bullying Proof Zones" at Westfield State College They returned with units on bullying and its prevention which have been incorporated into our curriculum for all grades, 9 – 12.

July 2012-13: Principal attended multi-day professional development opportunity sponsored by Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators (MSSAA) on bullying prevention. Assistant Principal attended a workshop sponsored by the DESE on bullying prevention.

April 2010, 2011, 2012: Regional & Nationally licensed and notable guest speaker Mark Mainella spoke to freshman and sophomore students about bullying and harassment.

September 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013: New freshmen students and senior mentors were the only students to attend the first day of school. A selected group of 16 seniors were trained as peer mentors to work with freshman as they transition into the school. Senior mentors were assigned to freshmen homerooms and lunches to assist freshmen with the transition to a new school. They provided freshmen directions as they moved about the building. Senior mentors were present at lunchtime to familiarize freshmen with the lunchroom procedures.

All freshmen were transported to Morse Hill Outdoor Education Center in Shutesbury for leadership training and to promote communication between peers. These students come from every public school in Franklin County and most do not know each other. Students were there for four hours working in small groups on problem solving activities. Our intent was to break down barriers in communication and begin the process of creating a cohesive group. Senior mentors facilitated the process.

School committee adopted a bullying prevention policy and an addendum to the Student Handbook on the same topic. A Task Force was formed to develop a bullying prevention plan using the DESE model plan distributed in late August of 2010.

February-June 2011, 2012, 2013: Theatre Club presented their play on discrimination and bullying to FCTS students as well as other local school districts.

May 2011 & 2012: Nationally certified guest speaker Mark Mainella is scheduled to speak to students on harassment, discrimination, and bullying.

February 2013: Chris Herren a regional and national speaker came to FCTS to speak to all students. Mr. Herren presented a powerful message on peer pressure, bullying, and the pitfalls of substance abuse.

May 2013: Theatre Club presented a play on bullying, self-esteem, and peer pressure. This hour long presentation to all grade levels and faculty concluded with a question and answer period.

Fall 2013: Assistant Principal conducted class meetings for all 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students to train them on the various forms of bullying and intimidation.

Fall 2015: Assistant Principal conducted trainings for all 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students to provide updated orientation on harassment, bullying, and reporting procedures.

Spring 2016: Director of PPS coordinated training conducted by DESE (Jeffrey Perotti, Harvard University) at FCTS for the Student Support Team, administrators, and advisors.

Fall 2017: Assistant Principal conducted trainings for all 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students to provide updated orientation on school-workplace harassment, bullying, and reporting procedures.

Spring 2018: CESK instructor and counselor conducted trainings for all 9th grade students to provide orientation on school-workplace harassment, bullying, and reporting procedures at FCTS

Summer 2021: Created a partnership with 10 other schools with the Mass in Motion Coordinator at the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments. Our aim is to contribute to policy, system, and environmental changes that will improve school climate, promote racial justice and racial equity.

VI. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, schools or districts must put in place policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures will ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

1. 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 school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the Principal/Assistant Principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. It should be noted reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form (FCTS main office & FCTS website), a voicemail box (413-863-9561 ext. 119, 115, 114, or 122), and a dedicated mailing address (82 Industrial Blvd, Turners Falls, MA. 01376). It should be noted that a single incident of bullying may not meet the definition of bullying, but may constitute disciplinary action if it violates the student code of conduct or is deemed to be harassment.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district 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, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the Assistant Principal; 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 school or district 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 Assistant Principal, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school's website, and in parent mailings.

A. Reporting by Staff:

A staff member will report immediately to the Assistant Principal or Dean of Students and/or Principal when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Assistant Principal and/or Principal does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

B. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others:

The school or district 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 Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal 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 principal or designee.

2. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation:

A. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal 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 Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary. The Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal may issue a school based, "no contact order" to all students involved in a bullying incident. The no contact order offers protection for the target and demands no contact to the target or associates.

The Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal 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. Safety plans for students who have been a target of bullying may include some of the following interventions listed below. Consideration for various interventions, which are incorporated into the target's safety plan will depend on the individual circumstances of the situation.

B. Safety Plan criteria:

1. Guidance counselor will review targets schedule with his/her guidance counselor to identify potential 'hot spots,' where the target and aggressor could possibly interact.
2. At the direction of the principal/designee, the guidance counselor will change the aggressor's schedule to provide a safe buffer zone away from the target.

3. A school based, “No Contact Order” may be issued to the aggressor with a clear directive for the aggressor to have no contact; verbally, physically, email, telephone, instant message, written, social media platform (e.g. Facebook, SnapChat, Instagram, Kick, or any other form of contact not listed above. This also includes physical gestures. This includes the added responsibility of the aggressor to notifying peer acquaintances to not have any contact with the named student (*target*).
4. A peer mentor may be assigned to the target if it is deemed appropriate by the target, their family, and the representative of the school. The purpose of the peer mentor is to provide additional support for the target during non-structured school hours.
5. In some situations, an adult staff member will be assigned to the target to shadow the target in classes or identified “hot spots.”
6. The target will have ongoing counseling support on a regular basis as agreed upon by the guidance counselor, target, and their family.
7. The target’s guidance counselor will work in collaboration with an outside counselor/agency to implement recommended school-based interventions.
8. If the student is targeted or feels uncomfortable pertaining to negative interactions with peers, the guidance conference room or guidance counselor’s office will be the designated safety zone for the target. Other agreeable safety zones may include the main office conference room. If a target goes to a safety zone, they will meet with a guidance counselor or school psychologist as soon as practical, but not to exceed 30 minutes.
9. Teachers of the target will be notified that there is a safety plan in place and their diligence in the classroom is required.
10. Teachers of the aggressor will be notified that the aggressor is to have no contact with the name student (target).
11. In some situations, the teacher of the aggressor may be asked to keep the aggressor in the classroom until the beginning of the next class, to eliminate potential interactions with the target.
12. Depending on the situation, a peer mentor or adult staff member may help transition the target to and from classes.

