Students

Bullying and Teen Dating Violence

Safe School Climate Plan

Purpose

It shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student, harassment, hate crimes, and teen dating violence are prohibited.

I. Prohibition Against Bullying and Teen Dating Violence

The Board of Education (Board) prohibits 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 the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and (b) outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, (ii) infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

II. Definitions

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at or referring to 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, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or 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.

“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.
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“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.

“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.

“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.

“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.

“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. “School employee” means (a) 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 (b) 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.

“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. (It is based on people’s experiences of school and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)

III. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Teen Dating Violence and Retaliation
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A. Publication of the Prohibition against Bullying and Teen Dating Violence and Related Procedures

The prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence shall be publicized by including the following statement in the student handbook:

“Bullying behavior and teen dating violence by any student in Common Ground High School is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly 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.

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 characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, gender identity, or physical mental, 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.

“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.

Students who engage in any act of bullying 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
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vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting may be subject to disciplinary consequences if such bullying or teen dating violence:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process.

B. Appropriate School Personnel

All school employees are charged with the responsibility of taking reports of bullying and teen dating violence or, if witnessing acts of bullying or teen dating violence, to notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available. Reports shall be appropriately investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available.

Common Ground High School Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Director shall appoint, from among existing school staff, a School Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the School’s Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Director to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying and teen dating violence in school;
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3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Director, to the Department of Education; and  

4. Meet with the Safe School Climate Specialist at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying and teen dating violence issues in the district and make recommended changes to the School’s safe school climate plan.

#### Safe School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Director shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying and teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the Common Ground High School’s Safe School Climate Plan;

2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in the school; and

3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying and dating violence reports in the school.

Safe School Climate Specialist: Keith Johnston, Assistant Director  
(203) 389-0823 ext. 1215  
kjohnston@commongroundct.org

District Safe School Climate Coordinator: Lianne M. Cox, Director  
(203) 389-0823 ext. 1203  
lcox@commongroundct.org

#### C. Annual Notification of the Complaint Process

The process by which students may make formal, informal, and anonymous complaints as set forth below shall be publicized annually in the student handbook. In addition, this Safe School Climate Plan shall be placed on the School website.
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D. Formal Written Complaints

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file written reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying or teen dating violence. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying or teen dating violence including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, or teen dating violence and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school employee, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator, if the Safe School specialist is unavailable, for review and action in accordance with Section IV below.

E. Informal/Verbal Complaints by Students

Students may make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying or teen dating violence by verbal report to the Safe School Climate Specialist, or to any school employee, as defined, or administrator. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying or teen dating violence, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying or teen dating violence, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school employee, or administrator or the Safe School Climate Specialist who receives an informal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the school employee, administrator, if not the Safe School Climate Specialist, shall be promptly forwarded to the Director for review and action in accordance with Section IV below.

F. Anonymous Complaints

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school employee who receives the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the Safe School Climate Specialist, if not the Director or his/her designee, shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may
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be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) 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.

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

A. Teachers and Other School Staff

School employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence as defined above, or who receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence shall promptly 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 employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying or teen dating violence. A written report must be filed not later than two school days after making such an oral report concerning the events witnessed or reported.

School employees who receive student or parent reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence shall promptly notify the Safe School Climate Specialist of such report(s). If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable.

If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a school employee, he or she shall prepare a succinct written report of the informal complaint, which shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable. The employee shall also verbally report the matter to the Safe School Climate Specialist not later than the next school day.

In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, school employees and other are encouraged to address the issue of bullying and teen dating violence in other interactions with students. Teachers and other professionals may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and teen dating violence and help eliminate bullying behavior and teen dating violence through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. All school employees including teachers and other professional employees should intervene
promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying” or teen dating violence.

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist

1. Investigation

The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected bullying or teen dating violence received by any school employee. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the School’s Safe School Climate Plan. The investigation must be completed promptly after the receipt by the Safe School Climate Specialist of any written report. In order to allow the school to adequately investigate all formal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied or victimized by teen dating violence will be asked to complete a consent form that allows the school to release that student’s name to those third parties who the school contacts as part of its investigation of that complaint with regard. In the investigation of informal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied or victimized by teen dating violence will also be asked to complete a consent form as long as that student has not requested anonymity. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of bullying or teen dating violence were verified, and, when acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

The school shall notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying or teen dating violence not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and in the case of a divorced/split situation, to the other parent/guardian if requested.

