

**BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY

7:30 PM

May 7, 2025

Walsh Intermediate School

Collaboration & Innovation Center (Room 112)

85 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405

To locate agendas and to access/view meetings please go to <https://www.branfordschools.org/>

Community Agreement

The Board of Education is committed to supporting the mission, vision, core values and global learning competencies of the Branford Public Schools. We are here to provide access for all students in close collaboration with the Superintendent and in partnership with the larger community.

A G E N D A

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comments
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Discussion/Action Items
 - A. 4750 Social Media
 - B. 5200 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
 - C. 5275 Restorative Practices
 - D. 5900 Student use of the District Computer Systems
 - E. 5950 - Use of Private Technological Devices by Students
 - F. 6150 Weighted Grading for Honors Classes
- V. Adjourn

**TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC COMMENTS REMOTELY PLEASE CALL:
(646) 558-8656 Meeting ID: 815 6405 4671 Passcode: 812124**

When participating by telephone please mute your phone when joining the meeting and unmute your phone when you are ready to speak. This can be done by pressing *6 on your phone's keypad.

Rules Governing Public Comments

Guests attending meetings in person or virtually are invited to make public comment. Speakers must identify themselves by name and address. While the Board does not respond to public comment during the meeting, the Chair and Superintendent will work collaboratively to make sure your comments are thoughtfully considered. Disruptive conduct may result in termination of participation privileges or removal from meetings. Three minutes will be allotted to each speaker.

To:

Branford Board of Education
Policy Committee

From:

Allison K. Moran,
Assistant Superintendent of
Schools

Re:

Recommended Policy Revisions

CC:

Christopher Tranberg, Ph.D.,
Superintendent of Schools

Blaize Levitan, Chief Operating
Officer

BPS Administration

BPS Human Resources

Recommended Policy Revisions

This month's policy revisions are prompted by administrative and community recommendations along with legislative changes. The following is a brief overview of the nature of the changes for each policy:

Changes from Shipman based on Legislative Updates

4750 Social Media -

5900 Student use of the District Computer Systems

5200 Connecticut School Climate Policy (Replaces 5200 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy)

5275 Restorative Practices *NEW*


Changes Prompted by Community Needs


5950 Use of Private Technological Devices by Students (includes legislative updates)

6150 Weighted Grading for Honors Classes (includes legislative updates)

4750 Social Media (14v13)

Summary of Updates from Shipman: The Social Media policy and accompanying regulations have been revised to distinguish between personal and official social media use by employees, reflecting different First Amendment implications. Updates were also made in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2024 decision in *Lindke v. Freed*, which clarified that some public employee posts may be considered "mixed use"—blending personal and governmental expression. The policy now includes guidance to help employees avoid unintentional classification of personal posts as state action. Legal references were added, and technical edits were made throughout the document.

 REDLINE 4750 Social Media P&R.pdf

 COMMITTEE 4750 Social Media P&R.pdf

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Policy Overview:

- Clarifies two main types of employee social media use:
 - **Personal Use** – Posts made in a private capacity.
 - **Official Use** – Posts made as part of an employee’s official duties.
- Each category is governed by different First Amendment standards.

Substantive Changes Made:

- Response to Supreme Court Ruling:
 - Updated following *Lindke v. Freed* (2024), which held that public employees’ social media activity may sometimes represent both personal and official government action (i.e., “mixed use”).
- Guidance on Avoiding State Action Classification:
 - Added steps employees can take to reduce the risk of their personal posts being interpreted as state-sponsored speech.

5900 Student Use of District’s Computer Systems (18v17)

Summary of Updates from Shipman: This policy has been revised to align with updates made by Public Act 24-118, which replaces all references to “child pornography” in Connecticut law with the term “child sexual abuse material.” Additionally, the policy now includes clearer language prohibiting students from using the district’s computer systems to send harassing, threatening, or intimidating messages. Technical edits have also been made throughout for clarity and consistency.

 [REDLINE 5900 Student Use of the District Computer Systems P&R.pdf](#)

 [COMMITTEE 5900 Student Use of the District Computer Systems P&R.pdf](#)

Policy Overview:

- Addresses student use of district computer systems and responsible digital behavior.
- Ensures compliance with state law and school expectations for safe and respectful technology use.


Changes Made:


- **Terminology Update (Public Act 24-118):**
 - Replaced all references to “child pornography” with “child sexual abuse material” in accordance with changes to Connecticut General Statutes.
- **Clarification of Prohibited Conduct:**


- Strengthened policy language to clearly prohibit students from sending harassing, threatening, or intimidating messages via the district's technology systems.
- **Technical Edits:**
 - Made general technical and language improvements throughout the policy for clarity and precision.

5200 School Climate Policy - Replaces 5200 Bullying and Safe School Climate Plan

Summary of Updates from Shipman and CABE: Following significant changes to Connecticut law in 2023, all boards of education must adopt and implement the Connecticut School Climate Policy by July 1, 2025 for the 2025–2026 school year and beyond. This new state-mandated policy—developed by CABE and approved by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative—replaces the former Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Safe School Climate Plan. While Shipman & Goodwin did not draft the state policy, they have developed optional model administrative regulations to support its implementation. These include references to CABE-created reporting and investigation forms. Districts must also appoint School Climate Specialists and Coordinators to develop building-specific School Climate Improvement Plans, replacing previous Safe School Climate Plans.

 [5200 Bullying and Safe School Climate Plan P - Google Docs.pdf](#) - Current Policy

 [DISCONTINUE 5200 Bullying and Safe School Climate Plan P](#)

 [COMMITTEE 5200 School Climate.pdf](#)

Policy Overview:

- **New Mandated Policy:** The Connecticut School Climate Policy is required by July 1, 2025 under Connecticut General Statutes §10-222aa et seq.
- **Developed By:** The policy was created by CABE and approved by the Collaborative.
- **Purpose:** Addresses elements of bullying, challenging behavior, and school climate, though not all operational aspects of relevant statutes.
- **Policy Status:** Replaces the former 5200 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Safe School Climate Plan.

Changes Made:

- **Discontinuation of Prior Policies:**
 - We must discontinue policy 5200 Bullying and Safe School Climate Plan
- **Requirements for School Personnel (not entirely new):**
 - Each school must have a:

- School Climate Specialist.
 - School Climate Coordinator.
- These roles must collaborate to develop a building-specific School Climate Improvement Plan that:
 - Aligns with state climate standards.
 - Includes classroom safety protocols and challenging behavior supports.
- **Implementation Support:**
 - Shipman's Role:
 - Shipman did not develop the mandated policy but created optional model administrative regulations that Branford will use as a starting point for the 2025-2 school year and will modify as needed.
 - These regulations assume districts are using CABE-developed forms for reporting and investigation (though districts may customize these).
 - Shipman has not developed model School Climate Improvement Plans due to the school-specific nature of these plans.
- **Resources Provided by the Collaborative:**
 - A template and rubric for developing School Climate Improvement Plans are available online.
 - These resources are intended to guide individual school-level planning.

Key Deadlines:

- **By July 1, 2025:**
 - Adopt the Connecticut School Climate Policy.
 - Repeal previous policies and plans.
 - Begin implementation for the 2025–2026 school year.

5275 Restorative Practices Response Policy (NEW)

Summary of Updates from Shipman: In 2023, the Connecticut General Assembly enacted legislation (now codified as Connecticut General Statutes §10-222jj) requiring each board of education to adopt a Restorative Practices Response Policy by July 1, 2025. This policy mandates that school employees implement restorative practices in response to nonviolent student conflict or challenging behavior that does not involve criminal conduct. The policy also instructs district administrators to establish a continuum of strategies to prevent, identify, and respond to challenging behaviors, including bullying and harassment.

Policy Overview:

- **Legal Requirement:** Mandated by Connecticut General Statutes §10-222jj, passed in 2023.
- **Scope:** Applies to nonviolent, non-criminal incidents involving student conflict or challenging behavior.
- **Purpose:** Establishes a framework for restorative responses by school staff.

Key Policy Elements:

- Requires each board of education to adopt a Restorative Practices Response Policy.
- Implementation Deadline: July 1, 2025.
- Policy is to be implemented by school employees.
- Directs the district administration to develop a continuum of strategies, which must:
 - Prevent challenging behavior.
 - Identify and respond to such behavior.
 - Include, but not be limited to, bullying and harassment responses.


Goals:


- Promote a proactive, relationship-centered approach to student discipline.
- Encourage non-punitive methods that repair harm and build community.

5950 Use of Private Technological Devices by Students (7v6)

Summary of Updates from Shipman: In response to the Connecticut State Board of Education's August 2024 guidance on personal technology use in schools, the policy on student use of private technological devices has been revised. The updates inform districts that they may create specific local rules to restrict cell phone use during the school day and allow these rules to be appended to the model policy. The policy was also updated to reflect statutory language changes, clarify prohibited conduct (e.g., harassment or intimidation via devices), and reference applicable board search and seizure policies.

Additionally, Branford community discussions inspired by *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt led to new language supporting the use of secure technology pouches at the high school level, with accompanying administrative regulations now developed.

 REDLINE 5950 Use of Private Technological Devices by Students P&R.pdf

 COMMITTEE 5950 Use of Private Technological Devices by Students P&R.pdf

Policy Overview:

- Governs student use of privately owned technological devices (e.g., cell phones, tablets).
- Aligned with the Connecticut State Board of Education's August 21, 2024 Position Statement and Policy Guidance on personal technology in schools.

Changes Made:


- **Local Discretion on Cell Phone Use:**
 - Added a note for districts that they may develop local policies or rules restricting in-school cell phone use.
 - These can be integrated as additions to the model policy and/or implemented through accompanying regulations.
- **Terminology and Device Updates:**
 - Updated the list of technological devices referenced.
 - Replaced "child pornography" with "child sexual abuse material" per statutory updates.
- **Clarified Conduct Prohibitions:**
 - Strengthened language against harassing, threatening, or intimidating communications by students.
- **Search & Seizure Reference:**
 - Revised Section 9(c) to reference board policy on search and seizure.
 - Updated legal citations accordingly.
- **Response to Community Input:**
 - Reflects feedback from community and Board discussions influenced by *The Anxious Generation*.
 - New language supporting the use of secure technology pouches at the high school level was added.
 - Administrative regulations have been developed to support implementation of this policy change.


