

OAK BLUFFS SCHOOL HANDBOOK

(Please tear out page and return with parent's or guardian's signature.)

After you have read and discussed the handbook with your child, please sign and date the form below; then return it to Oak Bluffs School.

We have read and discussed the Oak Bluffs School Handbook, including the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Civil Rights Policy, Anti-Bias Policy, and Acceptable Use Policy.

Student Name (Please print)

Date

Parent's Signature

Date

Se você gostaria de um versao traduzido
(Português) deste manual, por favor entre em
contato com a secretaria da escola.

OAK BLUFFS SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Parent Checklist

Certain permission forms and other information are important to help us secure the safety of your children. Many of these forms are due at the opening of the school. Others are due upon request throughout the year. Please be sure to review and sign the following forms when they are provided to you:

- Emergency contact card, which must be updated with any changes during the school year;
- Blanket permission slip;
- Permission to photograph, videotape, or publish pictures of your child through newspapers, local television, school website, and the media;
- Updated immunization records;
- Physical exam from MD - due within one year of school entry and every three years; middle school sports participants - every year
- Details about allergies;
- Prescription medicine in its original container labeled by the pharmacist, for students that require medicine and parent/doctor signature for the nurse to administer medicine
- Free or reduced lunch application forms;
- School handbook sign-off found on the first page of this handbook

School Hours

School hours are 8:15 A.M. - 2:40 P.M. daily. Students report to their classrooms at 8:15. Line up areas will be announced at the beginning of the year. Breakfast is served in the cafeteria daily from 7:50 A.M. to 8:15 A.M.

Dismissal

School is dismissed at 2:40 P.M. To ensure safety for all children, we ask that you follow the pick up procedures outlined at the beginning of each year. **Please stay calm and remain in your vehicle.**

Playground supervision is not provided before 8:00 A.M or after 2:40 P.M.

Attendance

State law requires school attendance. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child (children) arrive at school on time.

Absences / Tardiness

If conditions require a student to be absent from school, please call the Absentee Line (508-696-7740) by 9:00 A.M. on the day of the absence. Requests for homework can also be made by 9:00 A.M. on the day of an absence. Attendance is taken daily at 8:20 AM. Students arriving after 8:20 AM must report to the office with a note explaining the reason for the tardiness. If a student must leave school early, a note of explanation is requested in advance. Such notes should be presented to the homeroom teacher. Students in grades K-8 will be sent to the office after the parent arrives in the office to sign the child out. Frequent absences and tardiness will require a parent/administrator conference. Excessive absenteeism may result in summer school, retention, or a CHINS petition filed with Edgartown District Court.

Absence / Incomplete Grade / Retention

Regular attendance at school is essential to school success. Teachers may provide, **but shall not be expected to provide**, academic work in advance of extended periods of absence. Family vacations do not constitute an excused absence, and we encourage parents to plan around the school calendar. Families who are planning a long term absence for their child(ren) (i.e. more than 10 consecutive days) must come to the school office to un-enroll their child(ren). Upon returning to school, families must re-enroll their child(ren). Students may attend school 24 hours after re-enrollment.

Emergency Cards/Contact

You will need to complete an Illness/Emergency Procedure Card for each of your children in school. The information helps to locate parents in the case of an emergency or any other need. The card provides an update on each child's health status and the parents' preferred ways of managing individual health needs. It gives permission for emergency care. This card must be completed and returned to the school nurse at the start of the school year or at the time of registration of a new student. It is very important that each child's emergency card contain at least two forms of parent contact in case of an emergency and the school is notified of any changes that occur during the school year.

Health information that is for the nurse only should be submitted in a note addressed to the nurse marked "confidential".

Health Procedures

There is a full-time school nurse on duty. Any student who is ill should notify his/her teacher and report to the nurse's office. If it is considered necessary for the student to be dismissed, personnel will contact parents and parents must pick their child up from the nurse's office. Students will be required to go home:

- if s/he has vomited;
- if s/he has a fever over 99 degrees F;
- if s/he has active head lice, and/or ;
- at the discretion of the nurse and administration for other medical conditions.

Students are not to telephone home or leave school without the consent of the nurse, principal, or homeroom teacher.

School Visitors

Any non-student (adults and children) who enters the Oak Bluffs School must report directly to the office to obtain a visitor's pass. Visitors must access the school through the front door only.

Snacks

Snacks high in sugar content are discouraged in favor of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products. Water is the only beverage allowed in classrooms. It is a gum and candy-free campus.

Bicycles, Skateboards, etc....

Children may ride bikes, scooters, skateboards, and roller blades to school. Children should be 8 years old before riding to school in this manner. **By law, helmets are required for all riders.**

Telephone

The school telephone is only available to students in case of an emergency. A request to interrupt classes to talk with a student will be denied.

