

**Tri-County Regional  
Vocational Technical School  
District**

**Bullying Prevention and  
Intervention Plan**

**Approved by School  
Committee on  
December 15, 2010**

# Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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## **Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan LEADERSHIP**

The Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District School Committee, under the leadership of our Superintendent-Director, revised its Bullying Policy in February 2010 prior to the passage of M.G.L. c. 71, §370. The Superintendent-Director and the School Committee took a pro-active stance to ensure that our Bullying Policy would be in the student and faculty handbooks ready for distribution for the 2010-2011 school year. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan details the steps that Tri-County RVTHS has taken or will take to ensure compliance with M.G.L. c. 71, §370. The Bullying Policy is part of the overall Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the Plan). Although the work of all faculty, staff, and administrators is critical to the plan's success, the key administrators responsible for carrying out the provisions of the plan are the principal, the director of guidance, and the dean of students. The School Council, made up of parents, teachers, students, and community members, functions as the school's Bullying Prevention Committee.

**Public involvement in developing the Plan:** As required by M.G.L. c. 71, §370, this Plan was developed by teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. The September issue of TC Details, Tri-County RVTHS's monthly newsletter, reviewed our bullying protocol. The dean of students reviewed the bullying protocol with students on the first day of school. The school's website has a Notification of Bullying or Retaliation link for students and parents to access at any time. Tri-County RVTHS's policy is also outlined in both the faculty and student handbooks. Teachers and guidance personnel have been trained using materials from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC). The Plan will be reviewed by our School Council and will be presented at a parent meeting in December. After reviewing the Plan with parents, there will be a public comment period. All comments will be reviewed prior to presenting the Plan to the School Committee for approval.

**Assessment of 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, the following was researched:

- Review of new Massachusetts anti-bullying legislation:
  - review current policies and procedures
  - assess the adequacy of current programs
  - assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services.
- Items to include in existing policy.
- Grants or other sources of funding for anti-bullying efforts.
- How the school district policy can be implemented in a manner that is ongoing throughout the school year and integrated with:
  - the school's curriculum
  - the school's discipline policies, and
  - other violence prevention efforts.
- Determine which acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or cyberbullying may constitute criminal activity.

To allow for initial and periodic needs assessments, Tri-County RVTHS will: 1) develop and administer a survey to students, staff, parents, and guardians on school climate and school safety issues; 2) collect and analyze 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 behavior 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.

### **Planning and oversight:**

The following school or district leaders responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

1) receiving reports on bullying	Principal/Designee
2) collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes	School Council/ Bullying Prevention Committee (BPC) Administrators
3) creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors	Administrators, School Counselors, School Council/BPC
4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law	School Council/BPC Administrators
5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors	Administrators
6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school will use	Administrators HSTW Site Committee
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	Administrators and School Committee
8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct	Administrators
9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials	Administrators and School Counselors
10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently	School Council/ BPC

**Priority statements:** Tri-County RVTHS expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

- Tri-County RVTHS 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.
- Tri-County RVTHS 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.
- The Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the school or district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan. This Plan affords all students the same protection regardless of their status under the law.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Bullying may take a variety of forms. It is unacceptable in a school or work environment. As a result no student or employee shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying in any public educational institute.

Bullying as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 is the repeated use by one or more students of an unwelcome written, electronic, verbal or physical acts or gestures where a student or employee feels coerced, intimidated, harassed or threatened and under the circumstances (1) may cause a reasonable person to suffer physical or emotional harm, (2) may cause damage to another student's or employee's property, or (3) may cause a disruptive or hostile school environment. The behavior must interfere with an employee's ability to perform his or her duties or with a student's academic performance or ability to learn, or interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges: a) That are being offered through the school district; or b) During any educational program or activity; or c) While in school, or school equipment or property, in school vehicles, on school buses, at designated school bus stops, at school-sponsored activities, at school-sanctioned events.

Cyberbullying is done through the use of electronic communication. This means any communication through an electronic device including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager, or internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, social networks, and internet postings. Cyberbullying at school can include the use of data, telephone or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system or computer network in any public educational institute. See M.G.L. c. 71, §370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

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

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §370, 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.

## **PROHIBITION AGAINST HARASSMENT INCLUDING BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

### **Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School Policy:**

It is the policy of the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District to provide a learning and working atmosphere for students, employees and visitors free from sexual harassment, bullying, hazing, and intimidation. These terms are referenced herein as “harassment.” Such action may occur on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability or for any other reason.

