

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

Preamble

The mission of River Valley Charter School is to offer a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.

With the Montessori philosophy as the center of River Valley Charter School's mission, we strive to create a positive educational environment that places priority on a child's learning. We seek to provide a positive, safe and nurturing environment wherein children grow socially and emotionally, as well as academically. We promote respect for ourselves, respect for others and respect for the educational community.

A key element of the Montessori philosophy is the Grace and Courtesy curriculum which guides children to become thoughtful and caring members of the community. In this Montessori community, students are given personal freedoms that directly correlate to their willingness and ability to take responsibility for their own words and actions. They are continuously provided with opportunities to hone these skills and to develop as ethical, independent thinkers. In circumstances where children are not able to exist peacefully in our school community, a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan exists.

Following is River Valley Charter School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP). The plan describes a comprehensive approach to preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. Protection under this plan is afforded to all students regardless of their legal status as well as to members of the River Valley Charter School (including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, the school nurse, bus drivers, support services personnel, coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals).

Introduction

It is well known that bullying and cyberbullying interfere with the educational process and can result in a hostile environment for students and teachers. Bullying can create unnecessary anxiety that affects the ability or desire of a student to attend school; learn in school; travel on the school bus; feel safe in school areas such as the playground or classroom; or participate in special or extracurricular activities. The failure to address bullying behavior also gives other students the message that it is permissible to engage in negative conduct.

River Valley Charter School (RVCS) is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation. 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. As such, RVCS will not tolerate any form of bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation by school staff or other students in the school building, on school grounds, or at school-related activities. All members of the school community are expected to treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. This plan applies to all students and members of the school staff, including, but not limited to, the educators, the administrators, the school nurse, the custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals. RVCS will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation and take immediate action to eradicate the

behavior and restore a sense of safety for all students. RVCS is committed to supporting the entire RVCS community in its understanding of the expectations, implications, and plans for dealing with bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation.

The Assistant Director (AD) is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the BPIP, except when a reported bullying incident involves a staff member or the AD as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Director shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target. If the Director is the alleged aggressor, the Board of Trustees, or its designee, shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target.

The AD will receive reports on bullying; create a process for recording and tracking incident reports and assessing information related to targets and aggressors; develop new or revise current policies and protocols under the BPIP including an internet safety policy; amend student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to make clear that bullying will not be tolerated; review and update the BPIP each year, or more frequently. In conjunction with the appropriate personnel, the AD will also ensure the planning of supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors.

The Director, in conjunction with the administrative team, is responsible for periodically collecting and analyzing school-wide data on bullying to assess the presence of a problem and to measure improved outcomes; ensuring ongoing professional development that is required by the law; choosing and implementing the curricula to be used; leading the parent or family engagement efforts; and drafting parent information materials.

RVCS understands that members of certain groups, including but not limited to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnancy or parenting status, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics, may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. RVCS will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive, environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. In addition, for students whose IEP (Individualized Educational Program) Team determines that the student has a disability that affects social skill development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of his/her disability, the IEP Team will include appropriate measures to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

The scope of this plan does not include negative or disruptive behaviors not defined as bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation. Behaviors that are *not* considered acts of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation are addressed through the school's Code of Conduct.

Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited at River Valley Charter School:

- 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 RVCS; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by RVCS, and

- At a location activity, function, or program that is not related to RVCS through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by RVCS, 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 RVCS.

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

Knowingly making false accusations of bullying and retaliation are also prohibited and will result in disciplinary action consistent with the RVCS Code of Conduct and M.G.L. c. 71, §37O.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Definition and Terms

Bullying, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, means the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of the school staff including but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

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

Bullying shall include cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, 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, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include:

- the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or
- the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.
- the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

For the purposes of this plan, terms are defined as follows:

Aggressor, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, means a student or a member of the school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.

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.

Local law enforcement agency means a local police department, county district attorney, or any other public entity charged with investigation, apprehension, detention or prosecution of individuals suspected or convicted of a crime.

