

Clark Lane Middle School
Waterford, CT
Safe School Climate Plan
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Living and Learning at Clark Lane Middle School in a Safe School Environment

The Waterford Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or his designee, along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a **Safe School Climate Plan** in furtherance of the Board of Education Policy 5131.911.

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

Clark Lane Middle School is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment free from harassment, discrimination and bullying.

CLMS Safe School Climate Committee 2014-2015 (established September 2011)

Purpose: In response to both legislative and moral imperatives, CLMS has developed and implemented a **Safe School Climate Plan** that contains the essential elements indicated in CT State Statutes and Waterford Board of Education Policies.

CLMS is committed to creating an environment that is free from bullying and other harassing behaviors. Public Act 14-234 (*approved June 30, 2014*) requires that a safe school climate plan is in place to address bullying and teen dating violence in our school.

Updated definition of **bullying** according to Public Act 14-234

"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 school district, that:

- (i) Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- (ii) Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- (iii) Creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- (iv) Infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- (v) 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.

Public Act 14-234 identifies "teen dating violence" as it relates to its impact on a safe school climate.

DEFINITION: "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"

Clark Lane Middle School will support the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence through direct education, the development and enforcement of school rules, and adequate supervision of areas where this behavior is most likely to occur. In addition, intervention and support will be provided to students who engage in this behavior, and those who are the target of this behavior. Parents, staff and students will be educated of CT State law, the specific steps that should be taken to report incidents of suspected bullying and teen dating violence, and the actions CLMS administrators will take to investigate and intervene.

Leadership and Administrative Responsibilities (established Fall 2011)

1. **District Safe School Climate Coordinator** (Mr. Craig Powers, Assistant Superintendent)

- Responsible for implementing the district's Safe School Climate Plan
- Collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying in district school, provide data and information to the SDE
- Collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists (meet twice per year) to discuss issues relating to bullying in the school district and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Plan

2. **Safe School Climate Specialist** (Mr. James Sachs, Principal; Mrs. Tracy Moore, Assistant Principal)

- Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying and act as primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying
- Ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report
- Review any anonymous reports (no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report)
- Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation
- Provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's Safe School Climate Plan at the beginning of each school year

3. **SSC Specialist will Establish a Safe School Committee** (established September 2011)

- To include 1 parent of student enrolled in current school year
 - Any parent/guardian shall not participate in any activities which may compromise the confidentiality of any student, including, but not limited to receiving copies of investigation reports, or identifying or addressing patterns of bullying among students in the school
 - Develop and review of Safe School Climate Plan
- Receive copies of completed reports following investigations

- Document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations
 - Maintain a list of the number of verified acts
 - Make such list available for public inspection
 - Annually report such number to the Dept. of Education
- Identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school
- Review and make recommendations to the Coordinator based on issues and experiences specific to the school
- Educate students, school employees and parents/guardians on issues relating to bullying
- Collaborate with the Coordinator in the collection of data
- Perform any other duties as determined by the Principal related to prevention, identification and response to school bullying

Reporting

1. Students and parents/guardians may make **oral reports** or file **written reports**
 - Filed with building administrator and/or SSC Specialist
 - All written reports shall be forwarded to the SSC Specialist for review
 - Written report forms available from Administration
2. Students may make **anonymous reports** to any school employee
 - Parents must receive annual notification of the process
 - Student must meet with SSC Specialist or designee to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact of such may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action
 - No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint
3. School employees who **witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying** shall
 - **Orally notify** the SSC Specialist (or school administrator if the Specialist is unavailable) **not later than 1 school day** after witnessing or receiving a report of bullying

- **File written report not later than 2 school days** after making such oral report; report forms available from Administration

If an Act of Bullying is Verified:

1. Notify parent/guardian of the student against whom act was directed no later than 48 hours after completion of investigation and invite the parent/guardian to a meeting to discuss the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student.
2. Notify parent/guardian of the student who committed act of bullying no later than 48 hours after completion of investigation and invite the parent/guardian to a meeting to discuss the measures being taken by the school to prevent future acts of bullying.
3. Notification to include description of the school's response
4. Specific disciplinary consequences imposed or personally identifiable information may not be disclosed
5. SSC Specialist shall invite the parent/guardian of both students involved to a meeting to communicate the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student/victim and to prevent further acts of bullying
 - normally separate meetings shall be held
 - the meeting may be held jointly with written consent of both parents
6. Student Safety Support Plan
 - SSC Specialist shall develop a plan to include safety measures to protect against further acts
7. Written Intervention Plan
 - shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual
 - written plan may include counseling, discipline or other appropriate remedial actions
8. Law enforcement will be notified if the Principal reasonably believes that any act of bullying constitutes a criminal offense
9. SSC Specialist shall also coordinate any investigation with other appropriate personnel within the district as appropriate (Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator, etc.)