It is a violation of this policy for any administrator, teacher or other employee, or any student to engage in or condone harassment in school or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of harassment.

This policy is not designed or intended to limit the school’s authority to take disciplinary action or to take remedial action when such harassment occurs out of school but has a connection to school, or is disruptive to an employee’s or student’s work or participation in school related activities.

Reports of cyber bullying by electronic or other means, occurring in or out of school will be reviewed and, when a connection to work or school exists, will result in discipline. Parents of students alleged to have engaged in cyber harassment will be invited to attend a meeting at which the activity, words or images subject to the complaint will be reviewed. A student disciplined for

cyberbullying will not be re-admitted to the regular school program until his or her parent(s) attend such meeting.

It is the responsibility of every employee, student and parent to recognize acts of harassment and take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of this school district are implemented.

Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.

The principal/designee shall be responsible for assisting employees and students seeking guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of harassment.

**Procedures:**

**Definitions—Sexual Harassment Prohibited:**

“Sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including but not limited to unwelcome comments, touching, written notes, pictures/cartoons or other inappropriate conduct, such as leering, whistling, brushing up against the body, commenting on sexual activity or body parts or any other activity that constitutes sexual harassment. Harassment has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment that takes place under any of the following circumstances:

1. When submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment, instruction, or participation in school activities or programs;
2. When submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used by the offender as the basis for making personal or academic decisions affecting the individual subjected to sexual advances; or
3. When such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual’s work, attendance at school or participation in academic or curricular activities.
4. When such conduct has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment.

**Definitions—Bullying Prohibited:**

Bullying may take a variety of forms. It is unacceptable in a school or work environment. As a result no student or employee shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber bullying in any public educational institute:

1. “Bullying and cyberbullying” means unwelcome written, electronic, verbal or physical acts or gestures where a student or employee feels coerced, intimidated, harassed or

threatened and under the circumstances (1) may cause a reasonable person to suffer physical or emotional harm, (2) may cause damage to another student's or employee's property, or (3) may cause a disruptive or hostile school environment. The behavior must interfere with an employee's ability to perform his or her duties or with a student's academic performance or ability to learn, or interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges:

- a) That are being offered through the school district; or
  - b) During any educational program or activity; or
  - c) While in school, on school equipment or property, in school vehicles, on school buses, at designated school bus stops, at school-sponsored activities, at school-sanctioned events.
2. Through the use of data, telephone or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network or any public educational institute.
  3. As used in this section, "electronic communication" means any communication through an electronic device including a telephone, cellular phone, computer or pager.

**Definitions—Hazing Prohibited:**

The term "hazing" shall mean any conduct or method of initiation, even if consented to, into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.

1. Such conduct shall include, but is not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.
2. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing and is at the scene of such activity, shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such activity to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such behavior shall be subject to discipline.

**Complaints of Harassment:**

If any Tri-County employees or students believe that they are the victims of harassment, the employee or student has the right to file a complaint with the school district, either orally or in writing. For further information about these guidelines or help with any form of harassment, consult:

Jean Mallon, Interim Principal  
Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School  
147 Pond Street  
Franklin, MA 02038

or

Karen Kennedy, Interim Director of Guidance  
Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School Guidance Office  
147 Pond Street  
Franklin, MA 02038

These individuals are also available to discuss any related concerns and to provide information about our policy on harassment and our complaint process.

**Guidelines for Investigating Harassment Claims:**

In school systems, harassment may take many forms and cross many lines. The situation may be an instance of staff member to staff member, staff member to student, student to staff member, or student to student. Guidelines for dealing with any charge of harassment are as follows:

