

## Students

### Bullying –Safe School Climate Plan

The Capitol Region Education Council is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and CREC's Safe School Climate Plan, CREC expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on 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 CREC; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by CREC.

CREC also prohibits any form of bullying outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including recommendation for expulsion, in accordance with CREC's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law. CREC does not expel students. CREC may recommend that the local board of education enrolling the student in a CREC program expel a student in accordance with the law.

For purposes of this policy, "**Bullying**" means (A) the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or (B) a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:

- 1) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- 2) places such student 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 such student;
- 4) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
- 5) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

For purposes of this policy, "**Cyberbullying**" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

For purposes of this policy, “**Teen dating violence**” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

Consistent with the requirements under state law, the CREC Council authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in schools. As provided by state law, such Safe School Climate Plan shall include, but not be limited to, provisions which:

- 1) enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make such reports;
- 2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence;
- 3) require school employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employees witness or receive a report of bullying or teen dating violence, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;
- 4) require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this policy and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
- 5) require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- 6) include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;
- 7) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence;
- 8) require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation; such notification shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;

- 9) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed and the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;
- 10) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence to a meeting to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school; and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a separate and distinct meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 11) establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying or teen dating violence in such school; and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence in such school, make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education, in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
- 12) direct the development of case-by-case interventions, that may include both counseling and discipline, for addressing repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying or teen dating violence incidents by the same individual;
- 13) prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 14) direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 15) require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or designee believes that any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct;
- 16) prohibit bullying and teen dating violence (A) on 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 CREC, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by CREC, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

- 17) require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
- 18) require that all school employees annually complete the training described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220a.

Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and CREC's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

The CREC Council shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to this policy and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review and approval. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Department of Education, CREC shall make such plan available on CREC's website as well as on the website of each CREC school or program and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in CREC's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

Legal References:

Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145a

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145o

Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-220a

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-222g Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-222h

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Public Act 14-172 *An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities through Education and Ensuring Safe School Climates.*

Public Act 14-234 *An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault*

Public Act 14-232 *An Act Concerning The Review and Approval of Safe School Climate Plans by the Department of Education*

Policy adopted: June 18, 2003

Revised: September 19, 2007

Revised: June 17, 2009

Revised: November 16, 2011

Revised: March, 18, 2015

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL

Hartford, Connecticut

## Safe School Climate Plan

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) is committed to creating and maintaining a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe educational environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, CREC has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan, consistent with state law and CREC Policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying, and teen dating violence and sets forth CREC's expectations for creating a safe and positive school climate.

Bullying and teen dating violence are strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or recommendation for expulsion from school. CREC's commitment to addressing bullying and teen dating violence, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a positive school climate in which such behavior will not be tolerated by students or school staff.

### I. Prohibition Against Bullying, Teen Dating Violence and Retaliation

- A. CREC expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior or teen dating violence on 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 CREC; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by CREC.
- B. CREC also prohibits any form of bullying behavior or teen dating violence outside of the school setting if such behavior (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such behavior was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such behavior was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
- C. In addition to prohibiting student acts which constitute bullying or teen dating violence, CREC also prohibits discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence.
- D. Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence in violation of CREC Policy and the Safe School Climate Plan shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including recommendation for expulsion, in accordance with CREC's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

### II. Definitions

- A. **"Bullying"** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student attending school in the same district that:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
  2. places such student 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 such student;
  4. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
  5. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- B. Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.
- C. "**Cyberbullying**" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.
- D. "**Teen dating violence**" means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship
- E. "**Electronic communication**" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo-optical system;
- F. "**Hostile environment**" means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;
- G. "**Mobile electronic device**" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;

- H. **"Outside of the school setting"** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.
- I. **"Prevention and intervention strategy"** may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying or teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees, (6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, and (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.
- J. **"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.
- K. **"School employee"** means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.
- L. **"School-Sponsored Activity"** shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Education.

#### IV. Leadership and Administrative Responsibilities

##### A. Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent shall appoint, from existing school district staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator ("Coordinator"). The Coordinator shall:

1. be responsible for implementing the district's Safe School Climate Plan ("Plan");

2. collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the CREC, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying in district schools;
3. provide data and information, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education regarding bullying;
4. meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence in the school district and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Plan.

**B. Safe School Climate Specialist**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the principal of each school (or principal's designee) shall serve as the Safe School Climate Specialist. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying and teen dating violence and act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying and teen dating violence in the school.