The notice will describe the school’s response, measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act was
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directed, and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying or teen dating violence.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complainant. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

2. Remedial Actions

Verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence shall result in intervention by the Director or his/her designee that is intended to address the acts of the perpetrator and the needs of the victim and to assure that the prohibition against bullying behavior and teen dating violence is enforced, with the goal of ending such bullying behavior or teen dating violence. Bullying behavior and teen dating violence can take many forms and can vary dramatically in severity and potential impact 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 disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying or teen dating violence, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in-school suspension; suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Director (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee.) No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.

The following sets forth permissible interventions for building principals (or other administrators) to enforce the Board’s prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence.

a. Non-disciplinary Interventions

When verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying or teen dating
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violence do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying and teen dating violence and their prohibition, and students’ duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying or teen dating violence.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer 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.

In any instance in which bullying or teen dating violence are verified, the Director (or other responsible program administrator) shall invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, and the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence to separate meetings to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the student’s safety and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence.

b. 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 that are not otherwise verified, 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 the Board’s Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with Board policy. This consequence shall be reserved for serious incidents of bullying or teen dating violence and/or when past interventions have
not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior or teen dating violence.

c. Interventions for Students Bullied or Victimized by Teen Dating Violence

The Safe School Climate Specialist/Director (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student or student victimized by teen dating violence may include the following:

- Counseling;
- Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying/teen dating violence situations;
- Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;
- Peer mediation where appropriate.

V. 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 school actions may ameliorate any potential problem with bullying or teen dating violence in school or at school sponsored activities. A focus will be placed on school efforts to improve school climate based upon the National School Climate Standards.

While no specific action is required and school needs for such interventions may vary from time to time, the following list of potential intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional staff members in each school:

a. 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;

b. A safe school climate assessment on or after July 1, 2012 and biennially thereafter to determine the prevalence of bullying and teen dating violence.

c. Establishment by the school Director of a Safe School Climate Committee or the designation of an existing committee that is responsible for fostering a safe
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The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying and teen dating violence;

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 recommendation to the Common Ground High School Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the School’s Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;

5. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence;

6. Collaborate with the Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and teen dating violence; and

7. Perform any other duties as determined by the Director that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and school teen dating violence for the school. Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #2 above and from any other committee activities that may compromise student confidentiality.

d. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying and teen dating violence are likely to occur;

e. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in grades 7-12;

f. Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student or the student victimized by teen dating violence, parents and school employees;

g. School-wide training related to safe school climate;

h. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
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i. Respectful responses to bullying and teen dating violence concerns raised by students, parents or staff;

j. Planned professional development programs addressing bully/victim and perpetrator of teen dating violence/victim problems;

k. Student peer training, education and support. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;

l. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping (e.g., males need to be strong and tough);

m. Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of staff and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;

n. Modeling by all school employees 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.

VI. Reporting Obligations

A. Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Perpetrator

If after investigation, acts of bullying or teen dating violence by a specific student are verified, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation, the Director/Safe School Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator regarding the finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification. In addition, the school shall invite the parent/guardian of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence (after the completion of the investigation) to a meeting to communicate to the parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety and measures being taken by the school to ensure the student’s safety and to prevent further acts of bullying and teen dating violence. Records will be maintained by the Director/Safe School Climate Specialist of the bullying and teen dating violence reports, subsequent investigations and parental/guardian meetings.

B. Reports to the Targeted Student and his/her Parent or Guardian

If after investigation, acts of bullying or teen dating violence against a specific student are verified, the Director/Safe Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. In providing
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such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of
the perpetrator of such bullying or teen dating violence. The specific
disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, as reflected in the
student’s educational records, shall not be disclosed to the parents or guardian
of the victim, except as provided by law (e.g., court order/subpoena).

In addition, the school shall invite the parent/guardian of the student against
whom the verified act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed, after the
completion of the investigation, to a meeting to communicate to the
parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety
and measures being taken by the school to ensure the targeted student’s safety
and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence. Records will be
maintained by the Director/Safe School Climate Specialist of the bullying and
teen dating violence reports, subsequent investigations and parental/guardian
meetings.