1. By law, harassment is defined by the victim's perception in combination with objective standards or expectations. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, in order to protect the rights of both parties, it is important that the victim make it clear to the harasser that the behavior is objectionable.
2. In all charges of harassment, the victim should describe in writing the specifics of the complaint to ensure that the subsequent investigation is focused on the relevant facts. Oral and anonymous complaints will be reviewed but are inherently difficult to investigate and may not be procedurally fair; as a result no disciplinary action shall be taken on anonymous complaints unless verified by clear and convincing evidence. All other complaints will be reviewed based on a preponderance of evidence standard.
3. Any school employee that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of harassment, bullying, or intimidation shall immediately report it to the principal/designee. The principal/designee shall document any prohibited incident that is reported and confirmed, and report all incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber bullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals, to the superintendent's office as they occur.
4. A good faith report from a staff member renders the staff member immune from discipline for making a report and is considered to have been made in the course of the staff member's employment for purposes of M.G.L. c. 258. As a result, the school district shall indemnify staff members from any cause of action arising out of a good faith report of harassment of the district's subsequent actions or inaction in connection thereto.
5. Instances of harassment (student to student, staff member to student, student to staff member, and staff member to staff member) should be reported to the principal/designee.
6. Once a charge of harassment has been made, including charges of mental, emotional or physical harassment as well as threats to a person's safety or position in the school or work environment, the following course of action should be taken. (a) The principal/designee should investigate the charge through discussions with the individuals

involved. In situations involving allegations against a staff member, he/she should be informed of his/her rights to have a third party present at the time of the discussion. Parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the situation be resolved as confidentially and as quickly as the circumstances permit. (b) If the harasser and the victim are willing to discuss the matter, the principal/designee will hold a resolution meeting. During this discussion, the offending behavior should be described by the victim and administration, a request for a change in behavior should be made, and a promise should be made that the described behavior will stop. If circumstances do not permit a face-to-face meeting, the administration will present the victim's position. Follow-up verification procedures will be explained. Failure to comply after a resolution meeting will result in appropriate discipline.

7. If after a resolution meeting with the involved parties, the principal/designee determines that further disciplinary action must be taken, the following could occur: (a) In instances involving student to student or student to staff member harassment, the student may be subject to discipline including but not limited to counseling, suspension, and in appropriate cases expulsion. (b) In instances involving staff member to student and staff member to staff member harassment, findings will be reported to the superintendent for further action. Personnel action may also be initiated at this point, consistent with the applicable law and collective bargaining agreement. (c) In all cases a referral to law enforcement will be considered by the principal or superintendent based on circumstances. School officials will coordinate with the Police Department to identify a police liaison for harassment cases.

**Retaliation:**

Retaliation in any form against any person who has made or filed a complaint relating to harassment is forbidden. If it occurs, it could be considered grounds for dismissal of staff personnel and/or removal from the educational setting for a student. A referral to law enforcement may be made.

**Confidentiality:**

Reports of harassment should be kept completely confidential, consistent with necessary investigation procedures, with the goal of protecting the victim and stopping the behavior.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO  
BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

**REPORTING:**

**Complaints of Harassment**

If any Tri-County RVTHS employees or students believe that they are the victims of harassment, the employee or student has the right to file a complaint with the school district, either orally or in writing. Such complaint should be brought to the attention of: Karen Kennedy, Interim Director of Guidance, Chris Beaton, Dean of Students, or Jean Mallon, Interim Principal. Continuing Education students and teachers should direct their concerns to Marc Koczwaro,

Director of Continuing Education. These individuals are also available to discuss any related concerns and to provide information about our policy on harassment and our complaint process.

Tri-County RVTHS 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 anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. If a student knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation, he/she shall be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension. Students, parents or 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.

Once a charge of harassment has been made, including charges of mental, emotional or physical harassment as well as threats to a person's safety or position in the school or work environment, the following course of action should be taken. (a) The principal/designee should investigate the charge through discussions with the individuals involved. In situations involving allegations against a staff member, he/she should be informed of his/her rights to have a third party present at the time of the discussion. Parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the situation be resolved as confidentially and as quickly as the circumstances permit. (b) If the harasser and the victim are willing to discuss the matter, the principal/designee will hold a resolution meeting. During this discussion, the offending behavior should be described by the victim and administration, a request for a change in behavior should be made, and a promise should be made that the described behavior will stop. If circumstances do not permit a face-to-face meeting, the administration will present the victim's position. Follow-up verification procedures will be explained. Failure to comply after a resolution meeting will result in appropriate discipline.

### **Notice of Bullying or Retaliation to Parents and Guardians**

At the beginning of each school year, Tri-County RVTHS 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 principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

If bullying has been reported, Tri-County RVTHS will utilize the following procedures to notify parents and guardians:

- (1) The principal/designee shall promptly notify the parent of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator of a report of bullying or retaliation and of the school's procedures for investigating the report. If the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator attend different schools or school districts, the principal receiving the report shall inform the principal of the other student's school, who shall notify the student's parent of the report and procedures.
- (2) The principal/designee shall inform the parent of a victim of bullying or retaliation of actions that school officials will take to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation.