Parent means a student's father or mother, or legal guardian.

Plan is an established bullying prevention and intervention plan.

Perpetrator is a student or a member of a the school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation. (At RVCS the term aggressor, as defined above, is typically used in place of the term perpetrator.)

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.

School grounds are defined as the property on which the school facility is located.

School staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Student record has the meaning set forth in the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.02.

Target, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, means a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Victim is defined as the student against whom bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been perpetrated. (At RVCS the term target, as defined above, is typically used in place of the term victim.)

Promoting a Positive Culture through Teaching

River Valley Charter School honors and supports a school culture that encourages students, teachers, and parents to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior, both experienced and witnessed. As such, all students will be taught the key dynamics of bullying and how to react appropriately and respectfully through modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social and healthy behaviors.

RVCS uses the evidence-based Open Circle social-emotional learning program as a component of our overall bullying prevention strategy for all Kinderhaus and Elementary 1 (grades 1-3) classrooms. The tenants of Open Circle are to help foster a caring classroom community where children feel supported by the adults around them and empathic toward others, reducing the likelihood that bullying behavior occurs. Open Circle provides a common language to discuss these often difficult social issues. There are specific lessons tailored to prevent bullying, which are taught and reviewed within the classroom as an element of routine instruction.

The Elementary 2 (grades 4-6) teaching teams meet regularly with students to discuss issues of community, respect, and responsibility, following the Open Circle guidelines, both in their Morning/Community Meetings as well as within smaller groups. An anti-bullying message is a component of these discussions. Further,

incorporated into the E2 technology classes is explicit instruction in the definition and prevention of cyberbullying. Each E2 classroom develops core values or a classroom bill of rights that further encourages healthy relationships.

The Middle School (grades 7-8) Advisor Groups meet regularly and focus on character development, including strategies for positive relationships with each other. The discussion-based Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) middle school advisory curriculum, which focuses on bullying and cyberbullying prevention, will be incorporated into these group meetings.

On a daily basis, all students at River Valley Charter School are encouraged to take the following actions to prevent bullying:

- Treat each other respectfully
- Include everyone, especially those who may feel left out
- Respect and follow the Code of Conduct
- Report any observed bullying.

Reporting Bullying, Cyberbullying, and/or Retaliation

River Valley Charter School maintains an open reporting system in which any concerned person (staff member, student, parent/guardian, or other) may report an incident of bullying or retaliation either experienced or witnessed. The school is committed to addressing these incidents and empowering students to be part of the solution and expects students, parents or others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation to report it immediately.

Reports of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation are made to the AD (or to the Director when the AD is the alleged aggressor or to the Board of Trustees when the Director is the alleged aggressor) and are accepted from students, teachers, parents, community members, or others. Reports may be made in oral or written form. All reports will be recorded in writing on a Bullying Incident Report Form (copies are made available to every family at the beginning of the school year and then remain available during the year in the front office, the AD's office, the counselor's office, the nurse's office as well as on the RVCS website). A school staff member is required to report immediately to the AD any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Students, parents, guardians, or others may request assistance from a staff member to fill out the form. Individuals may make an anonymous report of an experienced or a witnessed incident; but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor based solely on an anonymous report. Consequently, a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

At the beginning of each school year, RVCS will provide the school community, including, but not limited to students, educators, administrators, school nurses, bus drivers, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, and parents or guardians, with written and/or oral notice of its policies for addressing acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the AD, (and the Director and Board of Trustees when the AD is the alleged aggressor), is part of this BPIP and will also be included in student and staff handbooks, and on the school website. Reports of bullying may also be made via postal mail at the school's address, via a dedicated bullying-reporting email address, or by voicemail.

Insofar as is legally allowed by state law, confidentiality will be maintained with respect to the parties involved in the report, however the party reporting the incident will be notified that it has been investigated and results will be shared as appropriate and to the extent permissible by law.

The requirement to report incidents of bullying to the Assistant Director does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with the Code of Conduct or described in a behavior intervention plan.