Cancellation of School

When there is not school due to weather conditions or other emergencies, an announcement will be made on WMVY (FM 92.7), Oak Bluffs School website, and various television stations such as Channels 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Delayed Opening

If weather forecasts indicated clearing during the morning, we may have a delayed opening. All bus routes and schools then begin one or two hours later than usual. Radio and television stations will broadcast the delayed opening by 6:30 AM. If the weather does not improve by 8:00 AM, school may then be canceled. Radio stations and television stations will announce the cancellation of schools by 8:00 AM. It will also be posted on the school's website.

Early Dismissal

When an early dismissal becomes necessary because of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergencies, announcements will be made over WMVY, school website, and various television stations mentioned above. The announcements are made before 12:00 Noon.

Parents who will not be at home if school is dismissed early should make arrangements with relatives or friends to care for young children. Written notices of such arrangements must be provided to the school.

School Property

Students are responsible for textbooks, reference books, library books, school athletic uniforms, e.g., track, basketball, volleyball, or equipment that is assigned to them. The student must pay for any book, uniform, or piece of equipment damaged or lost. Students who fail to fulfill this obligation may not receive their final report card or diploma until the debt is paid. All textbooks need to be covered and clearly identified with the student's name and homeroom.

The Social Curriculum

At the Oak Bluffs School, our goal is to create a safe, challenging, and joyful environment for all students to learn. Some of the skills we stress in the classroom and school are: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. The adults in school will model these behaviors and give the children time to practice them. Students learn that all actions have consequences, some positive and some negative. At times, the adults need to intervene with "logical consequences." Logical consequences will be:

- *relevant* ~ directly related to the student's action and effective in repairing the problems the actions caused
- *realistic* ~ reasonable for the student to do and for the adults to follow through on
- *respectful* ~ adults will be firm but caring; focusing on the specific behavior of the student, and communicated with respect to the student

School Rules (from the Constitutional Convention of 2003)

We rely on our partnership with families in support of our school rules and decisions in order to help children learn responsibility.

- Respect school property.
- Take responsibility for ourselves, others and our surroundings.
- Acknowledge personal and educational space.
- Respect people's differences
- Make it a safe place to make mistakes
- Treat Others The Way You Want To Be Treated

Bus Conduct

Students must understand that it is a privilege, not a right, to ride the school bus. For the overall safety of everyone on the bus, including the driver, students need to be considerate and follow the rules for behavior. Violations of these rules **will** result in loss of bus privilege.

- *The Oak Bluffs School Rules apply to all students who ride the bus to or from school.*
- *Stand back from the roadway while waiting for the bus.*
- *Do not run or play around the bus stop area.*
- *Boarding should be done safely; allow younger students to board the bus first.*
- *Students should remain seated at all times; bodies are kept inside the bus at all times.*
- *Students will be picked up and dropped off only at their designated bus stops.*
- *When crossing the street at a bus stop, students must wait until the driver gives a signal that it is safe to cross. Crossing is done in front of the bus, well ahead of it so the driver can see students. Warning lights will be flashed on the bus until the crossing is completed.*

Only those students assigned to the bus may ride it. Any exception requires a note from home and the principal's approval.

Bus conduct offenses are written on transportation warning slips and must be signed by the parents and returned to school. Repeated bus offenses may result in loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the year. Parents will be notified of any suspension in riding privilege and have a right to a conference. A transportation representative may be available.

Birthdays

Invitations to after-school parties should be mailed rather than distributed at school.

Items from Home

Students are discouraged from bringing toys and collectibles from home except as part of a teacher requested "share." These items can lead to distraction during the school day.

Appropriate Attire and Appearance

Oak Bluffs School children should come to school dressed in clean, comfortable clothing which allows them to participate in the many types of activities that occur through the school day.

Student dress should reflect respect and pride in each student, each student's family, and the school community.

- Any type of dress or personal grooming which disrupts the educational environment or is a threat to safety or health is prohibited.
- In all cases, students are to wear clothing that covers all parts of the body from neck to mid-thigh. As a general guideline, tank/halter tops must be the width of 4 fingers and skirts/shorts must reach the end of fingers when arms are lowered to the side. Tights may be worn underneath skirts.
- Undergarments are to be covered during all school activities (while arms are raised and lowered, while sitting or standing, and during any other physical activity).
- Students should not wear hats, bandanas or other head coverings except with administrative permission.
- Displays on clothing should be appropriate for a K-8 learning environment. This includes but is not limited to appropriate language, messages with double meanings, and alcohol or drug related messages.

