

# ROXBURY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MODEL: Creating a Better School for All

## RCS MISSION STATEMENT

The vision of the Roxbury Central School is to provide a safe and caring environment in which our students can develop academically, creatively and socially. Each member of our school community will demonstrate personal integrity, a commitment to learning and an appreciation for cultural diversity.

# Introduction

This model has been modified for our district's needs from the "Model District Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy" by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). This document is also aligned with New York State Education Department guidelines.

This model is being provided to you to clearly explain the district's approach to behavioral issues and our intentional approach to addressing them proactively and as effectively as possible. Stressing social responsibility is key to improving the educational environment of the school district. It is the most effective way to eliminate bullying, harassment and other inappropriate behaviors. When we are more kind and respectful, interpersonal issues are resolved early on and in more positive ways. This model conforms with the Dignity For All Students Act (DASA) and our DASA coordinator is Mrs. Jo Hinkley, Dean of Students for Roxbury Central School.

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & DEFINITIONS

## **RCS D Statement of Purpose**

This school district acknowledges that all students have the right to participate fully in the educational process, free from bullying, harassment and discrimination, and in that regard, a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and to achieve high academic standards. Bullying, harassment, and discrimination, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, are forms of conduct that disrupt both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Because students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, visitors and volunteers should be expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

The RCS D shall strive to attain an educational environment that replaces these behaviors with pro-social skills such as empathy, kindness and compassion.

## **Definitions**

A. "Bullying" means written, verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities by placing the student (or students) in reasonable fear of psychological or physical harm. Bullying can be, and often is, continuous and repeated over time, but does not have to be. It invokes a real or perceived imbalance of power, with a more powerful child or group harming those that are less powerful. This includes conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be defined by the district or state educational agency. This also includes association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned characteristics, whether actual or perceived.

Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate activity intended to harm . Those who play an active supporting role in the bullying are considered to have participated in the bullying.

B. "Harassment" means written, verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities because the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive. This includes conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be defined by the district or state educational agency. This also includes association with a person or group with one or more of the abovementioned characteristics, whether actual or perceived.

C. "Cyber-bullying" means use of any electronic communication technology to bully or harass, as defined above, one or more students, regardless of location or the type of electronic communication used.

# SCOPE, PROHIBITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Definitions (cont'd)

D. "Discrimination" means the practice of conferring or denying privileges on the basis of membership in a protected class, as are outlined in the definitions of harassment and bullying. Discriminatory acts may include, but are not limited to: refusal to promote, hire, select, assist, deny access to facilities, educational opportunities, or instituting policies and practices that have a disproportional adverse effect on an individual on the basis of their membership in a protected class.

## Scope of Proscribed Conduct

This model is applicable to all educators, staff members, students, and volunteers, and covers conduct that takes place in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles and at bus stops. This model also pertains to usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that is used for bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying and discrimination.

## Prohibition on Bullying Behavior

Bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying and discrimination are prohibited in this district. Retaliation or threats of retaliation meant to intimidate the victim of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying or discrimination or toward those investigating incidents thereof, are also prohibited.

## District Responsibilities

- A. The Superintendent shall direct the Building Principal and Dean of Students to document all complaints of teasing and intimidation that may not rise to the level of bullying at that time but could in the future. These conflicts or acts will be brought to the attention of the parents, all teachers and to our student counseling program or other support system to make attempts to remedy the situation prior to its escalation.
- B. The Superintendent shall identify those employees responsible for collecting and responding to reports of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying and discrimination
- C. The district shall provide a report on the aggregate complaints of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying and discrimination and responses to these complaints to the Board of Education semi-annually. This report shall be made available to the public, and shall conform with the New York State Education Department's requirements per the Dignity For All Students Act (DASA), Violent and Disruptive Incidences Report (VADIR) and FERPA.
- D. The district shall receive and investigate complaints from parents, students, educators, and staff members, which allege that a school is failing to implement this policy.
- E. This document and relevant school policies will be distributed annually, and will also be included in any district-wide student codes of conduct, disciplinary policies, student handbooks and website.
- F. The district will conduct exit interviews with the affected parties to deconstruct the process for the purpose of developing future plans for continuous improvement for future incident management.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