**V. Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan**

- A. For the school year commencing July 1, 2012 and each school year thereafter, the Principal of each school shall establish a committee or designate at least one existing committee ("Committee") in the school to be responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence in the school. Such committee shall include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, as appointed by the school principal.
- B. The Committee shall: 1) receive copies of completed reports following bullying and teen dating violence investigations; 2) identify and address patterns of bullying and teen dating violence among students in the school; 3) review and amend school policies relating to bullying and teen dating violence; 4) review and make recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the Safe School Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school; 5) educate students, school employees and parents/guardians on issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence; 6) collaborate with the Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and teen dating violence; 7) implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan, regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying and 8) perform any other duties as determined by the Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and teen dating violence.
- C. Any parent/guardian serving as a member of the Committee shall not participate in any activities which may compromise the confidentiality of any student, including, but not limited to receiving copies of investigation reports, or identifying or addressing patterns of bullying or teen dating violence among students in the school.



- D. The CREC Council shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to CREC policy and submit such plan to the Department of Education for review and approval. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Department of Education, CREC shall make such plan available on CREC's website and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

## VI. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Complaints

- A. Students and parents (or guardians of students) may file written reports of bullying or teen dating violence. Written reports of bullying or teen dating violence shall be reasonably specific as to the basis for the complaint, including the time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of incidents, the target of the suspected bullying or teen dating violence, and the names of potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any building administrator and/or the Safe School Climate Specialist (i.e. building principal), and all reports shall be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with this Plan.
- B. Students may make anonymous reports of bullying or teen dating violence to any school employee. Students may also request anonymity when making a report, even if the student's identity is known to the school employee. In cases where a student requests anonymity, the Safe School Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall meet with the student (if the student's identity is known) to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact that maintaining the anonymity of the complainant may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action. All anonymous reports shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that does not disclose the source of the report, and is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying or teen dating violence. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- C. School employees who witness acts or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence shall orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, **not later than one (1) school day** after such school employees witness or receive a report of bullying or teen dating violence. The school employees shall then file a **written report not later than two (2) school days** after making such oral report.
- D. The Safe School Specialist shall be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of bullying or teen dating violence; shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or teen dating violence; and shall ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports; and that the parents or guardians

of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced. In order to allow the district to adequately investigate complaints filed by a student or parent/guardian, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied or subjected to teen dating violence should be asked to provide consent to permit the release of that student's name in connection with the investigation process, unless the student and/or parent has requested anonymity.

- E. In investigating reports of bullying or teen dating violence, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The Safe School Climate Specialist will interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

## **VII. Responding to Verified Acts**

- A. Following investigation, if acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the students against whom such acts were directed as well as the parents or guardians of the students who commit such acts of the finding **not later than forty-eight hours** after the investigation is completed. This notification shall include a description of the school's response to the acts of bullying or teen dating violence. In providing such notification, however, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of other students, including the perpetrator of such bullying or teen dating violence. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian's own child, may not be disclosed, except as provided by law.
- B. In any instance in which bullying or teen dating violence is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also invite the parents or guardians of the student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardian of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student/victim and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence. The invitation may be made simultaneous with the notification described above in Section VII.A. The purpose of the meeting is to communicate to parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student involved the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence. Separate meetings shall be held with the respective parents.
- C. If bullying or teen dating violence is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an

act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed. Such support plan will include safety measures to protect against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence.

- D. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. The written intervention plan may include counseling, discipline and other appropriate remedial actions as determined by the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee, and may also incorporate a student safety support plan, as appropriate.
- E. Notice to Law Enforcement

If the Principal of a school (or his/her designee) reasonably believes that any act of bullying or teen dating violence constitutes a criminal offense, he/she shall notify appropriate law enforcement. Notice shall be consistent with CREC's obligations under state and federal law and CREC policy regarding the disclosure of personally identifiable student information. In making this determination, the Principal or his/her designee, may consult with the school resource office, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

- F. If a bullying or teen dating violence complaint raises concern about discrimination or harassment on the basis of a legally protected classifications (such as race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability), the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also coordinate any investigation with other appropriate personnel within the district as appropriate (e.g. Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator etc.)