C. List of Verified Acts of Bullying/Teen Dating Violence

The Director/Safe School Climate Specialist of each school shall establish a
procedure to document and maintain records relating to reports and
investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in such school and 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. The
list shall be reported annually to the Department of Education in such manner as
prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Given that any determination of
bullying involves repeated acts over time, each report prepared in accordance
with Section V (B) (1) above that includes verified acts of bullying shall be
tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the
subject of the report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall
be limited to the number of such verified acts of bullying and teen dating
violence in the school, and it 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.

VII. Prohibition against Discrimination and Retaliation
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A. Safety

Discrimination and/or retaliation against any person who reports bullying or teen dating violence or provides information during an investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying or teen dating violence is prohibited. The continuation and perpetuation of bullying or teen dating violence against a student through the dissemination of hurtful or demeaning material by any other student is prohibited. The Common Ground High School will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, teen dating violence, discrimination or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school related activities. All reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, teen dating violence, discrimination and retaliation will be investigated promptly and prompt action will be taken to end that behavior and restore the student’s against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed (target’s) sense of safety. This commitment is to be supported in all aspects of the school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent/guardian involvement. Before formally investigating the allegations of bullying, teen dating violence, discrimination or retaliation, the Director/Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed (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; predetermined seating arrangements for the alleged victim (target) and/or the alleged perpetrator in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the alleged student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed (target); and altering the alleged perpetrator’s schedule and access to the alleged target.

The Director/Safe School Climate Specialist will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Director/Safe School Climate Specialist will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying, teen dating violence or retaliation a student who has reported bullying, teen dating violence or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying, teen dating violence or retaliation, a student who
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provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying, teen dating violence or retaliation.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Director/Safe School climate specialist or designee will contact the victim to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If determined necessary, the Director/Safe School Climate Specialist will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

B. Law Enforcement Notification

The Director or his/her designee shall notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Director or his/her designee believes any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct.

VIII. Training Requirements for School Staff

A. Certified and Non Certified staff shall be provided in-service training on the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and teen dating violence and the prevention of and response to youth suicide.

i. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying and teen dating violence among students in school and outside the school setting.

ii. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate and effective interventions to stop bullying and teen dating violence,

iii. Information regarding the interaction and relationship between students committing acts of bullying or teen dating violence students against whom such acts of bullying or teen dating violence are directed and witnesses of such acts of bullying or teen dating violence,

iv. Research findings on bullying and teen dating violence, such as information about the types of students who have been shown to be at-risk for bullying or teen dating violence in the school setting,

v. Information about the incidence and nature of cyberbullying as defined in C.G.S. 10-222d, or vi. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

B. Beginning teachers shall satisfactorily complete instructional modules as required by C.G.S. 10-145a which shall include a module in classroom management and climate, which shall include training regarding the prevention,
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identification, and response to school bullying and teen dating violence and the prevention of and response to youth suicide.

IX. Notification Requirements

A. A copy of this School’s Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in written or electronic format to all school employees annually at the beginning of each school year.

B. The School’s Safe School Climate Plan shall be made available on the school’s website. Such posting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the approval of such plan by the Board.

C. The Common Ground High School Safe School Climate Plan shall be included in the school’s publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

X. School Climate Assessments

A. On or after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, the Board requires the school to complete a climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education.

B. Completed assessments shall be shared with the Board and then submitted by the Board to the State Department of Education.

XI. Bullying/Teen Dating Violence Through the Use of Technology (Cyberbullying)

An emerging form of bullying and teen dating violence is the use of technology to threaten, intimidate, ridicule, humiliate, insult, or harass. Technology enables aggressive expression toward others and does not rely on physical strength or physical contact. By using a cell phone or the Internet, a student can quickly and aggressively spread rumors, threats, hate mail, or embarrassing photos through text messages, e-mails, or instant messages. There are a number of social networking sites (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) available to our students that can be misused and/or abused for bullying or teen dating violence purposes. Any alleged misuse or abuse must be reported to any staff member or the Safe School Climate Specialist.

The School’s discipline policy states that misuse, on or off campus, of electronic devices, for threatening/bullying/hazing, harassment or committing teen dating violence is a violation and can be the basis for discipline on or off campus. When information is received that a student or students are involved in bullying or teen dating violence through the use of technology either as the actor or a member of a group, or the victim, the following will be considered:
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- If it takes place on campus or at a school sponsored event, disciplinary action will be taken.
- If it takes place off campus a school may take disciplinary action if the incident poses a likelihood of substantial disruption to the educational process or the day to day operations of the school.