6150 Weighted Grading and Calculation of Grade Point Averages (19v18)

Summary of Updates from Shipman: The policy has been revised to align with Public Act 24-47, which changes eligibility criteria for the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program (CAAP) by

replacing class rank percentile with unweighted GPA as the determining factor. Although not specified in the Act, the CAAP website also acknowledges a weighted GPA option.

Additionally, based on a recommendation from Branford High School Principal Lee Panagoulas and input from BHS educators, the policy now includes third quarter senior year grades in the GPA calculation for determining valedictorian and salutatorian honors, beginning with the 2025–26 school year. This adjustment aligns with practices in peer districts and aims to more accurately reflect students' overall academic achievement.

 REDLINE 6150 Weighted Grading for Honors Classes P.pdf

 COMMITTEE 6150 Weighted Grading for Honors Classes P.pdf

Policy Overview:

- Addresses eligibility for the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program (CAAP) and local criteria for academic honors (valedictorian/salutatorian).

Changes Made:

- **CAAP Eligibility Revision (Public Act 24-47):**
 - Unweighted GPA now determines eligibility (replaces prior class rank percentile requirement).
 - Note: While not codified in statute, CAAP website also recognizes weighted GPA as an option.
- **Local GPA Calculation Policy Update (Branford High School):**
 - At the recommendation of Principal Lee Panagoulas and informed by a BHS educator committee:
 - Third quarter senior year grades will now be included in GPA calculations used to determine valedictorian and salutatorian.
 - Effective beginning with the Class of 2026.
- **Rationale for Change:**
 - Enhances accuracy and fairness in reflecting students' full academic performance.
 - Aligns Branford's policy with peer districts such as Guilford, Shelton, and Old Lyme.
 - Reinforces the district's focus on academic excellence and rigorous coursework.
 - See additional information in the [Principal's Memo to the Superintendent](#)



SOCIAL MEDIA

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Ordinarily, the use of social media by employees, including employees’ use of personal online accounts, will not be a legal or policy issue. While a policy cannot address every instance of inappropriate social media use, employees must refrain from personal social media use that:

interferes, disrupts or undermines the effective operation of the school district or is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications; (e.g., when such speech relates to a matter of public concern and its disruptive impact outweighs the importance of the speech);

- 1) creates a hostile work environment;
- 2) breaches confidentiality obligations of school district employees; or
- 3) violates the law, Board policies and/or other school rules and regulations.

Employees’ official social media use will be addressed as speech pursuant to duty under applicable First Amendment principles.

The Board, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain administrative regulations to implement this policy.

Legal References:

- U.S. Constitution, Amend. I
- Pickering v. Board of Education, 391 U.S. 563 (1968)
- Connick v. Myers, 461 U.S. 138 (1983)
- Garcetti v. Ceballos, 547 U.S. 410 (2006)
- Lindke v. Freed, 601 U.S. 187 (2024)



Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520

Conn. Constitution, Article I, Sections 3, 4, 14

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-40x

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-51q

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182; 53a-183; 53a-250

ADOPTED: October 19, 2022

REVISED:

10/22/2024

Personnel

4750 R



ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Branford Board of Education (the “Board”) recognizes the importance and utility of social media and networks for its employees. The laws regarding social media continue to evolve and change. Nothing in the Board’s policy or these administrative regulations is intended to limit an employee’s right to use social media or personal online accounts under applicable law, as it may evolve. The Board acknowledges, for example, that its employees have the right under the First Amendment, in certain circumstances, to speak out on matters of public concern. The Board will resolve any conflict between the Board’s policy or these regulations and applicable law in favor of the law.

Ordinarily, the use of social media by employees, including employees’ use of personal online accounts, will not be a legal or policy issue. While a policy or regulation cannot address every instance of inappropriate social media use, employees must refrain from personal social media use that:

- 1) interferes, disrupts or undermines the effective operation of the school district; or is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications (e.g., when such speech relates to a matter of public concern and its disruptive impact outweighs the importance of the speech);
- 2) creates a hostile work environment;
- 3) breaches confidentiality obligations of school district employees; or
- 4) violates the law, Board policies and/or other school rules and regulations.

Employees’ official social media use will be addressed as speech pursuant to duty under applicable First Amendment principles.

Definitions:

The rapid speed at which technology continuously evolves makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify all types of social media.

Thus, the term “*social media*” includes a variety of online tools and services that allow users to publish content and interact with their audiences. By way of example, social media includes, but is not limited to, the following websites or applications, including an employee’s personal online account using such social media:

- (1) social-networking (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+);
- (2) blogs and microblogs (e.g. X, Tumblr, Medium);



- (3) content-sharing (e.g. Scribd, SlideShare, DropBox);
- (4) image sharing, video sharing or live streaming (e.g., TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest);
- (5) other sharing sites or apps such as by sound, location, news, or messaging, etc. (e.g. Reddit, Kik, SoundCloud, WhatsApp).

“Board of Education” or Board” includes all names, logos, buildings, images and entities under the authority of the Board

“Electronic communications device” includes any electronic device that is capable of transmitting, accepting or processing data, including, but not limited to, a computer, computer network and computer system, and a cellular or wireless device.

“Personal online account” includes any online account that is used by an employee exclusively for personal purposes and unrelated to any business purpose of the Board, including, but not limited to electronic mail, social media, and retail-based Internet websites. Personal online account does not include any account created, maintained, used or accessed by an employee for a business, educational, or instructional purpose of the Board.

Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity

1. In order for an employee to use social media sites as an educational tool or in relation to extracurricular activities or programs of the school district, the employee must seek and obtain the prior permission of the employee’s supervisor.
2. Employees may not use personal online accounts to access social media for classroom activities without express permission of the employee’s supervisor. Where appropriate and with permission, district-sponsored social media accounts should be used for such purposes.
3. If an employee wishes to use social media sites to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a school-based club, school-based activity, official school-based organization, or official school-based sports team (collectively, a “school-based group”), the employee must also comply with the following rules:
 - The employee must receive the permission of the employee’s immediate supervisor.
 - The employee must not use the employee’s personal online account for such purpose but shall use a Board-issued account.



- The employee must ensure that such social media use is compliant with all Board policies, regulations, and applicable state and federal law, including the provision of required legal notices and permission slips to parents.
 - The employee must set up the school-based group as a group list which will be "closed" (e.g membership in the group is limited to students, parents/guardians, and appropriate school personnel), and "monitored" (e.g the employee has the ability to access and supervise communications on the social media site).
 - Parents/guardians shall be permitted to access any page that their child has been invited to join.
 - Access to the page may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the school-based group.
 - The employee responsible for the page will monitor it regularly. If members of the group are permitted to contribute or comment on the site, the employee will monitor the communications and address any inappropriate communications in a manner designed to be consistent with Board policies and applicable law.
 - The employee's supervisor shall be permitted access to any page established by the employee for a school-based group or school-related purpose.
 - Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such district-sponsored social media activity.
4. Employees are prohibited from making harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate statements in their social media communications using district-sponsored sites or accounts or through Board-issued electronic accounts.
5. Employees are required to comply with all Board policies and procedures and all applicable laws with respect to the use of electronic communications devices, networks, Board-issued accounts, or when accessing district-sponsored social media sites or while using personal devices on the district's wireless network or while accessing district servers.
6. The Board reserves the right to monitor all employee use of district computers and other electronic devices, including employee blogging and social networking activity. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any communication made through social media, including personal online accounts,



while using district electronic communications devices or while accessing district networks from a privately owned device.

7. All communications through district-sponsored social media or Board-issued electronic accounts must comply with the Board's policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If an employee is considering sharing information and is unsure about the confidential nature of the information, the employee shall consult with the employee's supervisor prior to communicating such information.
8. An employee may not link a district-sponsored social media page to any personal online account or sites not sponsored by the school district.
9. An employee may not use district-sponsored social media or Board-issued electronic accounts for communications for private financial gain, political, commercial, advertisement, proselytizing or solicitation purposes.
10. An employee may not use district-sponsored social media or Board-issued electronic accounts in a manner that misrepresents personal views as those of the Board of Education, individual school or school district, or in a manner that could be construed as such.