### **VIII. Documentation and Maintenance of Log**

- A. Each school shall maintain written reports of bullying and teen dating violence, along with supporting documentation received and/or created as a result of investigations, consistent with CREC's obligations under state and federal law. Any educational record containing personally identifiable student information pertaining to an individual student shall be maintained in a confidential manner, and shall not be disclosed to third parties without written prior written consent of a parent, guardian or eligible student, except as permitted under CREC policy and state and federal law.
- B. The Principal of each school shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying and teen dating violence in the school and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Consistent with district obligations under state and federal law regarding student privacy, the log shall not contain any personally identifiable student information, or any information that alone or in combination would allow a reasonable person in the school community to identify the students involved. Accordingly, the log should be limited to basic information such as the number of verified acts, name of school and/or grade level and relevant date. Given that any determination of bullying involves repeated acts, each investigation that results in a verified act of bullying for that school year shall be tallied as one verified

- act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of each report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of bullying and teen dating violence in each school and shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including, but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.
- C. The Principal of each school shall report the number of verified acts of bullying in the school annually to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

## **IX. Other Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

- A. Bullying behavior and teen dating violence can take many forms and can vary dramatically in the nature of the offense and the impact the behavior may have on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying” or teen dating violence, as defined above, will generally warrant traditional disciplinary action against the perpetrator, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (e.g., detention, in-school suspension, suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building principal (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee). No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. As discussed below, schools may also consider appropriate alternative to traditional disciplinary sanctions, including age-appropriate consequences and other restorative or remedial interventions.
- B. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying or teen dating violence incidents by the same individual. This plan may include safety provisions, as described above, for students against whom acts of bullying or teen dating violence have been verified and may include other interventions such as counseling, discipline, and other appropriate remedial or restorative actions as determined by the responsible administrator.
- C. The following sets forth possible interventions which may also be utilized to enforce CREC’s prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence:

### **i. Non-disciplinary interventions**

When verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence are identified early and/or when such verified acts do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying and teen dating violence, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying or teen dating violence. Students may also be subject to other forms of restorative discipline or remedial actions, appropriate to the age of the students and nature of the behavior.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer or other forms of mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

ii. Disciplinary interventions

When acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with CREC's Student Discipline policy.

In cases in which expulsion is being considered, as CREC does not expel students, a recommendation will be made that the local board of education enrolling the student in a CREC program expel a student in accordance with the law. This consequence shall normally be reserved for serious incidents of bullying or teen dating violence and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating such behavior.

iii. Interventions for bullied students

The building principal (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address incidents of bullying against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student may include the following:

- a. Referral to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service;
- b. Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations;
- c. Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;
- d. Peer mediation or other forms of mediation, where appropriate;
- e. Student Safety Support plan;
- f. Restitution and/or restorative interventions; and
- g. Periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist

## iv. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying or teen dating violence and direct intervention when acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, other district actions may ameliorate potential problems with bullying or teen dating violence in school or at school-sponsored activities. While no specific action is required, and school needs for specific prevention and intervention strategies may vary from time to time, the following list of potential prevention and intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional employees in each school. Such prevention and intervention strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- a. School rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts;
- b. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur;
- c. Inclusion of grade-appropriate and culturally competent bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, which focus on building safe and positive school communities, social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation, and developing healthy relationships;
- d. Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the student victim, parents and school employees;
- e. School-wide training related to safe school climate, which training may include Title IX/Sexual harassment training, Section 504/ADA Training, cultural diversity/multicultural education or other training in federal and state civil rights legislation or other topics relevant to safe school climate;
- f. Student peer training, education and support;
- g. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
- h. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;

- i. Respectful responses to bullying and teen dating violence concerns raised by students, parents or staff;
- j. Planned professional development programs addressing prevention and intervention strategies, which training may include school violence prevention, conflict resolution and prevention of bullying and teen dating violence, with a focus in evidence based practices concerning same;
- k. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
- l. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping;
- m. Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of school employees and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;
- n. Modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
- o. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
- p. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.

D. In addition to prevention and intervention strategies, administrators, teachers and other professional employees may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and teen dating violence and help eliminate such behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe mean-spirited student conduct, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying” or teen dating violence.

#### **X. Improving School Climate**

CREC recognizes that a positive school climate is crucial in reducing or eliminating bullying and teen dating violence in its schools. The measures described in this Safe School Climate Plan are designed to promote a positive school climate, and their successful implementation involves a partnership among administrators, teachers, other staff members, parents and students themselves. This Plan is subject to periodic review and revision to assure that it effectively promotes a positive school climate. All members of the school community are encouraged to participate in that effort by conveying to the Safe School Climate Coordinator their questions, concerns and recommendations regarding this Plan and its implementation.

**XI. Annual Notice and Training**

- A. Students, and parents or guardians of students shall be notified at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make reports of bullying or teen dating violence.
- B. CREC shall provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence.
- C. At the beginning of each school year, each school shall provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan and require that all school employees annually complete training on the identification, prevention and response to bullying as required by law.

**XII. School Climate Assessments**

On and after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, CREC shall require each school in the district to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the Department of Education. CREC shall collect the school climate assessments for each school in the district and submit such assessments to the Department.