

WAYLAND • PUBLIC • SCHOOLS

WAYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

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Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

The Wayland Public Schools are committed to working with parents to create a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

You are probably aware that the new Massachusetts anti-bullying law (S. 2323) passed in May gives school officials the power to investigate and discipline bullying that occurs **on or off school grounds** if that bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target of bullying, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of the school, as determined by school administrators.

The new law requires that all districts submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) a complete comprehensive "Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan" by December 31, 2010. Over the summer, a group of Wayland teachers, counselors, special education liaisons, and administrators gathered to begin the work of ensuring that we are in compliance with the new Massachusetts law and our School Committee's new anti-bullying policy (JICFB). That work resulted in the following:

- Common procedures for reporting, investigating, and documenting bullying;
- common guidelines for protecting targets from further bullying or retaliation;
- common guidelines for disciplining and educating bullies;
- a framework for training school staff to prevent and recognize bullying; and
- a preliminary curriculum map of our K-12 anti-bullying curriculum.

Of course, the work we are doing at school can only go so far in preventing bullying. Supporting children's development is a shared responsibility between home and school. Parents are a child's first teachers and model the developmental tools, coping strategies, and life skills necessary for navigating all facets of social interaction, including responding to social conflict.

Wayland Public Schools encourages families to get involved in their children's schools and in their learning by attending conferences, attending school functions when possible, reading school and teacher newsletters and notices, and communicating with teachers regularly to provide input about their children's needs.

In addition, we invite you to join us in our efforts to eliminate bullying by:

- Reading our current draft of bullying and reporting and investigation procedures, which can be found at [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan](#).
- Attending meetings with school officials this fall to review the "Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan" that we will be submitting to DESE. The dates of these public meetings will be announced by the building administrators and posted on the appropriate school web pages.
- Attending special events hosted at your child's school regarding bullying. These meetings are being scheduled and will be advertised later in the school year.
- Exploring the anti-bullying resources provided by DESE at www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/bullying

Although we are waiting for more guidance from the DESE before we complete our Bullying Plan, I am confident that we have opened the school year ready to prevent and respond, if necessary, to incidents of bullying. Your support of our efforts in this area of concern is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gary A. Burton
Superintendent of Schools