Responding to Reports of Allegations of Bullying by a Student

River Valley will respond to allegations of bullying by first, assessing the need to restore safety to the alleged target, and to protect the target from possible further incidents; and second, notifying parents of the target and the aggressor.

Student Safety

Prior to any investigative procedures, the AD will implement appropriate strategies for protecting and maintaining safety of all involved parties from further bullying or retaliation including the target, a student has reported or witnessed the alleged incident and/or a student who provides information during the investigation. The safety process will involve designating a trusted adult and may include creating a personal safety plan or 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/or altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The AD will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

Notifications

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

Notice to another school- 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 AD or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to law enforcement- At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the AD has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor, the AD 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.

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 AD 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 student aggressor. In making this determination, the AD will, consistent with the plan and with applicable school policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, and other individuals the AD deems appropriate.

Investigating Reports of Bullying

The AD will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and speak privately with the target and the aggressor in order to determine the severity and intent of the situation. Factors to be considered will include: age, maturity level, surrounding circumstances, nature of the behavior, special needs, patterns of behavior, and any past incidents. If necessary, the school will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

During the investigation, the AD will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. Interviews may be conducted by the AD, other staff members as determined by the AD, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. The AD (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

The investigation will be documented through the use of the Bullying Incident Report Form, and there will be ongoing communication with the target and aggressor. The safety of these individuals is first and foremost. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the AD will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. Progress monitoring in the form of goal setting and follow-up conversations will be maintained through the AD.

If the AD or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action. Students who are not primary participants in the reported act of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation but join in, may be subject to disciplinary action or consequences as if they were primarily involved. “Joining-in” is a form of endorsing the behavior.

Determinations

If the findings reveal lack of intent to bully then the student will be directed to complete a peer mediation session with the other student(s) involved. This will be facilitated by appropriate school personnel until it is sufficiently resolved. The parents of all parties will be contacted prior to dismissal or as soon as possible on that same day.

If the findings reveal intent, the process will continue. The AD 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 AD will determine what remedial action is required, if any, and determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

The AD will notify the parents of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notification will comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

Regardless of the determination, the AD will inform the parents/guardians about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system.

Disciplinary Action

If the Assistant Director determines that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be based on the facts from the investigation, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behaviors. The actions will be consistent with the River Valley Charter School Code of Conduct. Possible disciplinary actions include, but are not limited

to, one or more of the following: verbal and/or written warnings, reflective writing assignments intended to educate the aggressor, detentions, in-school or out-of-school suspensions as determined by the school administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements. These actions may escalate in severity for repeated offenses or with the severity of the conduct.

The AD will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation, and what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the AD cannot report specific information to the parent or guardians of the target about 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

Actions may be accompanied by the referral to counseling/other therapeutic support or outside services to meet the needs of the individual student/family. When appropriate, the Assistant Director and School Counselor/Psychologist will collaborate to a) identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for social skills development (including the consideration of special groups), and b) assess the school’s capacity to provide services for the target, aggressor and their families. The review will include consideration of the current staffing and programs that support the creation of a positive school environment.

Alternatively, a student/family could be referred for community-based treatment services on an as-needed basis. Student referrals may include the target, the aggressor, and/or witnesses of an incident. The School Counselor/Psychologist will provide the student (both target and aggressor) and his/her parents with written notice of the name, address and telephone number of the recommended outside agency. River Valley Charter School will contact the parents and/or agency to ensure that a connection has been made and support is in place.

River Valley will also make sure that counseling and other services are available appropriate to the cultural and linguistic needs of its community members.

Students with Disabilities

River Valley Charter School supports collaboration between special education and general education administrators and teachers, which is necessary to address proactively and effectively the needs of students with disabilities relative to bullying. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). Considerations will be made for students whose disability

- (a) is on the autism spectrum, or
- (b) affects social skills development, or
- (c) makes the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

For students on the autism spectrum, protection under the law will be automatic.