Rules Concerning Personal Online Accounts

1. The Board understands that employees utilize social media and the web for personal matters in the workplace. The Board reserves the right to monitor all employee use of district electronic communications devices, including a review of online and personal social media activities. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any personal communication made through social media while using district computers, district-issued cellular telephones, other electronic communications devices or when accessing district networks. While the Board reserves the right to monitor use of its electronic communications devices, employees may engage in incidental personal use of social media in the workplace so long as such use does not interfere with operations and productivity and does not violate other Board policies.
2. An employee may not mention, discuss, reference, or link to the Board of Education, the school district or its individual schools, programs or school-based groups, including sports teams, using personal online accounts or other sites or applications in a manner that could reasonably be construed as an official school district communication, unless the employee also states within the communication that such communication is the personal view of the employee of



- the school district and that the views expressed are the employee's alone and do not represent the views of the school district or the Board. An example of such a disclaimer is: "the opinions and views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the position or opinion of the school district or Board. For example, except as may be permitted by Board policy, employees may not provide job references for other individuals on social media that indicate that such references are made in an official capacity on behalf of the Board.
3. Employees should be aware that, in certain circumstances, their posts on personal social media pages could be considered "mixed use" for both personal and government (e.g., school district) action. To avoid a finding of state action on their personal pages, employees should take care *not* to post anything that could be interpreted as an official action attributable to the Board or school district. Employees who fail to make clear that they are speaking in their personal, not official, capacity may expose themselves to liability in certain circumstances, including those associated with deleting comments from and/or blocking an individual from their social media pages.
 4. Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students, parents, guardians and colleagues. For example, absent an unrelated online relationship (e.g., relative, family friend, other affiliation (such as scout troop, religious affiliation, or community organization) or personal friendship unrelated to school), it is not appropriate for a teacher or administrator to "friend" a student or ,parent, or guardian or otherwise establish special relationships with selected students through personal online accounts, and it is not appropriate for an employee to give students or parents access to personal postings unrelated to school.
 5. In accordance with the public trust doctrine, employees are advised to refrain from engaging in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications through personal online accounts. Such communications reflect poorly on the school district's reputation, can affect the educational process and may substantially and materially interfere with an employee's ability to fulfill the employee's professional responsibilities.
 6. Employees are individually responsible for their personal communications through social media and personal online accounts. Employees may be sued by other employees, parents or others, and any individual that views an employee's communication through social media and personal online accounts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. In addition, employees should consider refraining from posting anything that belongs to another person or entity, such as copyrighted



- publications or trademarked images. As all of these activities are outside the scope of employment, employees may be personally liable for such claims.
7. Employees are required to comply with all Board policies and procedures with respect to the use of electronic communications devices when accessing personal online accounts and/or social media through district computer systems. Any access to personal online accounts and/or personal social media activities while on school property or using school district equipment must comply with those policies and may not interfere with an employee's duties at work.
 8. All communications through personal online accounts and/or social media must comply with the Board's policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If an employee is considering sharing information and is unsure about the confidential nature of the information, the employee shall consult with the employee's supervisor prior to communicating such information.
 9. An employee may not post official Board material using a personal online account without written permission of the employee's supervisor.
 10. All of the Board's policies and administrative regulations apply to employee use of personal online accounts in the same way that they apply to conduct that occurs in the workplace and off duty conduct.

Access to Personal Online Accounts

1. An employee may not be required by the employee's supervisor to provide the employee's username, password, or other means of authentication of a personal online account.
2. An employee may not be required to authenticate or access a personal online account in the presence of the employee's supervisor.
3. An employee may not be required to invite or accept an invitation from the employee's supervisor or required to join a group with the employee's personal online account.

Prohibition on Crowdfunding Activities

Employees are prohibited from engaging in crowdfunding activities (e.g. the use of websites or applications such as DonorsChoose, Kickstarter, GoFundMe, etc.) on behalf of the Board, its schools, classes, or extracurricular teams or clubs.

Disciplinary Consequences



Violation of the Board's policy concerning the use of social media or these administrative regulations may lead to discipline up to and including the termination of employment consistent with state and federal law.

An employee may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment if an employee transmits, without the Board's permission, confidential information to or from the employee's personal online account.

An employee may not be disciplined for failing to provide the employee's username, password, or other authentication means for accessing a personal online account, failing to authenticate or access a personal online account in the presence of the employee's supervisor, or failing to invite the employee's supervisor or refusing to accept an invitation sent by the employee's supervisor to join a group affiliated with a personal online account, except as provided herein.

Notwithstanding, the Board may require that an employee provide the employee's username, password, or other means of accessing or authenticating a personal online account for purposes of accessing any account or service provided by the Board for business purposes or any electronic communications device supplied by or paid for, in whole or in part, by the Board.

Nothing in this policy or regulations shall prevent the district from conducting an investigation for the purpose of ensuring compliance with applicable state or federal laws, regulatory requirements, or prohibitions against work-related employee misconduct based on the receipt of specific information about an activity on an employee's personal online account or based on specific information about the transfer of confidential information to or from an employee's personal online account. During the course of such investigation, the district may require an employee to allow the district to access the employee's personal online account for the purpose of conducting such investigation. However, the employee will not be required to provide the employee's username and/or password or other authentication means in order for the district to access the personal online account.

Legal References:

U.S. Constitution, Amend. I

Pickering v. Board of Education, 391 U.S. 563 (1968)

Connick v. Myers, 461 U.S. 138 (1983)

Garcetti v. Ceballos, 547 U.S. 410 (2006)

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Conn. Constitution, Article I, Sections 3, 4, 14



Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-40x
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-51q
Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182; 53a-183; 53a-250

ADOPTED: October 19, 2022

REVISED: _____

10/22/2024

COMMITTEE MAY 2025



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~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-40x~~

Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520

Conn. Constitution, Article I, Sections 3, 4, 14

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-40x

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-51q

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182; 53a-183; 53a-250

ADOPTED: ~~10-19-2022~~

REVISED:

~~7/5/16~~ 10/22/2024

~~Technical Rev. 11/20/2020~~



Personnel

4750 R

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Branford Board of Education (the “Board”) recognizes the importance and utility of social media and networks for its employees. The laws regarding social media continue to evolve and change. Nothing in the Board’s policy or these administrative regulations is intended to limit an employee’s right to use social media or personal online accounts under applicable law, as it may evolve. The Board acknowledges, for example, that its employees have the right under the First Amendment, in certain circumstances, to speak out on matters of public concern. The Board will resolve any conflict between the Board’s policy or these regulations and applicable law in favor of the law.

Ordinarily, the use of social media by employees, including employees’ use of personal online accounts, will not be a legal or policy issue. While a policy or regulation cannot address every instance of inappropriate social media use, employees must refrain from personal social media use that:

- 1) interferes, disrupts or undermines the effective operation of the school district;
- or 2) is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications (e.g., when such speech relates to a matter of public concern and its disruptive impact outweighs the importance of the speech);
- 2) 3) creates a hostile work environment;
- 3) 4) breaches confidentiality obligations of school district employees; or
- 4) 5) violates the law, Board policies and/or other school rules and regulations.

Employees’ official social media use will be addressed as speech pursuant to duty under applicable First Amendment principles.

Definitions:

The rapid speed at which technology continuously evolves makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify all types of social media.

Thus, the term ~~Social Media~~ “social media” includes a variety of online tools and services that allow users to publish content and interact with their audiences. By way of example, social media includes, but is not limited to, the following websites or applications, including an employee’s personal online account using such social media:



- (1) social-networking (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, ~~Classmates.com~~);
- (2) blogs and microblogs (e.g. ~~Twitter~~, ~~X~~, Tumblr, Medium);
- (3) content-sharing (e.g. Scribd, SlideShare, DropBox);
- (4) image sharing, video sharing or live streaming (e.g., ~~TikTok~~, ~~Snapchat~~, ~~Periscope~~, ~~Flickr~~, YouTube, Instagram, ~~Vine~~, ~~Pinterest~~);
- (5) other sharing sites or apps such as by sound, location, news, or messaging, etc. (e.g. Reddit, Kik, ~~Yik Yak~~, SoundCloud, WhatsApp).

“Board of Education” or Board” includes all names, logos, buildings, images and entities under the authority of the Board ~~of Education~~.

“Electronic communications device” includes any electronic device that is capable of transmitting, accepting or processing data, including, but not limited to, a computer, computer network and computer system, and a cellular or wireless ~~telephone~~ ~~device~~.

“Personal online account” includes any online account that is used by an employee exclusively for personal purposes and unrelated to any business purpose of the Board, including, but not limited to electronic mail, social media, and retail-based Internet websites. Personal online account does not include any account created, maintained, used or accessed by an employee for a business, educational, or instructional purpose of the Board.

Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity

1. In order for an employee to use social media sites as an educational tool or in relation to extracurricular activities or programs of the school district, the employee must seek and obtain the prior permission of ~~his/her~~ ~~the employee’s~~ supervisor.
2. Employees may not use personal online accounts to access social media for classroom activities without express permission of the employee’s supervisor. Where appropriate and with permission, district-sponsored social media accounts should be used for such purposes.
3. If an employee wishes to use social media sites to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a school-based club ~~or a~~, school-based activity ~~or an~~, official school-based organization, or ~~an~~ official school-based sports team (collectively, a “school-based group”), the employee must also comply with the following rules:
 - The employee must receive the permission of ~~his/her~~ ~~the employee’s~~ immediate supervisor.
 - The employee must not use ~~his/her~~ ~~the employee’s~~ personal online account for such purpose, but shall use ~~his/her~~ ~~a~~ Board-issued account.



- The employee must ensure that such social media use is compliant with all Board of Education policies, regulations, and applicable state and federal law, including the provision of required legal notices and permission slips to parents.
 - The employee must set up the ~~club, etc.~~ **school-based group** as a group list which will be "closed" (e.g. membership in the group is limited to students, parents/guardians, and appropriate school personnel), and "monitored" (e.g. the employee ~~had~~ **has** the ability to access and supervise communications on the social media site).
 - Parents/guardians shall be permitted to access any page that their child has been invited to join.
 - Access to the page may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the ~~club, activity, organization or team~~ **school-based group**.
 - The employee responsible for the page will monitor it regularly. If members of the group are permitted to contribute or comment on the site, the employee will monitor the communications and address any inappropriate communications in a manner designed to be consistent with Board policies and applicable law.
 - The employee's supervisor shall be permitted access to any page established by the employee for a **school-based group** or school-related purpose.
 - Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such district-sponsored social media activity.
4. Employees are prohibited from making harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate statements in their social media communications using district-sponsored sites or accounts or through Board-issued electronic accounts.
5. Employees are required to comply with all Board of Education policies and procedures and all applicable laws with respect to the use of electronic communications devices, networks, Board-issued accounts, or when accessing district-sponsored social media sites or while using personal devices on the district's wireless network or while accessing district servers.
6. The Board of Education reserves the right to monitor all employee use of district computers and other electronic devices, including employee blogging and social networking activity. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any communication made through social media, including personal online accounts, while using district electronic communications devices or while accessing district networks from a privately owned device.