## School Responsibilities

- A. The School Principal and Dean of Students shall have an opening day assembly to review behavioral expectations.
- B. The School Principal shall create an environment where the school community upholds the standards of respect and civility and understands that bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying are inappropriate, harmful and unacceptable.
- C. The School Principal and Dean of Students shall be responsible for receiving reports of, and responding to, complaints of bullying, harassment, or cyber-bullying. The system for reporting suspected bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying must ensure the reporting can be done easily, safely and privately. All complaints will be assessed by a review panel established by the School Principal immediately.
- D. The Dean of Students shall maintain written or electronic records regarding all complaints of bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying, and investigations thereof, and any disciplinary action taken. These records shall be maintained for no less than 5 years.
- E. The School Principal shall report on all complaints of bullying, harassment and cyber-bullying, and investigation thereof, and any disciplinary action taken. These records shall be maintained for no less than 5 years.
- F. Throughout the school year the district will utilize various opportunities and entities to share strategies and information that families can use to help strengthen their child's ability to address the challenges they face.

## Employee Responsibilities

All school employees share responsibility for modeling appropriate behavior and creating an environment where mutual respect, civility, tolerance, and acceptance among students and staff are promoted and where students understand that bullying and harassment are inappropriate, harmful and are taken seriously.

All employees shall demonstrate empathy, kindness, compassion and mindfulness when interacting with others. Modeling behavior shall include but will not be limited to: confidentiality, one's tone of voice, addressing "issues" privately, maintaining a positive attitude, being reflective and non-reactionary and turning to others for assistance when needed. All employees are to remain vigilant and if they "see something or hear something" they are to address it immediately and report it accordingly.

All employees will take reasonable measures to prevent bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying and discrimination and are obligated to immediately report any such acts or complaints of such that come to their attention.

## Student Responsibilities

Students share responsibility for helping to create a safe school environment by not engaging in or contributing to bullying, harassment, or cyber-bullying, treating everyone with respect, and being sensitive as to how others might perceive their actions or words.

Any student who observes an act of bullying, harassment, or cyber-bullying shall report the incident(s) to school authorities immediately.

# RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

## Family Responsibilities

The expectation of the district is that families will immediately inform school officials of circumstances that would impede the students ability to participate or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities. Families will be provided with resources and opportunities to assist in developing an effective partnership with the district and will share the resources with their children.

## Complaint Procedures

- A. All allegations of bullying, harassment, or cyber-bullying shall be reported immediately to the Dean of Students or School Principal either orally or in writing. Any student, parent or guardian, volunteer, educator, or staff member may file such a report. If a report contains incomplete information, the Dean of Students or School Principal shall take reasonable measures to immediately contact the individuals involved to determine whether an investigation should be pursued.
- B. Upon receiving a complaint of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying for harassment from any student, educator, visitor, staff member or parent, the Dean of Students or School Principal shall:
  1. Promptly and thoroughly investigate the alleged incident of bullying, harassment, or cyber-bullying and convene a review panel within 24 hours or the next day of school if applicable;
  2. Take immediate steps, at their discretion, to protect any involved students, educators, or staff pending completion of an investigation;
  3. Provide immediate notification to the parents or guardians of all involved students, provided that such notification does not endanger the health, safety or well-being of any student;
  4. Maintain a written or electronic record of the complaint, any investigation, and any intervention or disciplinary actions taken;
  5. Take proper disciplinary action immediately following the conclusion of the investigation; and
  6. Issue a report in a timely manner regarding the complaint, investigation, and any disciplinary measures taken to all involved students, parents and educators, while maintaining the privacy and safety of any involved students. **The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) must be followed and all parties must understand that only the portions applicable to their individual circumstances shall be disclosed to them privately.**
- C. Reports of bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying may be filed anonymously. However, disciplinary action cannot be taken solely based on an anonymous report unless fully corroborated during the course of an investigation. Anonymous reports will be investigated with the same procedure, timeliness and vigor as other reports and disciplinary action can occur based on the results of the investigation.
- D. Anyone who files false reports of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying or discrimination will be subject to discipline per the Code of Conduct or through other measures.
- E. School administrators shall also use this procedure to investigate complaints of retaliation or threats of retaliation meant to intimidate the victim of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying or discrimination or toward those investigating incidents thereof.

# COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

## Complaint Procedures (cont'd)

- F. Incidents of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying or discrimination that involve criminal activity shall be reported to law enforcement. The Roxbury Central School District appreciates the strong partnership it has with local law enforcement agencies.
- G. A complainant may request that the district conducts an independent review if they: (1) believe that the school did not correctly analyze the complaint and failed to conduct an investigation of the incident because the school believed the alleged conduct did not constitute bullying or harassment, (2) are dissatisfied with the final determination following an investigation as to whether bullying or harassment occurred, or (3) believe that although a final determination was made that bullying or harassment occurred, the school's response was inadequate to correct the problem. The complainant shall make such a request in writing to the Superintendent. Upon such request, the Superintendent shall promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person provided by our area BOCES. The school and all employees shall cooperate with the independent reviewer so the investigation may proceed expeditiously. The review shall consist of an interview of the complainant and relevant school officials and a review of the written materials from the school's investigation.
- H. The bullied student will be contacted as often as agreed upon with the parent or guardian, for instance, every 1 or 2 days, then every week, then every month to ensure resolution and that someone is still there for them as time goes by.

NOTE: The district is sensitive to the fact that criminalizing student behavior can unfortunately lead to student incarceration or disengagement from the educational environment, which can have a lifelong negative impact on both the student and the community. While it is sometimes necessary to involve law enforcement to address egregious matters of student discipline, approaches that strive to educate and prevent negative behavior should be the first recourse for educators, dependent on the scope and severity of the incident.

## Notification of Parents and Guardians

When a complaint of bullying, harassment, or cyber-bullying is filed, the School Principal shall notify the parents or guardians of all involved students. Additionally, when the investigation is completed, the designated administrator shall issue a report in a timely manner regarding the complaint, investigation, and any disciplinary measures taken to the parents and guardians of any involved students. Private educational or personal data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the District shall not be disclosed, to the extent protected by law. In certain circumstances, disclosure of the basis for which a student is bullied may result in additional negative consequences to the student's health and well-being. Prior to notification of any parent or guardian regarding any incident of bullying, harassment, or cyber-bullying, school authorities must consider the issue of notification as they would any other educationally-relevant decision, considering the health, well-being and safety of any students involved in the incident.

## Discipline and Skills Development

Disciplinary actions for bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying may include, but are not limited to: warnings; pro-social skills development; loss of opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, school social events or graduation exercises; loss of school bus transportation; community service, in-school suspension; short term suspension; or transfer to an outside BOCES placement among others. The specific consequences should be

(cont'd)

# TRAINING AND BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION

## **Discipline and Skills Development (cont'd)**

consistent, reasonable, fair, age appropriate and match the severity of the incident. While the District takes ALL reported cases of bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying seriously, we promote progressive discipline and intervention as opposed to “zero tolerance” policies.

## **Professional Development**

The district shall implement ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff members, including, but not limited to educators, school and district staff, to prevent, identify and respond to bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying. The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying, harassment and cyber-bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying; (iv) research finding on bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying, harassment and cyber-bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying. The district shall identify and offer information on alternative methods for fulfilling the professional development requirements of this section.