Lockers

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are assigned lockers for storage of their clothing, books, and supplies. Storage of contraband (e.g. weapons, narcotics, tobacco, alcohol, stolen property, etc.) in school lockers is not allowed and punishable by law. **Lockers are subject to periodic inspections to ensure compliance with school policies and the law.**

Lost and Found

Please check the Lost and Found (located in the main lobby) when something is missing. It is helpful to label clothing and other items with the student's name wherever possible. Remember, the school cannot assume responsibility for lost or missing possessions; we strongly encourage that valuable items remain at home.

Electronic Communication Devices

Students may not use cellphones, pdas, handheld electronic games, laser pens, or similar devices in school including recess. These may be confiscated and held by administration.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the educational process. Students are expected to complete related work assignments outside the classroom in order to improve their achievement levels. It is suggested that parents set aside a quiet place and consistent time each day for their children to spend on homework. Assignments graduate in levels of difficulty and time commitment as a student moves through the grades. In Middle School, a substantial amount of homework should be expected. If you have questions or concerns about this, please discuss them with the classroom teacher. All students in grades 4-8 will receive assignment notebooks. Students in Kindergarten through grade 3 are given a homework folder; please check it daily.

After School Library/Homework Club

Students may receive support and assistance with their homework in the library on Monday through Thursday, 2:40 to 4:00, depending on funding availability. Students in grades 6-8 may see a teacher for help before and after school, given the teachers' availability. Communication with your child's teacher is necessary to insure that this assistance can take place.

Report Cards

In K-5, a written report will be mailed home at mid-year and year-end. In grades 6-8 report cards are mailed out three times a year (trimesters). Report cards for K-5 are generally issued in January and June. Report cards for 6-8 generally are issued in December, March, and June.

Interims (Grades 6-8 only)

Interim reports are issued in the middle of each trimester and serve a number of purposes:

- To inform you that your child is keeping up with all work and is doing well in the classroom.
- To inform you that while your child is doing well overall in a specific class, there are some areas (i.e. homework) that are in need of further attention.
- To inform you that your child is not keeping up with requirements for the class.
- To inform you that your child is in danger of failing a class.

Interim reports are not necessarily sent home for every class or for every student each trimester, and only the boxes with an "X" in them refer to your child's progress. Some teachers choose to use other grade book type interims and may or may not include a narrative.

It is important to note that following interims there is sufficient time remaining in each marking period for your child to address areas needing improvement for a particular class. Please feel free to contact the

guidance office or the classroom teacher for further information. Teachers are also available by appointment both before and after school to meet with your child to work out an improvement plan.

Eligibility / School Programs and Events

In the Middle School, academic and behavioral eligibility are critical to participation in extracurricular activities and events, such as FLEX, special school activities, sports practices and games, play rehearsals and performances, math team, student council, and school dances and canteens.

Eligibility is determined by:

- a. a "Passport" which is explained to students at the start of school.
- b. assignments (this includes missing class work, homework, projects, etc).
- c. other significant issues.

If a student is deemed ineligible, s/he will lose the privilege to participate in ANY extracurricular activities for one week, e.g., FLEX, sports practices and games, play rehearsals and performances, etc.

Ineligibility is determined if:

- a. a student owes 5 or more homework assignments
- b. a student has 8 or more circles on his/her passport

Parent-Teacher Conferences

At parent conferences in the fall and spring, parents are brought up to date on their child's performance and behavior. It is strongly suggested that parents attend these conferences. Every effort is made to accommodate parent schedules, and we hope you will take advantage of these times to meet. This ongoing communication between home and school is a significant contributing factor to school success. Please let the guidance counselor know of any issues that might affect your child's performance in school.

Honor Roll Policy

Students have the ability to earn High Honor Roll and Honor Roll distinctions in grades six, seven and eight.

In order to earn "High Honor Roll" status a student must:

- earn an "A" grade in every subject including specials, such as Physical Education/Health, Art, Home Arts, Shop and/or Music.
- earn conduct marks of "satisfactory"(S) in all classes. An "unsatisfactory" (U) or "need's improvement" conduct mark in any class will disqualify a student from earning the distinction of High Honors.

In order to earn "Honor Roll" status a student must:

- earn grades of "A" or "B" in all of their classes, including specials, such as Physical Education, Art and/or Music.
- earn conduct marks of "satisfactory" (S) or "needs improvement" (N). An "unsatisfactory" grade (U) in any class will disqualify a student from earning "honor roll" status.

Testing

This year, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) will be administered to students in grades 3 through 8 according to state designated times in March, April, and May. Parents will receive more information on which subject areas will be tested at each grade level (see calendar section that follows). **We strongly encourage perfect attendance during these weeks.**

Field Trips

Field trip experiences that are considered a special privilege. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times during these trips and failure of students to follow school rules may result in the loss of this privilege. Permission slips are required for all off-island field trips. On-island trips conducted throughout the year are covered by a blanket permission slip that parents sign at the beginning of the school year.