7. All communications through district-sponsored social media or Board-issued electronic accounts must comply with the ~~Board of Education's~~ **Board's** policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If an employee is considering sharing information and is unsure about the confidential nature of the information, the employee shall consult with ~~his/her~~ **the employee's** supervisor prior to communicating such information.
8. An employee may not link a district-sponsored social media page to any personal online account or sites not sponsored by the school district.
9. An employee may not use district-sponsored social media or Board-issued electronic accounts for communications for private financial gain, political, commercial, advertisement, proselytizing or solicitation purposes.
10. An employee may not use district-sponsored social media or Board-issued electronic accounts in a manner that misrepresents personal views as those of the Board of Education, individual school or school district, or in a manner that could be construed as such.

Rules Concerning Personal Online Accounts

1. The Board understands that employees utilize social media and the web for personal matters in the workplace. The Board ~~of Education~~ reserves the right to monitor all employee use of district electronic communications devices, including a review of online and personal social media activities. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any personal communication made through social media while using district computers, district-issued cellular telephones ~~or~~, other electronic communications devices or when accessing district networks. While the Board reserves the right to monitor use of its electronic communications devices, employees may engage in incidental personal use of social media in the workplace so long as such use does not interfere with operations and productivity, and does not violate other Board policies.
2. An employee may not mention, discuss, reference, or link to the Board of Education, the school district or its individual schools, programs or school-based groups, including sports teams, using personal online accounts or other sites or applications in a manner that could reasonably be construed as an official school district communication, unless the employee also states within the communication that such communication is the personal view of the employee of the school district and that the views expressed are the employee's alone and do not represent the views of the school district or the Board ~~of Education~~. An example of such a disclaimer is: "the opinions and views expressed are those of the author and do not



necessarily represent the position or opinion of the school district or Board of Education.” For example, except as may be permitted by Board policy, employees may not provide job references for other individuals on social media that indicate that such references are made in an official capacity on behalf of the Board of Education. ¶

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3. Employees should be aware that, in certain circumstances, their posts on personal social media pages could be considered “mixed use” for both personal and government (e.g., school district) action. To avoid a finding of state action on their personal pages, employees should take care *not* to post anything that could be interpreted as an official action attributable to the Board or school district. Employees who fail to make clear that they are speaking in their personal, not official, capacity may expose themselves to liability in certain circumstances, including those associated with deleting comments from and/or blocking an individual from their social media pages.

4.3- Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students, parents, guardians and colleagues. For example, absent an unrelated online relationship (e.g., relative, family friend, other affiliation (such as scout troop, religious affiliation, or community organization) or personal friendship unrelated to school), it is not appropriate for a teacher or administrator to “friend” a student or his/her parent, or guardian or otherwise establish special relationships with selected students through personal online accounts, and it is not appropriate for an employee to give students or parents access to personal postings unrelated to school.

5.4- In accordance with the public trust doctrine, employees are advised to refrain from engaging in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications through personal online accounts. Such communications reflect poorly on the school district’s reputation, can affect the educational process and may substantially and materially interfere with an employee’s ability to fulfill his/her the employee’s professional responsibilities.

6.5- Employees are individually responsible for their personal communications through social media and personal online accounts. Employees may be sued by other employees, parents or others, and any individual that views an employee’s communication through social media and personal online accounts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. In addition, employees should consider refraining from posting anything that belongs to another person or entity, such as copyrighted publications



or trademarked images. As all of these activities are outside the scope of employment, employees may be personally liable for such claims.

- 7.6. Employees are required to comply with all Board of Education policies and procedures with respect to the use of electronic communications devices when accessing personal online accounts and/or social media through district computer systems. Any access to personal online accounts and/or personal social media activities while on school property or using school district equipment must comply with those policies, and may not interfere with an employee's duties at work.
- 8.7. All communications through personal online accounts and/or social media must comply with the Board of Education's Board's policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If an employee is considering sharing information and is unsure about the confidential nature of the information, the employee shall consult with his/her the employee's supervisor prior to communicating such information.
- 9.8. An employee may not post official Board of Education material using a personal online account without written permission of his/her the employee's supervisor.
- 10.9. All of the Board of Education's Board's policies and administrative regulations apply to employee use of personal online accounts in the same way that they apply to conduct that occurs in the workplace and off duty conduct.

Access to Personal Online Accounts

1. An employee may not be required by his/her the employee's supervisor to provide his/her the employee's username, password, or other means of authentication of a personal online account.
2. An employee may not be required to authenticate or access a personal online account in the presence of his/her the employee's supervisor.
3. An employee may not be required to invite or accept an invitation from his/her the employee's supervisor or required to join a group with the employee's personal online account.

Prohibition on Crowdfunding Activities

Employees are prohibited from engaging in crowdfunding activities (e.g. the use of websites or applications such as DonorsChoose, Kickstarter, GoFundMe, etc.) on behalf of the Board of Education, its schools, classes, or extracurricular teams or clubs.

Disciplinary Consequences



Violation of the Board's policy concerning the use of social media or these administrative regulations may lead to discipline up to and including the termination of employment consistent with state and federal law.

An employee may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment if an employee transmits, without the Board's permission, confidential information to or from the employee's personal online account.

An employee may not be disciplined for failing to provide ~~his/her~~ the employee's username, password, or other authentication means for accessing a personal online account, failing to authenticate or access a personal online account in the presence of ~~his/her~~ the employee's supervisor, or failing to invite ~~his/her~~ the employee's supervisor or refusing to accept an invitation sent by ~~his/her~~ the employee's supervisor to join a group affiliated with a personal online account, except as provided herein.

Notwithstanding, the Board may require that an employee provide ~~his/her~~ the employee's username, password, or other means of accessing or authenticating a personal online account for purposes of accessing any account or service provided by the Board for business purposes or any electronic communications device supplied by or paid for, in whole or in part, by the Board.

Nothing in this policy or regulations shall prevent the district from conducting an investigation for the purpose of ensuring compliance with applicable state or federal laws, regulatory requirements, or prohibitions against work-related employee misconduct based on the receipt of specific information about an activity on an employee's personal online account or based on specific information about the transfer of confidential information to or from an employee's personal online account. During the course of such investigation, the district may require an employee to allow the district to access ~~his or her~~ the employee's personal online account for the purpose of conducting such investigation. However, the employee will not be required to provide ~~his/her~~ the employee's username and/or password or other authentication means in order for the district to access the personal online account.

Legal References:

U.S. Constitution, Amend. I

~~Conn. Constitution, Article I, Sections 3, 4, 14~~

Pickering v. Board of Education, 391 U.S. 563 (1968)

Connick v. Myers, 461 U.S. 138 (1983)

Garcetti v. Ceballos, 547 U.S. 410 (2006)

Lindke v. Freed, 601 U.S. 187 (2024)

Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520

Conn. Constitution, Article I, Sections 3, 4, 14



Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-40x
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-51q
Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182; 53a-183; 53a-250

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~~7/5/16~~

~~Technical Rev. 11/20/2020~~

10/22/2024



Connecticut School Climate Policy

Policy Statement

All schools must support and promote teaching and learning environments where all students thrive academically and socially, have a strong and meaningful voice, and are prepared for lifelong success.

Implementation of the following set of guiding principles and systemic strategies will promote a positive school climate, which is essential to achieving these goals.

This policy sets forth the framework for an effective and informed school climate improvement process, which includes a continuous cycle of (i) planning and preparation, (ii) evaluation, (iii) action planning, and (iv) implementation, and serves to actualize the Connecticut School Climate Standards, as detailed herein.

The Board recognizes that improving school climate is contextual. Each school needs to consider its history, strengths, needs, and goals. Furthermore, this policy will support and promote the development of restorative action plans that will create and sustain safe and equitable learning environments.

The Branford Board of Education adopts this policy.

Definitions

1. **“School climate”** means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.
2. **“Positive Sustained School Climate”** is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:
 - a. Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe.
 - b. People who treat one another with dignity and are engaged, respected and solve problems restoratively.
 - c. A school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision.

- d. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
 - e. A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.
3. **“Social and emotional learning”** means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.
 4. **“Emotional intelligence”** means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.
 5. **“Bullying”** means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
 6. **“School environment”** means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs that occur outside of a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions or programs negatively impacts the school environment.
 7. **“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 other electronic communication.
 8. **“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.
 9. **“Mobile electronic device”** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.
 10. **“Electronic communication”** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectric or photo-optical system.

11. **“School climate improvement plan”** means a building-specific plan developed by the school climate committee, in collaboration with the school climate specialist, using school climate survey data and any other relevant information, through a process that engages all members of the school community and involves such members in a series of overlapping systemic improvements, school-wide instructional practices and relational practices that prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment.
12. **“Restorative practices”** means evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.
13. **“School climate survey”** means a research-based, validated and developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees and families of students, in the predominant languages of the members of the school community, that measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan.
14. **“Connecticut school climate policy”** means the school climate policy developed, updated and approved by an association in the state that represents boards of education and adopted by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q of the general statutes, as amended by this act, that provides a framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process that serves to implement Connecticut school climate standards, and includes a continuous cycle of (A) planning and preparation, (B) evaluation, (C) action planning, and (D) implementation.
15. **“School employee”** means (A) a teacher, substitute teacher, administrator, school superintendent, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, paraeducator or coach employed by a local or regional board of education, or (B) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public school, pursuant to a contract with a local or regional board of education.
16. **“School community”** means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

17. **“Challenging behavior”** means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.
18. **“Evidence Based Practices”** in education refers to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.
19. **“Effective School Climate Improvement”** is a restorative process that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:
 - A. Promoting decision-making that is collaborative and actively involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;
 - B. Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g., school climate survey, discipline data) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive and intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process;
 - C. Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students, educators, and broader school community. These goals shall be integrated into overall school improvement efforts thereby leveraging school strengths to address evidence-based areas of need, while sustaining the improvement process over time;
 - D. Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity building among school personnel and develop common staff skills to educate the whole child;
 - E. Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning and adult barriers to teaching; and F. Strengthening policies and procedures related to:
 - a. climate and restorative informed teaching and learning environments;
 - b. infrastructure to facilitate data collection, analysis, and effective planning;
 - c. implementation of school climate improvement plans with the goal of becoming restorative;
 - d. evaluation of the school climate improvement process; and
 - e. sustainability of school climate and restorative improvement efforts.