(3) A principal/designee's notification to a parent about a report of bullying or retaliation must comply with confidentiality requirements of Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99.

The regulations that speak to confidentiality at 603 CMR 49.07, state:

(1) A principal may not disclose information from a student record of a target or aggressor to a parent unless the information is about the parent's own child.

(2) A principal may disclose a determination of bullying or retaliation to a local law enforcement agency under 603 CMR 49.06 without the consent of a student or his or her parent. The principal shall communicate with law enforcement officials in a manner that protects the privacy of targets, student witnesses, and aggressors to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

(3) A principal may disclose student record information about a target or aggressor to appropriate parties in addition to law enforcement in connection with a health or safety emergency, if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals as provided in 603 CMR 23.07(4)(e) and 34 CFR 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36.603 CMR 49.07(3). This is limited to instances in which the principal has determined there is an immediate and significant threat to the health or safety of the student or other individuals. It is limited to the period of emergency and does not allow for blanket disclosure of student record information. The principal must document the disclosures and the reasons that the principal determined that a health or safety emergency exists.

Each case will present different circumstances requiring an exercise of judgment as to the disclosure of information to or about a perpetrator or a target. The issue is not susceptible to a one size fits all approach.

### **Notice to Law Enforcement Agency**

1. Upon receipt and review of a report of bullying or retaliation, the principal/designee shall make a preliminary determination whether to notify the local law enforcement agency of the reported incident. The principal/designee shall notify the law enforcement agency if he/she has a reasonable basis to believe that the incident may result in criminal charges against the alleged perpetrator. The principal/designee shall, consistent with school policy and procedure, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and such other individuals the principal/designee deems appropriate in making such determination.

(a) If the principal/designee decides to notify the local law enforcement agency, the principal/designee shall document the reasons for the decision and immediately contact the local law enforcement agency to discuss the incident and the law enforcement agency's involvement. Nothing in this section shall prevent the principal/designee from taking appropriate disciplinary or other action pursuant to school policy and state law.

- (b) If the principal/designee decides not to notify the local law enforcement agency, or the local law enforcement agency determines that its involvement is not necessary under the circumstances, the principal/designee shall respond to the incident of bullying or retaliation as provided in the bullying prevention and intervention plan. If the principal/designee subsequently determines facts that cause him or her to believe that the perpetrator's conduct may be criminal, the principal/designee shall notify the local law enforcement agency.
2. The principal/designee shall notify the local law enforcement agency of a report of bullying or retaliation consistent with 603 CMR 49.06(1) if bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21.

### **COUNSELING STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CREATING SAFETY PLANS FOR TARGETS/AGGRESSORS/WITNESSES**

If a student feels they are being bullied, either at school or some form of cyberbullying, his/her first step is to report it to the principal, guidance department, or the dean of students.

Referrals of bullying may be reported from victims, friends of victims, parents, teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, the principal, guidance department staff, or the dean of students. Reporting may be done in person or over the phone. The person reporting the incident will need to fill out the Tri-County Incident Reporting Form. All of the above mentioned departments will use the same schoolwide accepted form. If the bullying/harassment is electronic, students are asked to save and bring in all electronic material to be reviewed. All reports will be reviewed to determine what further action needs to be taken.

To make a determination if harassment, bullying, or retaliation has occurred, the following protocol will be followed:

1. Review the student's written statement.
2. Conduct an investigation. This includes interviewing the target, aggressor, and witnesses. Written statements will be taken from students and/or adults.
3. The dean of students and the director of guidance will review statements to determine consequences based on the student handbook.
4. Depending on the severity of the incident, this may include meeting with each student individually or meeting with both students simultaneously in an attempt to end the bullying. If a student meeting is not enough to end the bullying, other, more serious consequences are laid out in the student handbook. Consequences will be communicated to parents of the target and the aggressor.
5. Safety plans will be developed for the target and/or aggressor if the need arises. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or 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.

6. The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, pre-determining seating arrangements for this student in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the student; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to this person. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

If both the dean of students and the principal make a determination to bring in the Franklin Police Department, they will follow the Notice to Law Enforcement Agency Policy outlined in this plan.

### **BULLYING, HARRASSMENT, AND TEASING AS RELATED TO STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL SKILLS DEFICITS, INCLUDING THOSE ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM**

There are two primary areas to target:

- 1) Response to bullying and harassment
- 2) Avoidance of bullying and harassment

Response to bullying and harassment has been outlined in the previous section.