Sixth Grade Trip to Camp Alton Jones

Details are sent home in September. Students must be in good standing both academically and behaviorally in order to participate in this trip. Parents are responsible for the cost of the program.

Seventh Grade Ski Trip

A class ski trip is offered to the seventh graders in February or March of each year. Students must be in good standing both behaviorally and academically (first trimester and second interim average of C- or better) in order to participate. Students are encouraged to take part in class fund raising events, run by a committee of parents and the seventh grade staff advisors. Parents are responsible for the cost of the trip.

Eighth Grade Trip

A tradition of the eighth grade at Oak Bluffs School is a class trip to New York and Pennsylvania for 6 days in June. All students are academically eligible but must be in good behavioral standing. A student's attendance record is also considered. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in fund raising efforts. Parents are responsible for the cost of the trip.

Student Council

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8, are eligible to be members of the Student Council.

Community Service

Middle school students at the Oak Bluffs School are expected to complete a minimum of number of hours Community Service. 6th Grade students = 6 hours of community service. 7th Grade students = 8 hours of community service. 8th Grade students = 10 hours of community service. Throughout the year, students are notified of numerous community service opportunities which come through the school.

Guidance Counseling

Guidance services are available for every student in the school. These services include assistance with educational planning; help with home, school, or social concerns, and any other question the student or parent may feel the need to discuss with a guidance counselor. If a student's needs cannot be met in the school setting, the school may recommend a counselor through the Island Counseling Center or another private practitioner.

Health and Safety

Your child's health and safety are primary responsibilities of the school. To that end, your child will be given screenings by the school nurse, e.g, vision, hearing, scoliosis, and body mass index. In the event your son or daughter become injured or ill in school, s/he will be treated by the school nurse or staff in accordance with standard first aid practices. If an injury is serious (head injury, broken bone, loss of consciousness), Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) will be called via 911 emergency service. Parents are contacted immediately in the case of accidental injury and if you cannot be reached, your child will be transported to the Martha's Vineyard Hospital for emergency care. It is vital that all parents keep the school informed of emergency contact phone numbers.

OAK BLUFFS SCHOOL HONOR CODE

At Oak Bluffs School, students are expected to conduct themselves honorably.

The following are behaviors expected of all Oak Bluffs' students:

- Take responsibility for own work; cheating and plagiarism are not allowed.
- Students conduct themselves respectfully both in school (including public displays of affection) and at all school-sponsored events (including athletic events).
- Take responsibility for your actions; if you make a mistake, be truthful and move on.

Disciplinary consequences include:

- Zero grade on the assignment;
- Meeting with parents;
- In or Out of School Suspension;
- Suspension from extra-curricular activities.

Student Support Services

The School is a source or information for parents and educators about child and family services available at the School as well as elsewhere in the school system, the community, and off-Island.

School Nurse

The school nurse coordinates and provides a range of health support services. The following are some examples of these services:

- immunization record updating and free clinics;
- screening: hearing, vision, spinal curves, height, weight, body mass index, and blood pressure;
- dental clinics when available.

School Counselors

The counselors provide academic, emotional, or social support to students in grades K-8. Support may be provided through individual sessions, student groups, classroom presentations, or meetings between counselor, parent, and student.

Graduation Requirements

The Oak Bluffs School wishes to create a graduation ceremony that reflects the hard work and citizenship that we expect of all students. Each eighth grade student at the Oak Bluffs School is required to meet established academic and social expectations in order to graduate. Receiving a diploma and/or participation in the formal graduation ceremony, or any other school sponsored graduation function in

June is not automatic. In order to graduate, eighth graders must have completed all course work, have a cumulative passing grade in each subject area, returned all books and materials (including uniforms for athletic teams/clubs), and paid all fines and fees. Students are also expected to complete twenty-four hours of community service over the three years spent in grades 6,7, and 8. Every effort will be made to provide early and ongoing assistance to students. Students not meeting academic graduation requirements will be expected to complete the work during summer school before going on to high school. Parents of students who are in danger of not participating in graduation ceremonies will be notified by **May 1st**. Final determinations and notifications will be made by the building principal to both student and parents by **June 1st**. It is possible for a student to be placed at the high school without participating in the graduation ceremony, and/or without receiving a diploma. Parents can make appeals regarding any decision to school administration. All decisions are subject to final approval by the principal.

Smoking is not permitted at any time by anyone on the school grounds. This is state law.

Residency

Students must physically reside in the Town of Oak Bluffs in order to attend the Oak Bluffs school.

School Choice

A parent from any Island district may apply of a student's entry to the Oak Bluffs School through the lottery system.

