

# PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION (BULLYING)

EPPING SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Bullying Introduction
- School District Policy
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

# WHY THIS FOCUS ON BULLYING?

- Bullying may leave scars that last 5 years or more
- School shooters have been mercilessly bullied
- Bullying is a symptom of a larger illness or attachment deficit
- Bullying starts in preschool, peaks in middle school, & drops off in high school
- Severity of bullying increases in high school
- Bullied girls are more likely to attempt suicide
- Bullied boys are more likely to bring a weapon to school

*\*Professor Malcolm Smith, UNH*

# WHO IS DOING THE BULLYING?

Narcissist Student has a perceived imbalance of power over the victim that feeds his/her high self esteem.

Victim Student is being bullied & reacts to the bully.

Afraid Student is responding to his/her biggest fear (losing parent(s) or being embarrassed in front of friends).

Bystander Student assists the bully, reinforces the bullying act, &/or does nothing to help victim.

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# THE BULLYING LAW

- Language was developed by a committee of parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, union representatives, NHSAA & NHDOE representatives, & legislators (Epping participated)
- House Bill 1523 became effective July 1, 2010
- Required written policy within 6 months (Epping policy approved November 18, 2010)
- Requires training on policy within 9 months (Purpose of this presentation)

# THE INTENT OF THE LAW & POLICY

- Prohibit bullying & cyberbullying
- Provide all pupils with a safe & secure school environment in which all are treated with respect
- Protect all pupils on school grounds & participating in school activities & events
  - Epping school students
  - Epping home, charter, out-of-district, & private school students
  - Non-Epping school students

# BULLYING DEFINITION

**Bullying is a single significant incident or pattern of incidents involving:**

- **Written communication**
- **Verbal communication**
- **Electronic communication**
- **Physical act or gesture**
- **Any combination thereof directed at another student which:**

# BULLYING DEFINITION CONTINUED

- **Physically harms a pupil or damages the pupil's property**
- **Causes emotional distress to a pupil**
- **Interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities**
- **Creates a hostile educational environment or**
- **Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.**

# BULLYING DEFINITION CONTINUED

**It may also include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a pupil's actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs, or motivated by the pupil's association with another person and based on the other person's characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.**

**\*Characteristics of the student or one of their friends**

# BULLYING DEFINITION CONTINUED

Historically this has included:

- Race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, or ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic status
- Age
- Physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability
- Gender or gender identity & expression
- Obesity
- Other

# BULLYING INCLUDES CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying that is undertaken through the use of electronic devices.

- **Telephones & cell phones**
  - Text messaging
- **Pagers**
- **Computers**
  - Electronic mail
  - Instant messaging
  - Websites
- **Other**

# DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Address bullying that:**
  - Occurs on, or is delivered to, school property or a school-sponsored activity or event on or off school property (school, buses, computers, ...)
  - Occurs off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored event, if the conduct interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts orderly operations of school or school-sponsored activity or event

## DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

- **Impose appropriate discipline or remedial measures for students who:**
  - **Commit an act of bullying**
  - **Falsely accuse another student of bullying**
  - **Retaliate against any student who reports or provides information about bullying**
- **Protect students who report or provide information from retaliation by others**
- **Communicate with parents throughout the process**

## DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

- **Protect any staff member from retaliation for making a good faith report of bullying or participating in the process**
- **Provide annual written notice of policy to students, parents, staff, volunteers, & contracted employees**
- **Provide annual training to students, staff, volunteers, & contracted employees**
- **Host or schedule public forums to discuss & address bullying**

# SCHOOL EMPLOYEE\* RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Inform the Principal or Dean of Students as soon as possible within the school day if you have witnessed, received a report of, or have knowledge or belief that bullying may have occurred**
- **Encourage students to tell you about acts of bullying**

**\*Includes school volunteers & contract employees**

# SCHOOL EMPLOYEE\* PROTECTION

**School employees shall be immune from civil liability for good faith conduct in reporting, participating, responding, or implementing a recommended action.**

**\*Includes school volunteers & contract employees**

# STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Report bullying incident immediately to Principal or Dean of Students**
- **Tell a teacher or school employee who shall report the bullying incident**
- **Complete the Bullying Report Form**
- **Do not wrongfully and intentionally accuse another student of bullying**

# PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Report to the Principal or Dean of Students if you believe that your child is the victim of bullying or the perpetrator of bullying
- Talk to your children about bullying
- Inform the school immediately about bullying
- Complete the Bullying Report Form
- Cooperate fully with the school

**\*It does not go away!**

# COMMUNICATION & THE LAW

## Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

- The school can share the name of the alleged bully
- The school cannot disclose discipline & remedial action

## Individual Disability & Education Act (IDEA)

- The school cannot share information protected under IDEA

## Safe Schools Act

- The school may have to report some bullying incidents to the police per the Safes Schools Act

# COMMUNICATION AFTER REPORT

- 48 hours - Parents of victim & bully are notified of alleged bullying incident (Superintendent may waive notification if in best interest of student(s))
- 5 school days - Investigation is initiated
  - Victim & bully are interviewed separately
  - Evidence of emails, text messages, etc. may be requested
- 10 school days - Investigation is completed (Superintendent may extend up to 7 school days & parents are to be notified of extension)

# COMMUNICATION AFTER INVESTIGATION

- 2 school days - Students & parents (both victim & perpetrator) are notified of findings
- 5 school days – Parents are notified in writing of findings & school’s action. Action may include discipline or remedial measures for students who:
  - Commit an act of bullying
  - Falsely accuse another student of bullying
  - Retaliate against any student who reports or provides information about bullying
  - Parents have appeal rights

# COMMUNICATION WITH SAU & STATE

All substantiated reports of bullying are to be reported to:

- Superintendent upon completion of investigation & parent notification
- School Board at the next regular meeting
- NHDOE at the end of the school year (safe schools survey).

# HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

- Want the best for all students - bully & victim
- Teach (discipline) not punish (feeds bully)
- Listen & talk to students (share one good thing & one bad thing that happened at school)
- Expect students to take responsibility, make atonement, do good deeds, ...
- Teach children to be a good friend
- Implement a social curriculum
- Seek help when needed

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# OLWEUS PROGRAM

- Evidenced-based program
- Recommended by NHDOE
- Used by Raymond & Newmarket
- Made available to Epping free of charge by Epping/Newmarket Coalition for Youth & Families, United Way of the Greater Seacoast, & Allies in Substance Abuse Prevention

# OLWEUS GOALS

- To reduce existing bullying problems among students
- To prevent the development of new bullying problems
- To achieve better peer relations at school

\*Information provided by *Introducing the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*

# OLWEUS STUDENT DESIGN

- **Students in elementary, middle, & lower high school grades (ages 5 to 15)**
- **All students participate in most aspects of program**
- **Students bullying others or targets of bullying receive individualized interventions**

# OLWEUS RESULTS

- **20 to 70% reduction in student reports of being bullied**
- **Marked reductions in vandalism, fighting, theft, & truancy**
- **Improved order & discipline, more positive social relationships, & more positive attitudes toward schoolwork & school**

# SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- Establish bullying prevention committee
- Conduct committee & staff trainings
- Administer student questionnaire
- Hold staff discussion group meetings
- Establish school rules against bullying & encourage consistent negative & positive consequences for behavior
- Review & refine school's supervisory system (especially at common "hot spots")
- Hold a school kick-off event to launch program
- Involve parents through meetings, newsletters, ...

# CLASSROOM COMPONENTS

- **Post & enforce school wide rules against bullying**
- **Hold regular class meetings**
- **Hold meetings with students' parents**

# STUDENT COMPONENTS

- Supervise students' activities
- Ensure that staff intervene on the spot when bullying occurs
- Hold meetings with students involved in bullying
- Hold meetings with parents of involved students
- Develop individual intervention plans for involved students

# COMMUNITY COMPONENTS

- **Involve community members on bullying prevention committee**
- **Develop partnerships with community members to support school's program**
- **Help to spread anti-bullying messages & principles of best practice in the community**

# IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- School board hearing - Done
- School board policy approval - Done
- Staff training on bullying policy & introduction to Olweus – Done
- EES Committee selection & training – Done
- EMS/EHS Committee selection & training - Done
- Student bullying survey
- Whole school staff training
- Parent training
- School kick off