School Climate Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the superintendent of schools for each school district, or an administrator appointed by the superintendent, shall serve as the school climate coordinator for the school district.

The school climate coordinator shall be responsible for:

1. providing district-level leadership and support for the implementation of the school climate improvement plan for each school;
2. collaborating with the school climate specialist, for each school to (A) develop a continuum of strategies to prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment, and (B) communicate such strategies to the school community, including, but not limited to, through publication in the district student handbook;
3. collecting and maintaining data regarding school climate improvement, including, but not limited to, school discipline records, school climate assessments, attendance rates, social and emotional learning assessments, academic growth data, types and numbers of alleged and verified bullying complaints submitted by members of the school community, types and numbers of challenging behaviors addressed using the restorative practices response policy, and data concerning the implementation and outcome of restorative practices; and
4. meeting with the school climate specialist for each school at least twice during the school year to (A) identify strategies to improve school climate, including, but not limited to, by responding to challenging behavior and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, such as restorative practices, (B) propose recommendations for revisions to the school climate improvement plan, and (C) assist with the completion of the school climate survey.

School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the principal of each school, or a school employee who holds professional certification pursuant to section 10145 of the general statutes, is trained in school climate improvement or restorative practices and is designated as the school climate specialist by the school principal, shall serve as the school climate specialist for the school.

The school climate specialist shall be responsible for:

1. leading in the prevention, identification, and response to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, reports of alleged bullying and harassment;

2. implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices;
3. scheduling meetings for and leading the school climate committee; and
4. leading the implementation of the school climate improvement plan.

School Climate Committee

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, each school climate specialist shall appoint members to the school climate committee who are diverse, including members who are racially, culturally, and linguistically representative of various roles in the school community.

The school climate committee shall consist of:

1. the school climate specialist;
2. a teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-153b of the general statutes;
3. a demographically representative group of students enrolled at the school, as developmentally appropriate;
4. families of students enrolled at the school; and
5. at least two members of the school community, as determined by the school climate specialist.

Membership of the school climate committee shall be annually reviewed and approved by the school climate specialist, in coordination with the school climate coordinator.

The school climate committee shall be responsible for:

1. assisting in the development, annual scheduling, and administration of the school climate survey, and reviewing of the school climate survey data.
2. using the school climate survey data to identify strengths and challenges to improve school climate, and to create or propose revisions to the school climate improvement plan.
3. assisting in the implementation of the school climate improvement plan and recommending any improvements or revisions to the plan.
4. advising on strategies to improve school climate and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices, in the school community.

5. annually providing notice of the uniform challenging behavior and/or bullying complaint form, or similar complaint form used by the school, to the school community.

School Climate Survey

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and biennially thereafter, the school climate committee, for each school, shall administer a school climate survey to students, school employees and families of students, provided the parent or guardian of each student shall receive prior written notice of the content and administration of such school climate survey and shall have a reasonable opportunity to opt such student out of such school climate survey.

School Climate Improvement Plan

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the school climate specialist, for each school, in collaboration with the school climate coordinator, shall develop, and update as necessary, a school climate improvement plan. Such plan shall be based on the results of the school climate survey, any recommendations from the school climate committee, including the protocols, supports, and any other data the school climate specialist and school climate coordinator deem relevant. Such plan shall be submitted to the school climate coordinator for review and approval on or before December thirty-first of each school year. Upon approval of such plan, a written or electronic copy of such plan shall be made available to members of the school community and such plan shall be used in the prevention of, identification of and response to all challenging behavior.

Additionally, districts may place the school climate improvement plans into their district and school improvement plans.

Training

For the school year commencing July 1, 2024, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional Board of Education shall provide resources and training to school employees regarding:

1. social and emotional learning;
2. school climate and culture and evidence and research-based interventions; and
3. restorative practices.

Such resources and training may be made available at each school under the jurisdiction of such board and include technical assistance in the implementation of a school climate improvement plan. Any school employee may participate in any such training offered by the board under this section. The school climate coordinator, shall select, and approve, the individuals or organizations that will provide such training.

Funding

The school district shall in its discretion allocate sufficient funding to satisfy the requirements of this policy for all schools in the district. Such funding shall be distributed accordingly, with Superintendent approval, for assessments and professional development, as well as for school community outreach, training, and technical assistance.

Accountability

The Board shall adopt and allocate adequate resources to support the Connecticut School Climate Policy and adhere to state regulations set forth in Public Act 23-167.

Connecticut School Climate Standards

1. The school district community¹ has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate² that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to all challenging behavior³.
2. The school district community adopts policies that promote:
 - a. a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and
 - b. a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally re-engaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community.
3. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized, and supported to:
 - a. promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students;
 - b. enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities;
 - c. address barriers to teaching and learning; and

¹ School Community means any individuals, groups or businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

² School climate means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life, and that reflects the norms, goals, values and interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.

³ Challenging behavior means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.

- d. develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.
- 4. The school community creates a school environment⁴ where *everyone* is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities.
- 5. The school community creates a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Policy adopted:
cps 11/23

⁴ School environment means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs if bullying at or during such other activities, functions, or programs negatively impacts the school environment.

Connecticut School Climate Policy

The Branford Board of Education (the “Board”) has adopted the Connecticut School Climate Policy in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222cc. The purpose of these Administrative Regulations Regarding Connecticut School Climate Policy is to outline additional requirements under Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10-222aa et seq. regarding the reporting of, assessment of, and responses to challenging behavior and bullying, as well as certain related requirements.

A. Definitions

- a. “School Climate Specialist” means the principal of each school, or a school employee who holds professional certification pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-145, who is trained in school climate improvement or restorative practices, and is designated as the School Climate Specialist by the school principal. The School Climate Specialist is responsible for (1) leading in the prevention, identification and response to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, reports of alleged bullying and harassment, (2) implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices, (3) scheduling meetings for and leading the school climate committee, as described in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222ff, and (4) leading the implementation of the school climate improvement plan, developed pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222hh.
- b. “School employee” means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, administrator, school superintendent, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, paraeducator or coach employed by the Board, or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of the individual’s duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public school, pursuant to a contract with the Board.
- c. “Challenging behavior” means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.
- d. “Bullying” means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. “Bullying” includes “cyberbullying”, which 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 other electronic communication.
- e. “Challenging Behavior Reporting Form” (referenced as the “uniform bullying complaint form” in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222bb) means the

form that accompanies the Connecticut School Climate Policy and is intended for students, parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, and school employees to report alleged challenging behavior and/or alleged bullying incidents. Such form must be included on the Board's web site and in each of the Board's student handbooks, and the School Climate Committee must annually provide notice of such form to the school community.

- f. "Investigation Form" means the form that accompanies the Connecticut School Climate Policy and is to be completed by the School Climate Specialist within a reasonable amount of time after receiving a report of an alleged challenging behavior and/or alleged bullying incident.
- g. "Response Process(es) Notification Form" means the form that accompanies the Connecticut School Climate Policy and is to be completed and submitted by the School Climate Specialist to the student(s), parent(s) or guardian(s), and/or school employee(s) who submitted the Challenging Behavior Reporting Form within three (3) school days after an assessment has been finalized and submitted.
- h. "Tiered responses" are responses to challenging behavior, based on level of impact or frequency of occurrence, that are designed to re-engage students who have become disengaged. Particular tiered responses are required when a student engages in behavior that (1) requires temporarily clearing a classroom or removing a majority of students within the classroom to reduce likelihood of injury, (2) indicates credible intention to cause bodily harm to self or others, or (3) results in an injury that requires medical attention beyond basic first aid, or less severe injuries caused by the same student on more than one occasion, verified by the school nurse or other medical professional. Such tiered responses must include, at a minimum, the responses described in Section V of these Administrative Regulations.
- i. "Student discipline", for purposes of these Administrative Regulations, means removal from the classroom, suspension, or expulsion, as authorized by the Board's student discipline policy.
- j. "Removal" means an exclusion from a classroom for all or part of a single class period, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond ninety (90) minutes.

B. Reporting Challenging Behavior or Bullying

- a. School employees shall notify the School Climate Specialist or designee of any alleged challenging behavior or alleged bullying incident that results in student discipline (i.e., removal from the classroom, suspension, or expulsion).
- b. Students, parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, and school employees ("Reporters") may file a written report of any alleged challenging behavior or alleged bullying incident using the Challenging Behavior Reporting

Form. Such reports may be filed with the building principal, program administrator, and/or the School Climate Specialist, and all reports shall be forwarded to the School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with these Administrative Regulations.

- c. Reporters may complete the Challenging Behavior Reporting Form electronically or in hard copy, or they may meet with the School Climate Specialist for assistance in completing the Challenging Behavior Reporting Form.
- d. Written reports of alleged challenging behavior and/or alleged bullying shall be reasonably specific as to the basis for the report, including the date and place of the alleged conduct, a description of what happened, and the names of potential witnesses.
- e. Within three (3) school days, the School Climate Specialist or designee will provide the Reporter with confirmation of receipt of the Challenging Behavior Reporting Form.

C. Assessing Challenging Behavior and Bullying

The School Climate Specialist or other designated administrator shall assess the facts, severity, and intentionality of the alleged challenging behavior or alleged bullying incident in accordance with the following process:

- A. The School Climate Specialist or other designated administrator shall review the information reported in the Challenging Behavior Reporting Form.
- B. The School Climate Specialist or other designated administrator shall assess the factual basis of the report, as well as the severity and intentionality of any actions that may have occurred.
- C. In conducting such assessment, the School Climate Specialist or other designated administrator shall:
 - 1. Consult with individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information, including the Reporter, the individuals identified as having been affected by the behavior, and witnesses to the behavior, as appropriate;
 - 2. Review any relevant materials (e.g., records, statements, documents, videos);
 - 3. Consider whether the conduct also should be addressed pursuant to any other Board policies or District regulations, such as those related to protected class discrimination or harassment; and
 - 4. Maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable throughout the assessment process, in accordance with state and federal law.