## **Student Training and Prevention**

The district shall present in age-appropriate language the District’s policy on bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying as part of any orientation program conducted for students bi-annually at a minimum. This will also include instruction on how to prevent bullying, harassment, and cyber-bullying; the process for filing complaints; and the process/consequences that will result from the complaint. This policy will be distributed annually and will also be included in any student codes of conduct, disciplinary policies, student handbooks, and the school district website.

## **Roxbury Central School District’s Behavior Intervention Programs**

1. DBT For Schools— Dialectical Behavior Instruction (DBI) is a program of information, training, and support for staff, students and parents. DBI focuses on building crucial skills that contribute to productive behaviors and habits in the interpersonal and emotional realms. DBI consists of four core modules: Mindfulness, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Distress Tolerance and Emotion Regulation. The DBI framework will be posted on the school website and family trainings will be offered in the fall and spring.
2. Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS) - This evidence-based training focuses on classroom management and de-escalation techniques. The Superintendent, Mr. O’Brien, is formally trained to deliver TCIS by Cornell University. A Multi-day training was held during the summer of 2017 and ongoing awareness training shall happen periodically for all employees through the school year.

# RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

## Roxbury Central School District's Behavior Intervention Programs (cont'd)

### 3. School Counseling Programs

- Sources of Strength—Sources of Strength (SOS), is highly researched, broad suicide prevention program that also impacts other issues such as substance abuse and violence. It promotes community, school bonding, peer-adult partnerships, and help seeking behaviors among older students. Adult advisors from the school and community team with peer leaders. Together, they work to improve peer group views that influence coping practices and problem behaviors (e.g., self-harm, drug use).
- Second Step—Second Step is an evidence-based social and emotional learning curriculum for younger students. It teaches skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, friendship, and problem solving. The program encourages students to use learned skills outside of lessons through additional classroom activities and opportunities for teachers to make connections to other areas of learning (e.g., reading, art). Second Step also includes the *Bullying Prevention Unit*, which teaches students to learn to recognize, report, and refuse bullying.
- Student Leadership Conferences—These are a series of outside opportunities through CASSC and other partnerships for our students to be recognized as leaders and develop leadership skills.

### 4. Delaware County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council

- Too Good for Violence—Too Good for Violence - Social Perspectives is an evidence-based Social Emotional Learning program that develops the following social skills linked with healthy development and academic success (grades 5-8):
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Anger Management
  - Respect for Self and Others
  - Effective Communication
  - Responsible Decision Making
  - Goal Setting
  - Pro-Social Peer Bonding
- After-School (CROP) Partnership— Too Good for Drugs and Violence After-School Activities is an extension of the Too Good evidence-based prevention education programs for the after school setting. Through a variety of positive, age-appropriate activities including games, stories, and songs, the program reinforces basic prevention concepts including decision making, goal setting, and conflict resolution among others. The activities are divided by age groups to sustain the children's interest and correspond to their development level.
- Teen Intervene—Teen intervene is a tested, time-efficient, evidence-based program for teenagers suspected of experiencing mild or moderate problems associated with alcohol or other drug use. Teen Intervene can include their parents or guardians

# RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

## Roxbury Central School District's Behavior Intervention Programs (cont'd)

5. Mental Health Vital Access Grant—Through a partnership with Margaretville Memorial Hospital we have established school-based mental health services for our student's and families.
6. I-Safe and Netsmarts—Ethical use and protective measures for proper use of electronic media provided to all students.
7. Go Guardian—Program to monitor a student's electronic use that staff can utilize to track ethical computer usage in our facility and while using school district account and network system.

NOTE: All students will be sent to the Dean's office if they are removed from class or other areas, where they will be supervised by a Licensed Teaching Assistant (LTA) or Teacher's Aide (TA).

## APPENDIX

Appendix:

RCS Code of Conduct

Policy 3420—Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School

Policy 7550—Dignity For All Students Act

Policy 7551—Sexual Harassment of Students

Policy 7552—Bullying: Peer Abuse in the School

Policy 7553—Hazing of Students

Policy 8242 -- Civility, Citizenship and Character Education/Interpersonal Violence Prevention  
Education