Follow Up

The AD will work with the administrative team to 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, including any student who reported an incident, or was part of the investigation. One strategy that may be used 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 AD 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 AD will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

- a) All student(s) involved will have regular check-in sessions with appropriate school personnel.
- b) There may be a follow-up session with the whole class (or classes) to discuss and reinforce community values.
- c) Individualized skill-building sessions based on RVCS' anti-bullying curricula may be offered to the aggressor.
- d) The AD will meet with the involved personnel to debrief the incident, identify additional resources for the student(s), the teacher(s) or the school and refine the system.
- e) Continued efforts to meet with parent(s) or guardian(s) to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home.
- f) Behavioral plans may be adopted to include a focus on developing specific social skills.

Responding to Reports of Allegations of Bullying by a Staff Member

Procedures for investigating and responding to reports of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation of a student by a staff member will follow the steps outlined above under the direction and oversight of the Director (or the Board of Trustees when the Director is the alleged aggressor).

- Prior to and during any investigative procedures, the Director (or Board of Trustees) will implement appropriate strategies for protecting and maintaining safety of all involved parties from further bullying or retaliation. Most River Valley classrooms have at least two teachers present but additional support in the form of staff “safe persons” for the target may be provided when warranted.
- Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Director (or Board of Trustees) will notify both the staff aggressor and parents or guardians of the target, and of the procedures for responding to it and what actions are being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation.
 - If at any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, the Director or Board of Trustees has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the staff aggressor, the Director (or Board of Trustees) 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.
 - During the course of investigation, the Director (or Board of Trustees) will remind the alleged staff aggressor, student target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- Disciplinary actions and/or adjustments to the school environment to enhance the student target's sense of safety will be implemented at the Director (or Board of Trustees's) discretion and will be based on facts from the investigation.

Training and Professional Development

Student and parent training will involve awareness of bullying behavior and model examples of behavior that promote caring, compassionate, and responsible students.

Written Notice to Staff

RVCS will provide all staff with an annual written notice of this plan, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, within the Faculty Handbook, along with the Code of Conduct. An online version of the plan will be available on the River Valley Charter School Website.

Annual Staff Training on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Annual training will include staff duties under the plan, an overview of the steps that the AD will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered (e.g. Open Circle, MARC). Staff will be trained in how to use the Incident Report Form and the potential resulting actions following an investigation. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in school-based training within the year, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

Ongoing Professional Development

The RVCS staff will participate in mandatory training as it relates to specific information about age-appropriate curricula and building the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The goal is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes the safety and security of all students while establishing a respect for differences. This professional development will include information on:

- Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- 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;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying;
- Engaging staff and those responsible for implementation and oversight of the plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent or 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.

Written Notice to Families

River Valley Charter School will annually offer educational programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of bullying prevention and how to support actions at home.

Notification

A copy of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be included in the Family Handbook. The handbook will be made available in hard copy, electronic formats, and will be available in each requested home language. RVCS will also post the plan and related information on both the school website and Edline, which acts as our home and school communication system.

Reinforcing the Curricula at Home

River Valley Charter School will support school-wide initiatives which include relevant presenters, useful curricula, and ongoing discussion. RVCS will also provide parents with information from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC), which is posted in the “Counseling Center” section of the RVCS website. This information includes practical strategies for helping a child cope, and how to effectively work with a child’s school.

Resources will be provided ongoing, through posted resources, discussions through teacher and parent open houses, and parent education events. The goal is to develop a common language, common understandings, and partner in supporting students as they learn to be ethical, tolerant and kind community members.

Ongoing Review and Reporting of School-Based Bullying

River Valley Charter School will administer a student survey developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education every four years to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in the school. The survey will be used to assess the effectiveness of the bullying curricula and instruction occurring in the school.

Last, River Valley Charter School will collect and report the following data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as required by Chapter 86 of the relevant law:

- 1) The number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation;
- 2) The number and nature of substantial incidents of bullying and retaliation;
- 3) The number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation;
- 4) Other information as required by the Department.