- D. When conducting the assessment, the School Climate Specialist or other designated administrator shall complete the Investigation Form.
- E. Within a reasonable amount of time, the School Climate Specialist or other designated administrator will determine what responses, if any, should be or have already been taken to address the behavior and/or prevent future instances of such behavior.
- F. Within three (3) school days after an assessment has been completed, the School Climate Specialist or other designated administrator shall (a) complete the Response Process(es) Notification Form, describing the steps taken to address and prevent future instances of challenging behavior or bullying and keeping in mind the District's obligations regarding student confidentiality, and (b) provide the Response Process(es) Notification Form to the Reporter who completed the Challenging Behavior Reporting Form.

IV. Challenging Behavior or Bullying That Results in Student Discipline

- A. **Removal.** If a teacher removes a student from the classroom because the student has deliberately caused a serious disruption of the educational process, the teacher shall: (1) send the student to the main office or the appropriate administrator's office and (2) immediately inform the building principal or designee of the name of the student who was removed and the reason for the removal.
 - 1. While the student has been removed to a designated area, the student may receive supports that include, but are not limited to: access to school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and other mental health services available at the school.
 - 2. The parents or guardian of any minor student removed from class shall be given notice of such disciplinary action within twenty-four (24) hours of the time of the institution of such removal from class. Additional procedures governing behavior that causes a serious disruption; self-harm; and/or physical harm to teacher, another student, or other school employee shall be implemented in accordance with applicable law. Specifically:
 - a. The notice shall include, but not be limited to, informing such parent or guardian that the teacher of record in the classroom in which such behavior occurred may request a behavior intervention meeting.
 - b. If the teacher of record in the classroom ultimately requests a behavior intervention meeting with the crisis intervention team for the school, the parent or guardian must be notified that such meeting will occur.
 - c. If a behavior intervention meeting occurs, the crisis intervention team shall, not later than seven (7) days after the behavior intervention

meeting, provide to the parent or guardian of such student, in the dominant language of such parent or guardian, a written summary of such meeting, including, but not limited to, the resources and supports identified.

- B. ***Discipline.*** The District shall address incidents of challenging behavior or bullying that violate the Board's Student Discipline policy in accordance with such policy and any school rules, student handbook, or code of conduct provisions regarding same. Disciplinary action may be necessary for violations of other applicable Board policies or District regulations, such as those related to protected class discrimination or harassment and/or Title IX.

V. Challenging Behavior or Bullying That Requires Temporarily Clearing a Classroom or Students, a Credible Intention to Cause Bodily Harm, or Results in Certain Levels of Injury – Tiered Responses

- A. A. The school shall implement tiered responses, based on level of impact or frequency of occurrence, to incidents of challenging behavior or bullying that:

1. Require temporarily clearing a classroom or removing a majority of students within the classroom to reduce likelihood of injury;
2. Indicate credible intention to cause bodily harm to self or others; or
3. Result in an injury that requires medical attention beyond basic first aid, or less severe injuries caused by the same student on more than one occasion, verified by the school nurse or other medical professional.

- B. Such tiered responses shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:

1. For a single incident, the school principal shall notify the parents or guardians of each student involved in such incident in a manner that complies with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and relevant Board policy.
2. For a subsequent incident, the school principal shall invite the parents or guardians of each student involved in such incident to a meeting, either in person at the school or virtually, to discuss the specific supports or interventions that are applicable to such student, including, but not limited to, restorative practices.
3. For multiple subsequent incidents or a single incident that causes severe harm, the school principal shall provide notice to the parents or guardians of each student involved in such incident of other resources for supports and interventions, including, but not limited to, the 2-1-1 Infoline program, services

or programs available through the Behavioral Health Partnership, or other resources for professional services, support, or crisis intervention.

C. For incidents of challenging behavior or bullying that are subject to tiered responses pursuant to this section:

1. Not later than two school days after the date such incident occurred, there shall be a meeting between an administrator and the school employee (if any) who witnessed such incident. The purpose of the meeting shall be to determine the supports and interventions required to address the needs of students and school employees, provided the supports and interventions for any student who receives special education shall be determined by the planning and placement team ("PPT") for such student, and notice of such incident shall be submitted to the PPT not later than two school days after the date such incident occurred for consideration at a PPT to be scheduled in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. For a student who is eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), notice of the incident shall also be provided to the student's Section 504 team.
2. Any teacher of record in the classroom may request a behavior intervention meeting with the crisis intervention team for the school. Such request should be submitted to the building principal.
3. The District prohibits discrimination or retaliation against any person who reports or assists in the investigation of an incident of challenging behavior or bullying that is subject to a tiered response.

VI. Students with Disabilities

- A. The school shall ensure that any supports, services, or interventions provided in accordance with these regulations to any student who receives special education or accommodation for a disability comply such student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan and applicable law.

VII. Reports to Board of Education

- A. The Superintendent of Schools shall submit, at least annually, to the Board a report concerning:
 1. the number of incidents of challenging behavior or bullying that require temporarily clearing a classroom of students, a credible intention to cause bodily harm, or result in certain levels of injury, as described in Section V of these regulations, that occurred during the prior year;
 2. the grade level of each student involved in such incidents; and

3. the supports, services, or interventions provided in response to such incidents to address the needs of students and school employees.

B. Such report shall be produced in a manner that does not result in the disclosure of data identifiable to individual students in accordance with FERPA and the Connecticut State Department of Education's data suppression guidelines.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222aa
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222bb
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222cc
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222dd
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222ee
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222ff
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222gg
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222hh
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222ii
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233a
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233b
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233c
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233d
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233e
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-236c

3/5/2025

Challenging Behavior Reporting Form

This form is not required by law or policy but serves as a model challenging behavior reporting form that local and regional boards of education may adapt and adopt.

Instructions

This form is for **students, parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, and school employees** to report any alleged challenging behavioral incidents. Challenging behavior is behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk with interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee. This form should also be used to report alleged bullying incidents, meaning: unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Complete this form electronically, or in writing, or go to your school climate specialist (principal, vice principal, or other certified administrator) who will assist you with completing this form. All completed reports require a response from the school climate specialist, and every student, parent or guardian, and school employee **who completed this form** will receive a copy of the "Response Process(es) Notification Form" describing the action steps taken, within three (3) school business days after an assessment has been completed.

The school climate specialist will assess the facts of a challenging behavior incident and complete the "Response Process(es) Notification Form" (located on page 5 of this document). A confirmation of receipt of the "challenging behavior reporting form" will be provided to the individual who completed this form within **three (3) school business days**, and the behavioral assessment will be finalized within a reasonable amount of time.

If this is an emergency, and you feel that you or someone else is in imminent danger, please call 911, or your municipal police department.

Name: First _____ Last _____ or check here ☐ for any **student** who would like to submit anonymously.

I am a: ☐ Student, ☐ Parent and/or Guardian or ☐ School Employee

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Contact me by: ☐ Phone ☐ Email

Was this previously reported to any school employee prior to this report? If yes, identify to whom, when, and what was reported?

This form does not modify or eliminate any rights or obligations under state and federal laws, including, any constitutional and civil rights protections, or any applicable policies and procedures or collective bargaining agreements. All students' private and personal information will remain confidential throughout this process, subject to any waiver rights or disclosure responsibilities as permitted or required by law.

Please note: when a student exhibits challenging behavior, our priority is to ensure the safety of the students and the school, and to work with the student(s) to prevent the recurrence of such behavior, including making amends for any challenging behaviors that occurred. Federal law protects the privacy of each student. Therefore, you cannot be provided with any specific information concerning the student alleged to have engaged in the challenging behavior.

Where did the incident occur?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> On school property | <input type="checkbox"/> On a school bus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a school-sponsored activity or off school property | <input type="checkbox"/> On the way to/from school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic communication, internet, and social media | <input type="checkbox"/> Outside of School |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Approximate date of incident (if known): _____

Please describe what happened.

Of the following statement(s) check any that may describe or include what happened:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teasing, name-calling, intimidating, or threatening, in person or through electronic communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Making intimidating, and/or threatening gestures or remarks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spreading rumors or gossip | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting another person to do any of the behaviors listed above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair pulling, or throwing something or other acts of physical aggression | <input type="checkbox"/> Unwanted contact of a sexual nature (verbal, non-verbal, physical) |

Do you believe that the reported instance(s) of challenging behavior was in reference to a student's perceived or actual age, ancestry, color, learning disability, marital status, intellectual disability, national origin, physical disability, mental disability, race, religious creed, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, and status as a veteran? If so, why?

If known, provide the name(s) of any witness(es) of the alleged incident:

Date form submitted: ____

***For school climate specialist use only:**

Date received by school climate specialist: _____

Signature of receipt by school climate specialist: _____

This form does not modify or eliminate any rights or obligations under state and federal laws, including, any constitutional and civil rights protections, or any applicable policies and procedures or collective bargaining agreements. All students' private and personal information will remain confidential throughout this process, subject to any wavier rights or disclosure responsibilities as permitted or required by law.

Please note: when a student exhibits challenging behavior, our priority is to ensure the safety of the students and the school, and to work with the student(s) to prevent the recurrence of such behavior, including making amends for any challenging behaviors that occurred. Federal law protects the privacy of each student. Therefore, you cannot be provided with any specific information concerning the student alleged to have engaged in the challenging behavior.

Investigation Form

The purpose of this form is to provide a streamlined process to assess reported instances of challenging behavior.

This form is to be completed by the school climate specialist within a reasonable amount of time. Pursuant to the Federal Education Confidentiality Law (FERPA), students, parents or guardians, and school employees that completed the challenging behavior reporting form **cannot** receive a copy of this "Investigation Form" but will be provided with a copy of the "Response Process(es) Notification Form" after an assessment is completed.