An Oak Bluffs parent may request that their child attend any other Island school according to the guidelines of school choice at the Chilmark, Edgartown, West Tisbury, or Tisbury Schools.

Incoming Student Records

All incoming students who register at the Oak Bluffs School must provide a complete copy of their student record from their his/her prior school, as required by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37L.

Access to Records

Parents, legal guardians, and students who are at least 14 years old may request copies of student records and request an interpretation of the records, pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71.

Confidentiality of Records

With few exceptions, only the parents, the student, administrators, counselors, and authorized school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student's permanent record without specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student. Please understand that the court may subpoena records, and the parents will be notified of this event.

Amendment of Records

The parent, guardian, and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make objections known. Within a week of the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system. The appeals process must begin with the building principal, then the superintendent of schools, and, as a final resort, the school committee.

Transfer of Records

When a student transfers from this school, the student's records will be mailed to any school in which the student is enrolling. Records of students that have completed Grade 8 will be transferred to Martha's Vineyard Regional High School

**Oak Bluffs School
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools' (MVPS) Core Values are:

- All children have the right to every opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- Each person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Integrity and personal responsibility are the hallmarks of our daily interaction.

The MVPS expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The MVPS is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying/cyber bullying and their harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We understand that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students with cultural and linguistic difference, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The MVPS will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for all populations in the school community and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying/cyber bullying, harassment, or teasing. We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying, and the MVPS is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence.

I. DEFINITION OF BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING

Bullying as defined in MGL c. 71 § 370 is the repeated use by one or more students (or others) of written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, as directed at a target that:

1. Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
2. Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
4. Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
5. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process.

Cyber Bullying is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not be limited to, e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:

1. Deliberately threatens, harasses, and/or intimidates an individual student or a group of students; or
2. Places a student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm to person or property; or
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

“School district owned, operated, or supervised technologies” is any computer, networking system, electronic equipment, or any other equipment or device that may be used by a person to communicate to another which is owned, leased, operated, or under the control or supervision of the school district and/or school district staff.

Bullying/Cyber bullying are prohibited:

A. On school grounds, 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, or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district; and

B. At a location, activity, function, program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process of the school. Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying or cyber bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying/cyber bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying/cyber bullying. Retaliation is prohibited. Reports of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

II. LEADERSHIP

Leadership at all levels plays a critical role in everything we do here on Martha’s Vineyard and the development of the Bullying/Cyber Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is no exception. At the Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools’ level, the Superintendent Dr. James H. Weiss and the Assistant Superintendent Laurie F. Halt have reviewed this important topic with the All-Island School Committee (AISC) at its monthly meetings. The AISC has also been the initial vehicle for the development of the Island’s bullying, cyber bullying and harassment policies. At the local level, the individual School Committees (Tisbury, Oak Bluffs, Edgartown, Up-Island and Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School) have reviewed the policies at school committee meetings since late summer. Final approval is expected December 2010. The Superintendent will take responsibility for annually reviewing the policies and procedures to determine what may need to be updated.

Local school principals (Richard Smith – Tisbury, John Stevens –Edgartown, Carlin Hart – Oak Bluffs, Susan Stevens – Chilmark, Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury, and Dr. Stephen Nixon – MVRHS) have worked with their School Advisory Councils (SAC’s) to review the plans and have conducted PTO/A meetings to bring the ideas to their respective communities. Local school principals also reviewed the plans and policies with staff at staff meetings during the fall. This inclusive process has allowed stakeholders at all levels to have input into the development process as well as helping the local leaders assess the needs of the districts. Local building principals will also be responsible for record-keeping and reviewing trends that may become apparent. This ongoing process will allow for adjustments to be recommended on an Island-wide basis.

The Martha’s Vineyard Public School’s Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Leadership Team is responsible for improving the curriculum, instruction and assessment practices for the MV Public Schools. Team members include the superintendent, assistant superintendent, all building principals, high school department heads and elementary school teacher leaders. This team has developed a 5 stage curriculum renewal cycle. We will use this process to examine the current bully prevention programs in

place in our schools and make the necessary changes to ensure that the bully prevention program will help improve peer relations and create a more positive atmosphere where students can learn and develop.

III. BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING AND RETALIATION:

A. Reporting bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation.

Reports of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form,¹ a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address. Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians. At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying/cyber bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

B. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for **behavior management and discipline.**

C. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying/cyber bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee. Responding to a report of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation.

D. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the 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 altering the

aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation. (Include locally established student safety planning policies and procedures here.)

E. Obligations to Notify Others

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

2. Notice to Another School or District. 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 principal 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.

3. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal 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. Also, 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 principal or designee 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 aggressor. In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

4. Investigation. The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation. Procedures for investigating reports of bullying/cyber bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and

procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

5. Determinations. The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee 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 principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying/cyber bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development. The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the 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.