Addressing The Bully and The Victim at CLMS

The Bully: The district's commitment to **addressing bullying behavior** involves a multifaceted approach which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or school staff. **Students who engage in mean-spirited behavior** shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law. Whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action is a matter for the professional discretion of the Principal. Students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying. Peer mediation may be considered.

The Victim: Intervention strategies for a bullied student may include counseling, increased supervision and monitoring to observe and intervene, encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization, peer mediation, and/or a Student Safety Support Plan.

Supporting the Upstander at CLMS (school theme "*Upstander*, not *Bystander*")

The school-wide focus is on providing strategies that support the *Upstander*:

- training student mentors to be the change agents and role models for overall school climate
- participation in team activities and interactive assemblies featuring scenarios which require an *Upstander* response to mean-spirited behavior
- completing school curricular assignments relevant to acceptance and peace in our school and our world
- adult modeling and proactive involvement
- educating and supporting staff, students and parents/guardians

Prevention Strategies: CLMS Takes Action

(beginning August 2011 and on-going)

- Student Code of Conduct (Reflect...Respect...Respond!) advertised throughout the school, on the morning TV announcements and in all classrooms
- An online “reporting” form updated for 2014-15
- Interactive student assemblies, led by administration, to discuss and define school motto and expectations
- Established a Safe School Climate Committee to respond to Public Act No. 11-232
- Mentoring Committee meets regularly to design new Mentoring Programs
 - All students and all teachers participate; altered daily schedule twice per month to permit 25 minute mentoring period, teacher to student ratio is 1:10-12
 - Some activities focus on safe school climate
- School Safety training for Administrators and select teachers in site safety analysis and vulnerability
- Completed Safe School Climate Rubric and vulnerability assessment
- SAFE (Student Alliance for Everybody) Student Mentor-Leader program intersects with grade six mentoring groups and transition programs.
- Professional conferences supportive of middle school adolescents, culture, teaching and learning (throughout the year)
 - Example – School Refusal Presentation, November, 2014.
- Use of student “Recognition Referral” for acknowledgement of students who “go above and beyond”
- SAFE FUTURES curriculum delivered in grades seven and eight to respond to healthy dating relationships and healthy conflict resolution.

- Newly established GSA (Gay Straight Alliance Club) met monthly to address concerns of students seeking a supportive environment and place to discuss issues
- Parent presentation by SAFE FUTURES to assist parents in recognizing dangerous or inappropriate dating situations.

The following strategies occur regularly throughout the year:

- Faculty meetings – collaborative and instructional
- PLC meetings and Team meetings assess student data to support increased student learning and focus on the “middle school adolescent”
- Curriculum addresses acceptance, tolerance, personal differences, peace
- Team field trips to provide team-building experiences
- Student supports and interventions are solid via SRBI/STAT, 504, PPT
- Secure building – security cameras within the school and outside of school, addition of foyer cameras.
- Capital Request for additional cameras and safety film
- Emergency information clearly defined; reviewed throughout the year
 - Evacuation drills and “secure the building” drills practiced regularly
- Communication with parents/guardians – email, CLMS website, PowerSchool parent portal
- Team assemblies and recognition events to promote positive school culture
- In-School Suspension and office detention classroom offers reflection assignment and both academic and social/emotional support
 - Classroom often serves dual purpose - provides support to students in need with or without an assigned suspension
- School Resource Officer collaborates with staff, students and parents
- After-school activities on-going throughout the year – ACES, Connections, GSA, Unified Sports, Clubs & Athletics

- Ongoing collaboration with Waterford Youth and Family Services
- PTO Parent Series – topics relevant to various aspects of adolescent life

CLMS Responds to a Challenge Presented to all American Schools:

“I start with a simple premise that no school can be a great school until it is a safe school.”

“When we tolerate a culture that allows children to bully and harass each other because of race, color, national origin, gender stereotyping, or disability, we are failing to live up to principles of fairness and equity that are deeply rooted in our Constitution. Students should not be threatened physically, isolated socially, or hurt emotionally based on their skin color, their ethnicity, any physical or mental disabilities, their sex, their sexual orientation, their gender identity, religion or any other reason. Through our collective efforts, we're going to be able to reduce this harassment and make schools a better place for students to learn.”

-U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, March 11, 2011 White House Conference on Bullying.