Date "Challenging Behavior Reporting Form" received: _____ Today's Date: _____

Name of school climate specialist who received the report: _____

Were these events already reported to any school employee? If yes, please identify to whom, when, and what was reported:

Name of school community member who is reporting the incident: (student, parent or guardian, school or district employee, bystander, anonymous): _____

Name of student or students who were allegedly subjected to the challenging behavior:

Name of person or persons who allegedly engaged in the challenging behavior:

Where did the alleged incident occur? Date and time alleged incident occurred: (if known): Description of the alleged incident:

This form does not modify or eliminate any rights or obligations under state and federal laws, including, any constitutional and civil rights protections, or any applicable policies and procedures or collective bargaining agreements. All students' private and personal information will remain confidential throughout this process, subject to any waiver rights or disclosure responsibilities as permitted or required by law.

Please note: when a student exhibits challenging behavior, our priority is to ensure the safety of the students and the school, and to work with the student(s) to prevent the recurrence of such behavior, including making amends for any challenging behaviors that occurred. Federal law protects the privacy of each student. Therefore, you cannot be provided with any specific information concerning the student alleged to have engaged in the challenging behavior.

Was this investigated as bullying?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this a verified act of bullying?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this investigated as cyberbullying?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this a verified act of cyberbullying?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this investigated as teen dating violence?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this verified teen dating violence?
YES ☐ or NO ☐

Was this investigated as an assault?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this a verified assault?
YES ☐ or NO ☐

Was this investigated as an act of physical violence?
YES ☐ or NO ☐

Was this a verified act of physical violence?
YES ☐ or NO ☐

Was this investigated as a protected class violation/harassment?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this a verified protected class violation/harassment?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this investigated as a Title IX violation?
YES ☐ NO ☐

Was this a verified Title IX violation?
YES ☐ or NO ☐

Was this a verified act of challenging behavior not listed above? YES ☐ NO ☐

COMMITTEE

Please note: when a student exhibits challenging behavior, our priority is to ensure the safety of the students and the school, and to work with the student(s) to prevent the recurrence of such behavior, including making amends for any challenging behaviors that occurred. Federal law protects the privacy of each student. Therefore, you cannot be provided with any specific information concerning the student alleged to have engaged in the challenging behavior.

COMMITTEE MAY 2025

Printed name: _____

This form does not modify or eliminate any rights or obligations under state and federal laws, including, any constitutional and civil rights protections, or any applicable policies and procedures or collective bargaining agreements. All students' private and personal information will remain confidential throughout this process, subject to any wavier rights or disclosure responsibilities as permitted or required by law.

21

Response Process(es) Notification Form

The purpose of this form is to provide a template for transparency and accountability to a person(s) that submit(s) a report of challenging behavior.

The school climate specialist will complete and submit this form within three (3) school business days **after an assessment has been finalized** and submit it to the student(s), parent(s), or guardian(s), and/or school employee(s) who completed the “Challenging Behavior Reporting Form”.

Describe the steps taken to address and prevent future instance(s) of challenging behavior(s). Responses may include:

- utilization of restorative practices;
- the completion of a school-based threat assessment;
- safety plan for student(s) involved in the instance of alleged challenging behavior;
- student support services;

Signature or E-signature of responding school climate specialist: _____

Printed name: _____

Date completed: _____

This form does not modify or eliminate any rights or obligations under state and federal laws, including, any constitutional and civil rights protections, or any applicable policies and procedures or collective bargaining agreements. All students' private and personal information will remain confidential throughout this process, subject to any waiver rights or disclosure responsibilities as permitted or required by law.

Please note: when a student exhibits challenging behavior, our priority is to ensure the safety of the students and the school, and to work with the student(s) to prevent the recurrence of such behavior, including making amends for any challenging behaviors that occurred. Federal law protects the privacy of each student. Therefore, you cannot be provided with any specific information concerning the student alleged to have engaged in the challenging behavior.

Definitions and Clarifying Terms

Restorative Practices: Evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

School Based Threat Assessment: An evidence-based systematic evaluation process used to prevent violence, help troubled students, and avoid over-reactions to challenging behavior.

This form does not modify or eliminate any rights or obligations under state and federal laws, including, any constitutional and civil rights protections, or any applicable policies and procedures or collective bargaining agreements. All students' private and personal information will remain confidential throughout this process, subject to any waiver rights or disclosure responsibilities as permitted or required by law.

Please note: when a student exhibits challenging behavior, our priority is to ensure the safety of the students and the school, and to work with the student(s) to prevent the recurrence of such behavior, including making amends for any challenging behaviors that occurred. Federal law protects the privacy of each student. Therefore, you cannot be provided with any specific information concerning the student alleged to have engaged in the challenging behavior.



Students

5200 P

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY

The Branford Board of Education (the “Board”) is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board’s Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence 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.

For purposes of this policy, “Bullying” means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive, which:

- (1) causes physical or emotional harm to an individual;
- (2) places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or
- (3) infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and 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.

~~For purposes of this policy, “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.~~

~~¶~~
~~For purposes of this policy, “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.~~

~~¶~~
~~Consistent with the requirements under state law, the Board authorizes the Superintendent or designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a Safe School Climate Plan in furtherance of this policy. As provided by state law, such Safe School Climate Plan shall include, but not be limited to provisions which:~~

~~¶~~
~~(1) enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make such reports;~~

~~¶~~
~~(2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying;~~

~~¶~~
~~(3) require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;~~

~~¶~~
~~(4) require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;~~

~~¶~~
~~(5) require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;~~

~~¶~~
~~(6) include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;~~

~~¶~~

~~(7) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(8) require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty eight hours after the completion of the investigation described in subdivision (4), above (A) of the results of such investigation, and (B) verbally or by electronic mail, if such parents' or guardians' electronic mail addresses are known, that such parents or guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-4a and 10-4b published on the Internet website of the Board;¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(9) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying;¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(10) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting required in subdivision (9) above, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying;¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(11) establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(12) direct the development of case by case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(13) prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(14) direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(15) require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the~~

~~principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;~~¶

~~¶~~

~~(16) prohibit bullying (A) on school grounds, at a school sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, or (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;~~¶

~~¶~~

~~(17) require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and~~¶

~~¶~~

~~(18) require that all school employees annually complete the training described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-220a or 10-222j related to the identification, prevention and response to bullying.~~¶

~~¶~~

~~The notification required pursuant to subdivision (8) (above) and the invitation required pursuant to subdivisions (9) and (10) (above) shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the district's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.~~¶

~~¶~~

~~The Board shall submit its Safe School Climate Plan to the State Department of Education for review and approval. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Department, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.~~¶

~~¶~~

~~As required by state law, the Board, after consultation with the Connecticut Department of Education and the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, shall provide on the Board's website training materials to school administrators regarding the prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students based on such students' (1) actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, 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 (2) association with individuals or groups who have or are perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.~~¶

¶

~~As required by state law, the Board shall post on its website the plain language explanation of rights and remedies under Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-4a and 10-4b, as developed and provided to the Board by the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative.~~

¶

~~Legal References:~~

~~Public Act 19-166~~

~~Public Act 21-95~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145a~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145o~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-220a~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222e~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222h~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222j~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222k~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222l~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222q~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222r~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f~~

¶

~~ADOPTED: 10-19-2022~~

~~REVISED:~~

~~7/31/2021~~

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SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN

The Branford Board of Education (the “Board”) is committed to creating and maintaining a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe educational environment free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, the Board has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan, consistent with state law and Board policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and teen dating violence and sets forth the Board’s expectations for creating a positive school climate and thus preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying and teen dating violence.

Bullying behavior and teen dating violence are strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The district’s commitment to addressing bullying behavior and teen dating violence, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a positive school climate in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or school staff.

I. Prohibition Against Bullying, Teen Dating Violence and Retaliation

- A. The Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior and teen dating violence on school grounds; at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board.
- B. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- C. The Board further prohibits any form of teen dating violence outside of the school setting if such violence substantially disrupts the educational process.
- D. In addition to prohibiting student acts that constitute bullying, the Board also prohibits discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying.
- E. Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence in violation of Board policy and the Safe School Climate Plan 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.~~ ¶

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~~H. Definition of Bullying~~ ¶

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A. ~~“Bullying” means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive, which:~~ ¶

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~~(1) causes physical or emotional harm to an individual; ¶~~

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~~(2) places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or ¶~~

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~~(3) infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school. ¶~~

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B. ~~Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and 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. ¶~~

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~~III. Other Definitions~~ ¶

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A. ~~“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. ¶~~

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B. ~~“Electronic communication” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system. ¶~~

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C. ~~“Emotional intelligence” means the ability to (1) perceive, recognize and understand emotions in oneself or others, (2) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communications, (3) understand and identify emotions, and (4) manage emotions in oneself and others. ¶~~

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D. ~~“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate. ¶~~

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E. ~~“Mobile electronic device” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging~~

device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.¶¶

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F. **“Outside of the school setting”** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Board.¶¶

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G. **“Positive school climate”** means a school climate in which (1) the norms, values, expectations and beliefs that support feelings of social, emotional and physical safety are promoted, (2) students, parents, and guardians of students and school employees feel engaged and respected and work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision, (3) educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning, and (4) each person feels comfortable contributing to the operation of the school and care of the physical environment of the school. ¶¶

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H. **“Prevention and intervention strategy”** may include, but is not limited to, ¶¶

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(1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, ¶¶

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(2) school rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, ¶¶

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(3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, ¶¶

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(4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, ¶¶

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(5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees, ¶¶

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(6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, ¶¶

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(7) student peer training, education and support, ¶¶

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(8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions, and ¶¶

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~~(9) culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.~~

~~I. "School climate" means the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students', parents' and guardians' and school employees' experiences of school life, including but not limited to, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.~~