Avoidance of bullying and harassment involves the building of social skills which allow students to fit in more comfortably with their peers and therefore become less likely to be targets of bullying. Response to harassment involves knowing what steps to take when being harassed.

The school adjustment counselor/social worker will identify students with social skills deficits with information from the former school, parent input, and teacher input. For those students with IEP and/or 504 plans that indicate social skills deficits which make them vulnerable to bullying, the counselors will expand the counseling goal to address proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Various resources will be used to address building social skills, avoidance of harassment, and how to respond to bullying.

### **TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

M.G.L. c. 71, §370 requires the district 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. At the beginning of the school year, the director of guidance presented a content overview of the new Anti-Bullying Laws and Regulations and how they have been implemented at Tri-County RVTHS. In December, the Plan will be presented to faculty and staff followed by a workshop on Bullying Prevention and Intervention. In April, Dr. Englander, from MARC will discuss bullying, cyberbullying, prevention and interventions. She will offer additional insights on reporting, classroom procedures, and signs of retaliation. All of the above mentioned personnel will be included in one or more of the trainings.

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, § 370, the content of schoolwide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development. Tri-County RVTHS's Special Education Team Chairs have participated in specialized training to better understand the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71 §370.

Additional areas identified by the school or district 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;
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

Tri-County RVTHS will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in both the faculty and student handbooks and on the Tri-County RVTHS website.

In addition to annual written notice, annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school.

### **ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

- A. **Identifying resources:** A variety of personnel including the superintendent, principal, dean of students, director of special education, academic coordinator and vocational director, two special education team chairs, school social worker, school adjustment counselor, guidance counselors, nurses, teachers, special educators, related service providers, and support staff work together to support the creation of a positive school environment within the Tri-County School District.

Tri-County RVTHS has 960 students. There is a superintendent, school business manager, director of technology, principal, dean of students, academic coordinator, vocational director, director of special education, two special education team chairs, director of cooperative education, director of continuing education, director of facilities management, director of guidance, four guidance counselors, one adjustment counselor, two social workers, and two full time nurses. On a weekly basis, the district's administrative team meets to discuss and make decisions and share resources around relevant school-based concerns and initiatives, instructional practices, curriculum implementation, and services and interventions for students.

Tri-County RVTHS has a fully developed emergency plan which is updated annually, and works closely with school resource officers to review school safety procedures with school staff and students. The school resource officer is available to participate in school-wide presentations or initiatives which focus on school safety, making healthy choices, and other relevant topics.

- B. **Counseling and other services:** Tri-County RVTHS's school adjustment counselor/social worker offers services to all students. They may work with students individually or in small groups to address issues which primarily impact them in the school setting. They interface as needed with outside service providers, law enforcement, parents, and social services to address student and family needs and to provide referrals for families for outside services as appropriate. They identify

students who require supports around social skills and pragmatics in individual and small group settings and help to develop safety plans for students who have been the targets of bullying and to offer bullying prevention, education programs and intervention programs for targets and aggressors.

Guidance counselors assist students with their academic, vocational, and social concerns. When needed, guidance counselors assist in crisis interventions, safety planning, communication with parents and outside service agencies, and referral to community-based agencies for needed services for students and families. Guidance counselors also assist students with post-secondary school options, transitional services, academic course and shop selections. It is vitally important that a student have at least one specific person in school to whom he/she can turn for assistance. The student's guidance counselor serves in this capacity.

Whenever necessary, counselors work with teachers, administrators, parents and students to develop individual behavioral intervention plans and other supports to assist with student success.

For parents/families whose primary language of the home is not English, the school district provides translations of written documents and communications on the district's website. The district makes arrangements for a translator to be present at a school meeting to assist with translation for parents/guardians if needed.

- 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.
- D. **Referral to outside services:** At Tri-County RVTHS, referrals for students to outside services are determined on a case-by-case basis.

### ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The law requires each school or district to provide age-appropriate instruction in bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the school'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. Tri-County's High Schools That Work (HSTW) Curriculum Committee will develop a plan to implement age-appropriate curriculum by grade level. The Curriculum Committee will look at inclusion in English (grade 9), Health (grade 10), and History (grades 11 and 12). Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- Emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Plan. At the start of each school year, the Plan will be reviewed with students during grade level assemblies.