E. Responses to bullying/cyber bullying:

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v).

Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's antibullying/cyber bullying curricula;
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the antibullying/cyber bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- Making a referral for evaluation.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for pupils who commit an act of bullying/cyberbullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension. In addition, cyber bullying using district technology violates the *Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Network Acceptable Use Policy For Students* ;If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will 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. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying/cyber 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 principal or designee 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 principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

IV. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent education and resources. The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying/cyber bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations.

B. Notification requirements. Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying/cyber bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber bullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district will post the Plan and related information on its website.

V. BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

A. Specific bullying/cyber bullying prevention approaches. Bullying/cyber bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- Emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying/Cyber Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan should include specific information about how and when the school or district will review the Plan with students.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying/cyber bullying prevention efforts. The

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying/cyber bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:
- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
 - Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
 - Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
 - Using positive behavioral supports;
 - Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
 - Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
 - Using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
 - Using the Internet safely; and
 - Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

VI. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. Nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H1/2, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

In addition to the above, any complainant may pursue his/her rights under the law and file a formal complaint with the appropriate government agencies below within six (6) months:

Massachusetts Commission Against US Equal Employment Opportunity
Discrimination Commission
1 Ashburton Place, Room 601 475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02108 Boston, MA 02203
(617) 994.6000 (617) 565.3196

MVPS NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Definition of Networks and Systems Covered Under This Policy

There are three basic levels of networks that are covered under this policy. The Local Area Network (LAN) consists of all networked computers at the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS). The Wide Area Network (WAN) consists of the network connecting all Island schools, and in the future other Island institutions. The third level is our connection to the Internet. Within each of these networks, all hardware, software, and related peripherals used in connecting to or as a part of the network are included in this policy. In addition, all computers owned or leased by the MVPS shall be included under this policy.

Guidelines

Access to the MVPS networks is for educational purposes only. This access includes connections made on any Island public school, through a dial up or other provided access, or through the Internet. Below are categories of acceptable and unacceptable activities for these networks.

A. General

1. All users of these networks are representatives of the MVPS and should present themselves accordingly.
2. Access is for educational use only.
3. All users are expected to exercise responsible and ethical behavior when using these networks.
4. Students may only access the Internet under the supervision of a teacher or staff member.
5. Student use of the Internet should be for approved educational purposes only.
6. Activity on all network levels is subject to MVPS regulations, as well as all applicable local, state, federal, and international law.
7. Even though security measures are in place, be aware that sometimes information on networks can be accessed. Do not put information on line that you do not want others to have access to (i.e. credit card, bank account numbers, etc.)
8. Unauthorized use of copyrighted materials is prohibited.
9. Do not subscribe to any mail or listservs, or any service that will download large numbers of email messages to your mailbox without prior permission from a system administrator or Technology staff person.
10. Access to chat groups, video teleconferences, and the like are only to be done with the permission of a teacher or staff member and under their direct supervision.
11. If an email account is provided to a user, that person will use it for educational purposes only.
12. The MVPS reserves the right to examine, modify or remove any or all data stored in computers that are part of these networks to make sure that all users are in compliance with these regulations.

B. Security

1. Use only account(s) assigned to you.
2. All users with an account will be given a password - do not give your password to anyone else or use another user's password at any time - You will be responsible for all activities taking place on your account.
3. If you think someone has accessed your account, or has information about your account, notify the system administrator or technology staff immediately.
4. If you identify any security problems, notify a system administrator, technology staff, or MVPS administrator only. Do not show or identify a security problem to other users.

C. Vandalism/Destruction/Unauthorized access of data or files/Harassment

1. Do not upload, download, or use any computer programs or hardware that will record or otherwise give access to passwords or other information to allow unauthorized access to a computer or account.

2. Do not upload or download any malicious program or other program designed to destroy or in any way compromise the operation of any computer, server, Network system or data.

D. Responsibilities

1. All users are responsible for their user accounts and activities on those accounts
2. Users are subject to all applicable laws when using these networks. Violation of any rules may result in disciplinary or legal action from within the MVPS as well as from outside legal authorities.
3. Users will not search for or participate in any activity on any network that is obscene, threatening, or contrary to educational pursuits.

E. Penalties

1. Any user violating these provisions may lose network privileges temporarily or permanently.
2. Users are subject to all other rules and laws applicable when using these networks, and may be punished under MVPS regulations, as well as criminally prosecuted.
3. Users may be held responsible for any financial costs incurred as a result of malicious or intentional actions that cause damage to any aspect of the networked system.
4. School and district administrators will make the final determination on what constitutes unacceptable use. They will handle all punishments covered under this policy and school regulations.

