

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS) created the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”) required under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. The Plan’s format parallels the draft Model Bullying and Intervention Plan that was provided as a framework for schools by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. LEADERSHIP.....	2
II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	4
III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES.....	5
IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES.....	6
V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION.....	6
VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES.....	10
VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION.....	11
VIII. DEFINITIONS.....	11
IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.....	12

APPENDIX A: BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

HCCPS believes that the value our school places on nurturing and sustaining our community is reflected in many of our daily activities, our school wide celebrations and the relationships we build throughout the year. We believe these efforts contribute to increased school engagement, understanding and respect for the rights of all individuals and groups and a safe, secure and positive school climate and culture. As such, we expect that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

HCCPS 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.

We understand that, for a variety of reasons, certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. HCCPS will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

We 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 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and HCCPS 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.

I. LEADERSHIP

At all levels, Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School School's Bullying Intervention and Prevention Team (BIP Team), which includes the administrative, education and community coordinators, school counselor and nurse, will play a critical role in creating and implementing our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan, in the context of other whole school and community efforts, is to promote a positive school climate. These leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and in promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and differences. Leadership is responsible for setting priorities.

- A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, this Plan was developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, students, parents, and guardians. Bullying prevention and intervention is on-going in the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School. In January, 2008, faculty and staff in the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School participated in a half day workshop discussing practices and problems regarding student behavior, including bullying, within our school. Meetings with staff, teachers and parents/guardians were held throughout the fall of 2010 for the purpose of hearing feedback to the proposed draft and hearing concerns that need to be incorporated into the final document. Parent meetings were held on October 21 and November 18, 2010, with notice provided in the school calendar distributed in the summer of 2010 and in weekly newsletters throughout the fall. Management Team (comprised of staff representatives, administration and parent representatives) gave input at its November and December meetings. Domain Council (comprised of 2 officers of the Board of Trustees and 3 administrators) were active in development of this plan throughout the fall of 2010. The professional development day, on November 12, 2010, involved the entire school staff in policy development. These meetings were all held before the Board of Trustees meeting on Dec 15, 2010 where the plan was adopted by consensus.
- B. Assessing needs and resources. Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School conducted a student survey in grades K–8 in 2008. The results of the survey informed decision-making related to professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services. In order to continue to gather information related to school climate and school safety issues surveys will be administered to students on a bi- annual basis. The information will be collected and analyzed and specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying will be examined. This information will continue to help identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will continue to inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate anti-bullying curricula, and in-school support services. The student survey will be coordinated with the annual parent satisfaction survey, which constitutes another source of data.

- C. Planning and oversight. The BIP Team is comprised of HCCPS's 3 coordinators, the school counselor and nurse. The school's technology coordinator is adjunct and involved when addressing cyber concerns. The following positions are responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:
- 1) receiving reports on bullying- administrative or education coordinator ;
 - 2) collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes- BIP Team ;
 - 3) creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors- counselor and administrative or education coordinator;
 - 4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law- education coordinator;
 - 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors- counselor and education coordinator;
 - 6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use- counselor and education coordinator;
 - 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- BIP Team;
 - 8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct- 3 Coordinators;
 - 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials- Community Coordinator; and
 - 10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently- BIP Team.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School will provide on-going professional development as outlined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O. Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School recognizes the importance of providing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, and paraprofessionals.

A. Annual staff training. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the administrative or education coordinator 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.

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

1. age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
2. age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
3. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
4. information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
5. information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
6. 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 may be identified by the school for professional development in the future. HCCPS will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by incorporating it in the Employee Handbook and posting it on the HCCPS website.

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.

A. Identifying resources. The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School has a number of in-house resources that are available to assist targets, aggressors and their families. Some Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School resources include but are not limited to the following:

- School Counselor
- School Nurse
- Education Coordinator
- Administrative Coordinator

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School process for identifying existing and needed resources will occur during child study meetings. Resources will be identified based on the individual needs of students.

B. Counseling and other services. Some tools that HCCPS uses as resources in assisting aggressors and targets may include but are not limited to: behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula or counseling. Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School also makes external referrals for students and families to outside services based on the individual needs of students. Families and students have access to counseling and service information via our in-school counselor. This assistance helps students and families access appropriate and timely services. Referrals may be made to the following list (not inclusive):

- Northampton Children's Clinic
- ServiceNet
- REACH Program
- James Levine Associates, PC
- Additional resources are made available for use by school counselor.