C. Obligations to Notify Others:

1. **Notice to parents or guardians.** Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Assistant Principal will promptly notify the parents or guardians of both the target and the aggressor of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Assistant Principal and/or Principal contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
2. **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 Assistant Principal and/or Principal first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Assistant Principal and/or Principal 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.
3. **Notice to Law Enforcement.** At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Assistant Principal and/or Principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal/designee 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 Assistant Principal and/or Principal 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 principal/designee will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer if any, and other individuals the Assistant Principal and/or Principal deems appropriate.

3. Investigation:

The Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal will promptly investigate 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 Assistant Principal, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Assistant Principal, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal and/or Principal (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 Assistant Principal, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal, other staff members as determined by the Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal and in consultation with the school counselors, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. All written investigative notes will be provided to the Assistant Principal and/or Principal 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 Assistant Principal and/or Principal will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

4. Determinations:

The Assistant Principal and/or Principal will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances following an investigatory procedure. If, after the investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal 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 Assistant Principal and/or Principal 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 Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal 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 Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal 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 Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order, school based "no contact order," other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

5. Responses to Bullying:

A. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the Assistant Principal's or Dean of Student's and/or Principal's determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school 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 Assistant Principal, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula. This may include individual or group sessions with a school counselor or in consultation with outside counselor/agencies. The purpose of the counseling for the aggressor is to help them gain an increase understanding of the social/emotional impact their actions have on the target. The purpose of counseling of the target is to help provide social/emotional support.
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel. This may include aggressors or targets participating in FCTS bullying units which are part of new courses at FCTS. Additional participation in GSA or peer mediation/mentoring clubs will be determine in cooperation with the target, their family, and the school.
- 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. This may require the parents/guardians to have regular scheduled appointments with a school counselor or outside agency.
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills. Behavior plans will identify benchmarks and goals for those students involved. The monitoring of behavior plans will be in consultation with the student's guidance or school adjustment counselor. Professional development for writing behavioral plans will be provided for those staff who are not familiar of experienced on how to write them.
- Making a referral for evaluation. In some situations, the school counselor, parent, principal/designee, or Assistant Principal, may make a referral to the director of guidance/pupil personnel services to have a student undergo an evaluation. This evaluation may include a risk assessment, WISC-IV, sentence completion, TAT, Rorschach, BASC-2, or other appropriate assessments which provides clinical data for the purpose of providing appropriate interventions based on data.

B. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Assistant Principal, Dean of Students and/or Principal determine(s) that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Assistant Principal, Dean of Students and/or Principal, 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 Franklin County Technical School'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 Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Vocational Coordinator, PPS Director and/or Principal determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

C. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal 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 administration 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. These strategies are outlined within this bullying prevention plan in the "Safety" section.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. The target will have frequent check-ins with identified school personnel to assess if bullying, harassment, or intimidation is recurring. If so, the Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Vocational Director, PPS Director and/or Principal will work with appropriate school staff to implement increased measures of protection for the target to ensure a safe learning environment.

VII. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

The Franklin County Technical School plan will include strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the district to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration. The law requires the district or school Plan to include provisions for informing parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district including: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the FCTS 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 or guardians. FCTS specific approaches to collaboration will take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and the parents.

1. Parent education and resources. The FCTS will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and

any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Booster Club, School Council, Bullying Task Force, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations, which may be developed at FCTS. Cyber bullying and internet safety information will be sent home through monthly mailings on an annual basis. Parents/guardians will also be invited to annual bullying seminars offered at FCTS.

2. Notification requirements. Each year FCTS School Council/Bullying Task Force 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. Franklin County Technical School will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. Franklin County Technical School will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VIII. 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 school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by FCTS; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the Franklin County Technical School to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

IX. DEFINITIONS

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below. Franklin County Technical School may add specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but may not alter their meaning or scope. Plans may also include additional definitions that are aligned with local policies and procedures.

Bullying: Chapter 71, Section 370: "Bullying", 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: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his

property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyberbullying.

Perpetrator: a student who engages in bullying or retaliation.

(d) Each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall develop, adhere to and update a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The consultation shall include, but not be limited to, notice and a public comment period; provided, however, that a non-public school shall only be required to give notice to and provide a comment period for families that have a child attending the school. The plan shall be updated at least biennially. These amendments became effective on July 1, 2013.

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.

X. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS:

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking appropriate 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 school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½, Ch. 222 or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.