The MVPS makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The MVPS will not be responsible for any damages a user may suffer, including loss of data. The

MVPS will not be responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet or other network connections.

Statement of Civil Rights Policy

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools recognize the right of each student and employee to perform in an atmosphere free of harassment, intimidation, ridicule, hostility or offensiveness. The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) extends its policy of non-discrimination to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. ***No person shall be excluded or discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.*** Anyone aggrieved by or complaining of discrimination because of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability may register a complaint with the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator at the Office of the Superintendent, RR 2, Box 261, 4 Pine St. Vineyard Haven, MA 02568 508.693.2007 ext. 12. The Title VI and IX Coordinator is Dr. James H. Weiss, and the Section 504 Coordinator is Mr. Daniel Seklecki.

1. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Once the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, principal, supervisor, or other school personnel is notified, an immediate investigation of the allegation(s) will be conducted and necessary corrective action shall be taken through the grievance process. No employee or student shall be subjected to adverse treatment because the employee or student made a complaint. All appropriate confidences shall be maintained.

2. GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Students and employees are encouraged but not required to directly object to acts or behavior felt to be discrimination. If (s) he feels uncomfortable in doing so, or if the issue is unresolved after direct discussion, (s) he should inform the school principal and/or the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator.

The Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator may advise the aggrieved of various options:

- Formal or informal implementation of the grievance procedure;
- Filing a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Education
- Filing a complaint with the Massachusetts Human Rights Commission
- Filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights
- Filing a private lawsuit

3. INFORMAL PROCEDURE

Once the grievance is brought to the attention of the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, (s) he shall attempt to resolve the matter through fact finding.

If the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator is unable to resolve the complaint, the complainant may move to the formal grievance procedure. The Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator then becomes a resource to all parties.

4. FORMAL PROCEDURE

- a. The complainant may file a formal grievance with the principal or supervisor within 30 (thirty) working days (school days for students and school year employees) of the date that the complaint was made to the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. If all of the parties involved in the complaint process desire to extend the formal process, the 30-day requirement may be waived. If the complainant does not file a written complaint to the principal or supervisor, the principal or supervisor will record the complaint in writing. If the complaint process begins with the principal and does not go back to the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, then the formal process ensues. The principal/supervisor may advise the complainant to talk first with the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator and proceed with an internal review.
- b. The Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator will put in writing any recommendation for resolving the complaint and present it to the complainant, other parties involved in the complaint and the principal or supervisor.
- c. Within fourteen (14) days (school days for students or school year employees) days from receipt of the complaint, the principal/supervisor must investigate and respond in writing with her/his review of the incident and of any action taken or decision made. The principal/supervisor may notify the parent/guardian in accordance with established school policy if a student under 18 (eighteen) years of age is involved. The investigation may include but is not limited to the following:
 - meeting with the person charged to obtain a response to the complaint;
 - conducting interviews of possible witnesses to any alleged events;
 - report the matter to local police if criminal activity is involved (see Massachusetts general Laws, chapter 265 section 43, which prohibits stalking, and chapter 269 section 17 which prohibits hazing) and/or suspected child abuse to the Department of Social Services as required by Massachusetts General Laws chapter 119 section 51A;
 - subject to the requirements of due process, take disciplinary action against the person charged pursuant to any collective bargaining agreement, student handbook, and state and federal law, including without limitation, a letter of reprimand or warning or a suspension of 1(one) to 10 (ten) days;
 - refer the person charged to the Superintendent and/or designee for further disciplinary action.

The written report must contain the following information:

- All facts and circumstances of the incident;
 - Verification of parent or guardian notification if a student under 18 (eighteen) years of age is involved;
 - A summary of the investigation of all allegations which will include interviews with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information: the complainant, the person charged, and if either is under the age of 18 (eighteen), their parent(s)/guardian(s), witnesses, and anyone who may have been the victim of similar conduct
- d. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the principal or supervisor, (s) he may submit a written request for review to the Superintendent of Schools or designee within 30 (thirty) ays (school days for students and school year employees). The Superintendent of Schools or designee must respond, in writing, within 14 (fourteen) working days.
 - e. An employee, student or parent/guardian acting on behalf of a student may at any time file a grievance with the following agencies:

United States Department of Education
Region 1, John W. McCormack Building
C.H.ROOM 222
Boston, MA 02109-4557
(617) 223-9317

Massachusetts Human Rights Commission
51 Inman St. Second Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 349-4396

Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148-5023
(781) 338-3300

- f. Records of any grievance filed by a complainant shall not be placed in the complainant's personnel file.