Through our Positive Attitudes Toward Work Success (PAWS) Program, advisors and students have been reviewing case studies designed to elicit discussion and allow for instruction on ways to recognize and handle bullying situations.

Each year, a group of students participates in the Norfolk District Attorney's Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program. This program helps develop skills in students to help prevent bullying.

In addition to curriculum interventions and explicit classroom instruction, the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District offers extracurricular clubs which raise awareness and educate students on the impact of bullying.

Extracurricular clubs include:

- Non-Traditional Vocational Support Program
- Teens Against Ignorance (Gay Straight Alliance Club)

At the beginning of the school year, Tri-County RVTHS had all activity, sport, and club advisors read the Anti-Hazing law and sign a statement of acknowledgement with their members. Advisors used this opportunity to also discuss and review Tri-County RVTHS's policies on bullying prevention.

## **COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

Tri-County RVTHS will engage and collaborate with student's families in order to increase the capacity of the school or district to prevent and respond to bullying. Parents, guardians and students have access to the Tri-County RVTHS Bullying Policy written in the student handbook. Parents and guardians will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. The Plan will be

posted and updated each year on the school's website.

- A. Parent education and resources. Tri-County RVTHS will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula. In December, parents were invited to Tri-County RVTHS to review the plan and have time for questions and comments. Parents will be invited back in April when Dr. Englander, from MARC, will discuss bullying, online safety and cyberbullying, prevention strategies, bullying dynamics, reinforcing the plan at home, and what parents need to know. Local law enforcement personnel will also provide parent workshops on bullying prevention and intervention. The grade specific bullying curriculum, once developed and approved during the 2010-2011 school year, will be posted on the Tri-County website. The curriculum will also be reviewed during the fall 2011 parent orientation.
- B. Notification requirements. Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the antibullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the plan and the school's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school will post the plan and related information on its website.

### **NETWORK AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS**

The Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District provides technology resources to its students for educational purposes. The goal in providing these resources is to promote educational excellence in Tri-County by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication with the support and supervision of the faculty and administration. The use of technology is a privilege, not a right.

With access to computers and people all over the world comes the potential availability of material that may not be of value in the context of the school setting. Tri-County firmly believes that the value of information, interaction, and the available research capabilities outweighs the possibility that students may obtain materials not consistent with the educational goals of the district.

The Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School District expects that all students use the computers and computer networks in a responsible, ethical and respectful manner. This policy intends to clarify these expectations. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, a loss of computer privileges, and if appropriate, legal action.

The Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School District will cooperate with local, state or federal officials conducting an investigation related to any allegedly illegal activities conducted through the Tri-County computer network. Further, any work on school computers generates an electronic record that may be subject to public disclosure.

Students may not use personal laptop computers in school. Students who use school assistive technology devices must turn in the device at the end of each school year or upon request by a school administrator. Failure to do so, or damage or loss of such device will result in the

student being required to pay replacement costs.

Users are expected to abide by the following guidelines for acceptable use of technology resources including the Internet. Users are personally responsible for their actions in accessing and using the school's computer resources.

- Computers, peripherals, and other technologies, such as personal assistants, are to be used for legitimate educational activities.
- Use the Internet only to access educationally relevant materials. Use of "remote proxies" in an attempt to visit blocked web sites is a violation of this policy.
- Illegal activities, including violation of copyright or other contracts, and unauthorized access including "hacking," are strictly forbidden.
- Respect the rights of copyright owners and do not plagiarize work that you find on the Internet.
- Cite your sources. The MLA style for electronic sources is recommended.  
<http://www.mla.org>
- Use appropriate language and do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
- Do not participate in "chat rooms" or "instant messaging."
- Do not knowingly post or forward any information that is not true.
- Do not post private information about another person or post personal communications without the author's consent.
- Do not send any material that is likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients.
- Do not reveal your personal address or phone number or the personal address or phone number of other students, faculty, or administration.
- Do not trespass into anyone else's files, folders, or work.
- Do not share your personal account with anyone or leave the account open or unattended.
- Do not use an account assigned to another user.
- Do not attempt to download or install any software.
- Do not do anything to damage any computer, software, system, or service that you are using and never send anyone else a file or command that may damage theirs.
- Network storage areas may be reviewed by network administrators to maintain system integrity and to ensure that the students are using the system responsibly.
- Computer storage space is not private and contents may be viewed at any time.

- Students are not allowed to use teacher computers at any time.

### **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 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 §37H1/2, 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.