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 that 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.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Activities that build a respectful and cooperative school environment

- Buddy classrooms which pair older and younger students
- Weekly "All School " gathering which reinforces our sense of community
- Mixed age recess and lunch rooms
- Mixed age "mini-courses"
- "Link families" for new families joining the school community
- Weekly community service project with elder nursing home residents

B. Specific bullying prevention approaches. 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 cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference; and providing relevant information about the bullying prevention and intervention plan.

C. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment.

These approaches underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

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

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

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school member is required to report immediately to the administrative or education coordinator any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school staff members, may be made anonymously. Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School have made a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, mailing address, and an email address.

1. See Appendix A for Incident Reporting Form.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. HCCPS 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 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 Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School will provide the school community, including 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 administrative or education coordinator, will be incorporated in family and staff handbooks and on the school website.

2. Reporting by Staff.

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

3. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others.

The school 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 administrative or education coordinator. Reports 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 administrative or education coordinator.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

1. Safety.

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the administrative or education coordinator 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 are not limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom and at lunch; 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 administrative or education coordinator will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The administrative or education coordinator 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.

2. Obligations to Notify Others.

a. Notice to Parents or Guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the administrative or education coordinator will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the administrative or education coordinator contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the administrative or education coordinator first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the administrative or education coordinator of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the administrative or education coordinator has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the administrative or education coordinator 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 administrative or education coordinator 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 coordinator will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school policies and procedures, consult with other individuals the administrative or education coordinator deems appropriate.

C. Investigation. The administrative or education coordinator will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

If a complaint involves either of the coordinators the investigation will be coordinated by the president of the Board of Trustees.

During the investigation the administrative or education coordinator will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The administrative or education coordinator (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 administrative or education coordinator or designee and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the administrative or education coordinator will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The administrative or education coordinator will maintain a written record of the investigation. If necessary, the administrative or education coordinator will consult with legal counsel about the investigation. Parents/guardians of both the target and aggressor will be notified within 3 school days of the investigation results. If additional time is required to conduct the investigation, this will be communicated to the parent/guardian (s) and no more than two such extensions shall be permitted under this policy.

D. Determinations. The administrative or education coordinator will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the administrative or education coordinator 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 administrative or education coordinator 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 administrative or education coordinator may choose to consult with the student's 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 administrative or education coordinator 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 will comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the administrative or education coordinator cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior through Skills-Building.

Upon the administrative or education coordinator determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that HCCPS 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).

Skills-Building approaches that the administrative or education coordinator may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying message and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills;
- making a referral for evaluation.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action.

If the administrative or education coordinator decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the administrative or education coordinator, 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 this Plan and with the school's code of conduct. If the administrative or education coordinator determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

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.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others.

The administrative or education coordinator will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the administrative or education coordinator may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the administrative or education coordinator will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the administrative or education coordinator will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent Involvement. HCCPS's approach to bullying prevention starts with building and sustaining a respectful, inclusive community of families. As such parents are involved in all aspect of the school. Throughout the year families plan and participate in school wide community building activities and events. We meet as a community regularly to discuss educational and social issues, formally and informally. Two education sessions, specific to bullying, were held in the fall of 2010. In addition, the HCCPS Management Team composed of administrative, teaching, and parent representatives, meets monthly to address any issues that cross school and home and has reviewed this Plan.

B. Notification requirements. Each year HCCPS will inform parents/ guardians of age-appropriate work being done in classrooms around social relations and anti-bullying. The school will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the HCCPS 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 Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, that 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 a school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a 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, 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 school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

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

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

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, directed at a target that:

- 1) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- 2) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- 3) creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- 4) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- 5) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying incidents must meet the following criteria:

- 1) There must be an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the targeted student.
- 2) The behavior is unfair and one-sided and involves a student hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose.

3) The behavior is usually repeated.

Bullying may involve direct (face-to-face) behavior, or indirect (behind-the-back) behavior. It includes verbal, nonverbal, written, and/or electronic communication and may involve, but is not limited to:

- 1) physical violence
- 2) unwanted teasing
- 3) name-calling
- 4) threatening or intimidating behavior
- 5) exclusion or shunning
- 6) gossiping/spreading rumors
- 7) stealing or damaging property
- 8) harassment
- 9) retaliation

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, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in this 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 policies.

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