Civil Rights Policy
MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COMPLIANCE COORDINATORS AND LIAISONS
INDIVIDUAL – AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

James H. Weiss, Superintendent – Titles II, VI, and IX
Martha's Vineyard Public Schools
4 Pine Street
Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
Tel: 508.693.2007

Daniel T. Seklecki, Director of Student Support Services – Section 504
Martha's Vineyard Public Schools
4 Pine Street
Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
Tel: 508.693.2007

Stephen Nixon, Principal – Homeless Education
Martha's Vineyard Regional High School
PO Box 1385
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557
Tel: 508.693.1033

Retaliation/Confidentiality

The Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools will not allow anyone to retaliate against any person because (s) he complains of discrimination or assists in an investigation of discrimination. Intimidation, coercion or any other attempt to interfere with an investigation of discrimination will not be tolerated. Information provided during an investigation of discrimination will be treated as confidential. This means that such information will be shared with others on a need-to-know basis only.

{Adoption Date} 08.20.2002 by the Oak Bluffs School Committee

Revised:

CROSS REFS.:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|
| 1 st Reading | - | 5.21.2002 |
| 2 nd Reading | - | 7.02.2002 |
| 3 rd Reading | - | 8.20.2002 |

LEGAL REFS.:d

Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools Anti-Bias Policy

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools system supports all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. The members of the Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools system believe that for a school community to be truly healthy, it must be guided by the values of multicultural inclusion, respect, and equality. Intolerance has no place at an institution of learning.

The members of the Martha’s Vineyard Pubic Schools system believe in the importance of a safe climate where communication between adults and students is encouraged and supported, and where conflict is managed and mediated constructively. In a climate of safety, students are willing to break the unwritten, but powerful “code of silence”. When students know that harassment, intimidation, and bullying will not be tolerated, they are more likely to turn to trusted adults for help in resolving problems without the feeling that they are “ratting”, “tattling”, or “telling” on a peer. By encouraging responsible bystander behavior in students, serious problems will come to adult attention earlier, and can be addressed and mediated more effectively.

Martha's Vineyard Public Schools employees, students, and volunteers who witness or have reliable information about a student being subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying, whether verbal or physical, are encouraged to report these incidents. We encourage all Martha's Vineyard Public Schools professionals to be actively engaged in the struggle to end oppression, to prevent bias related violence in our school communities, and to take action to eradicate injustice.

PURPOSE:

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students by other students will not be tolerated in the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools system.

SCOPE:

This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, school district property, or property within the jurisdiction of the school district, school uses, or while students are engaging in school sponsored activities.

DEFINITIONS:

Harassment prohibited by the district includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability. Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble students, and that has the effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student. Included in this definition are any words, acts, or gestures reasonably perceived as being motivated by a student's height, weight, socio-economic status, or any other distinguishing characteristic. This category is geared to other things that make students stand out in a way that might target them as likely victims of bullies.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- ☐ PHYSICAL AGGRESSION: physical harm or destroying property;
- ☐ SOCIAL AGGRESSION: rumors, racial slurs, or exclusion from a group
- ☐ VERBAL AGGRESSION: name calling, teasing, or threatening, implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter;
- ☐ INTIMIDATION: phone calls, mean tricks, or taking possessions;
- ☐ WRITTEN AGGRESSION: threatening notes or graffiti;
- ☐ SEXUAL HARASSMENT: comments or actions of a sexual nature that make the victim uncomfortable;
- ☐ RACIAL AND CULTURAL (ETHNIC) HARASSMENT: comments or actions containing racial or ethnic overtones (direct or indirect) that make the recipient uncomfortable.

CONSEQUENCES AND REMEDIAL ACTION:

- 1) The student who is the victim will be offered additional support through the school counseling office.
- 2) Any student(s) involved in provoking an incident shall receive one or more of the following consequences.
 - a) Immediate suspension for up to five school days.
 - b) Parent meeting.
 - c) Verbal and/or written apology to the victim.

- d) Follow-up educational assignment facilitated by principal/school counselor from a list compiled and reviewed by school administration each year e.g., to conduct research on certain aspects of history involving coercion and mistreatment.

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ACTS OF HARASSMENT/BULLYING

When a harassment, intimidation or bullying incident occurs, staff members are required to immediately report the incident to administration.

Administration will contact school counselors who will provide emotional support to victimized student.

Administration will conduct a thorough investigation which upon substantiation, shall result in the above noted consequences and remedial action.

Parents of both victim and aggressor will be notified immediately.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES:

The district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;

The principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment, intimidation, and bullying;

PROHIBITION OF REPRISALS:

Retaliation against a student because a student has filed a harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaint, or assisted or participated in a harassment, intimidation, or bullying investigation or proceeding is prohibited. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools employees who promptly report an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying and who make this report in compliance with the procedures in this policy are not liable for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

REFERENCES: "Words that Hurt", American School Board Journal, September 1999
National Education Policy Network, NSBA