~~J. "School employee" means~~

~~(1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by the Board or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or~~

~~(2) any other individual who, in the performance of the individual's duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the Board.~~

~~K. "School-Sponsored Activity" shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board.~~

~~L. "Social and emotional learning" means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.~~

~~M. "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.~~

~~IV. Leadership and Administrative Responsibilities~~

~~A. Safe School Climate Coordinator~~

~~The Superintendent shall appoint, from existing school district staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator ("Coordinator"). The Coordinator shall:~~

~~(1) be responsible for implementing the district's Safe School Climate Plan ("Plan");~~

- ~~(2) collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying in district schools;~~
- ~~(3) provide data and information, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education regarding bullying; and~~
- ~~(4) meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss issues relating to bullying in the school district and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Plan.~~

~~B. Safe School Climate Specialist~~

~~The Principal of each school (or principal's designee) shall serve as the Safe School Climate Specialist. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying, collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying in the school and act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying in the school.~~

~~V. Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan~~

~~A. The Principal of each school shall establish a committee or designate at least one existing committee ("Committee") in the school to be responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues relating to bullying in the school. Such committee shall include:~~

- ~~(1) at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, as appointed by the school principal;~~
- ~~(2) school personnel, including, but not limited to, at least one teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees;~~
- ~~(3) medical and mental health personnel assigned to such school; and~~
- ~~(4) in the case of a committee for a high school, at least one student enrolled at such high school who is selected by the students of such school in a manner determined by the school principal.~~

~~B. The Committee shall:~~

- ~~(1) receive copies of completed reports following bullying investigations;~~
- ~~(2) identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school;~~

~~(3) implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan, regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying; ¶~~

~~¶~~
~~(4) review and amend school policies relating to bullying; ¶~~

~~¶~~
~~(5) review and make recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the Safe School Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school; ¶~~

~~¶~~
~~(6) educate students, school employees and parents/guardians on issues relating to bullying; ¶~~

~~¶~~
~~(7) collaborate with the Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and ¶~~

~~¶~~
~~(8) perform any other duties as determined by the Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying. ¶~~

~~¶~~
~~C. Any parent/guardian or student serving as a member of the Committee 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. ¶~~

~~¶~~
~~D. The Board shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to Board policy and submit such plan to the Department of Education. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Board, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks. ¶~~

~~¶~~ **VI. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Complaints of Bullying** ~~¶~~

~~¶~~
~~A. Students and parents (or guardians of students) may file written reports of bullying. Written reports of bullying shall be reasonably specific as to the basis for the report, including the time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of incidents, the target of the suspected bullying, and the names of potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any building administrator and/or the Safe School Climate Specialist (i.e., building principal or designee), and all reports shall be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with this Plan. ¶~~

~~¶~~

~~B. Students may make anonymous reports of bullying to any school employee. Students may also request anonymity when making a report, even if the student's identity is known to the school employee. In cases where a student requests anonymity, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall meet with the student (if the student's identity is known) to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact that maintaining the anonymity of the complainant may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action. All anonymous reports shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that does not disclose the source of the report, and is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.~~

~~C. School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying shall orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one (1) school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The school employee shall then file a written report not later than two (2) school days after making such oral report.~~

~~D. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of bullying and shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall also be responsible for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying, and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed, that an investigation has commenced. In order to allow the district to adequately investigate complaints filed by a student or parent/guardian, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied should be asked to provide consent to permit the release of that student's name in connection with the investigation process, unless the student and/or parent has requested anonymity.~~

~~E. In investigating reports of bullying, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The Safe School Climate Specialist will interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.~~

~~VII. Responding to Verified Acts of Bullying~~

~~A. Following investigation, if acts of bullying are verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the students~~

against whom such acts were directed as well as the parents or guardians of the students who commit such acts of bullying of the finding **not later than forty-eight (48) hours** after the investigation is completed. This notification shall include a description of the school's response to the acts of bullying; the results of such investigation; and verbally or by electronic mail, if such parents' or guardians' electronic mail addresses are known, that such parents or guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under Conn. Gen. Stat. Sections 10-4a and 10-4b once such explanation has been provided to the Board by the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative and published on the Internet website of the Board. In providing such notification, however, Branford Public Schools will take care to respect the statutory privacy rights of other students, including the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian's own child, may not be disclosed except as provided by law.¶

¶ B. In any instance in which bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student/victim and policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying. The Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the previously described meeting, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying. The invitations may be made simultaneous with the notification described above in Section VII.A. ¶

¶ C. If bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an act of bullying was directed. Such support plan will include safety measures to protect against further acts of bullying.¶

¶ D. A specific 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. The written intervention plan may include counseling, discipline and other appropriate remedial actions as determined by the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee and may also incorporate a student safety support plan, as appropriate.¶

¶ E. Notice to Law Enforcement¶

¶ If the Principal of a school (or designee) reasonably believes that any act of bullying constitutes a criminal offense, he/she shall notify appropriate law enforcement. Notice shall be consistent with the Board's obligations under state

and federal law and Board policy regarding the disclosure of personally identifiable student information. In making this determination, the Principal or designee, may consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the Principal or designee deems appropriate. ¶

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- F. If a bullying complaint raises a concern about discrimination or harassment on the basis of a legally protected classification (such as race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity or expression), the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also coordinate any bullying investigation with other appropriate personnel within the district as appropriate (e.g. Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator, etc.), so as to ensure that any such bullying investigation complies with the requirements of such policies regarding nondiscrimination. ¶

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VIII. Teen Dating Violence ¶

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- A. The school strictly prohibits, and takes very seriously any instances of, teen dating violence, as defined above. The school recognizes that teen dating violence may take many different forms and may also be considered bullying and/or sexual harassment. ¶

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- B. Students and parents (or guardians of students) may bring verbal or written complaints regarding teen dating violence to any building administrator. The building administrator shall review and address the complaint, which may include referral of the complaint to the Safe School Climate Specialist and/or Title IX Coordinator. ¶

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- C. Prevention and intervention strategies concerning teen dating violence shall be implemented in accordance with Section X below. Discipline, up to and including expulsion, may be imposed against the perpetrator of teen dating violence, whether such conduct occurs on or off campus, in accordance with Board policy and consistent with federal and state law. ¶

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IX. Documentation and Maintenance of Log ¶

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- A. Each school shall maintain written reports of bullying, along with supporting documentation received and/or created as a result of bullying investigations, consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law. Any educational record containing personally identifiable student information pertaining to an individual student shall be maintained in a confidential manner, and shall not be disclosed to third parties without prior written consent of a parent, guardian or eligible student, except as permitted under Board policy and state and federal law. ¶

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~~B. The Principal of each school shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Consistent with district obligations under state and federal law regarding student privacy, the log shall not contain any personally identifiable student information or any information that alone or in combination would allow a reasonable person in the school community to identify the students involved. Accordingly, the log should be limited to basic information such as the number of verified acts, name of school and/or grade level and relevant date. The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of bullying in each school and shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including, but not limited, to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.~~

~~C. The Principal of each school shall report the number of verified acts of bullying in the school annually to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.~~

~~X. Other Prevention and Intervention Strategies~~

~~A. Bullying behavior and teen dating violence can take many forms and can vary dramatically in the nature of the offense and the impact the behavior may have on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying or to teen dating violence. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying” or “teen dating violence,” as defined above, will generally warrant traditional disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying or teen dating violence, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (e.g., detention, in-school suspension, suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building principal (or responsible program administrator or designee). No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint of bullying. As discussed below, schools may also consider appropriate alternatives to traditional disciplinary sanctions, including age-appropriate consequences and other restorative or remedial interventions.~~

~~B. A specific 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. This plan may include safety provisions, as described above, for students against whom acts of bullying have been verified and may include other interventions such as counseling, discipline, and other appropriate remedial or restorative actions as determined by the responsible administrator.~~

~~C. The following sets forth possible interventions, which may also be utilized to enforce the Board’s prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence.~~

~~(1) Non-disciplinary interventions ¶~~

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~~When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying. Students may also be subject to other forms of restorative discipline or remedial actions, appropriate to the age of the students and nature of the behavior. ¶~~

~~¶~~

~~If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer or other forms of mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern. ¶~~

~~¶~~

~~When an act or acts of teen dating violence are identified, the students involved may be counseled as to the seriousness of the conduct, the prohibition of teen dating violence, and their duty to avoid any such conduct. Students may also be subject to other forms of restorative discipline or remedial actions, appropriate to the age of the students and nature of the behavior. ¶~~

~~¶~~

~~(2) Disciplinary interventions ¶~~

~~¶~~

~~When acts of bullying are verified or teen dating violence occurs, and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints of bullying, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action. ¶~~

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~~In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy. ¶~~

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~~Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy. This consequence shall~~

normally be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and teen dating violence, and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior. ¶

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(3) Interventions for bullied students and victims of teen dating violence ¶

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The building principal (or other responsible program administrator) or designee shall intervene in order to address incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student or victim of teen dating violence may include the following: ¶

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(a) Referral to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service; ¶

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(b) Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations or instances of teen dating violence; ¶

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(c) Encouragement of student to seek help when targeted or witnessing another being targeted; ¶

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(d) Peer mediation or other forms of mediation, where appropriate; ¶

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(e) Student Safety Support plan; ¶

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(f) Restitution and/or restorative interventions; and ¶

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(g) Periodic follow-up by the Safe School Climate Specialist and/or Title IX Coordinator with the bullied student or victim of teen dating violence. ¶

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(4) General prevention and intervention strategies ¶

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In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other district actions may ameliorate potential problems with bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. Additional district actions may also ameliorate potential problems with teen dating violence. While no specific action is required, and school needs for specific prevention and intervention strategies may vary from time to time, the following list of potential prevention and intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional employees in each school. Such prevention and intervention strategies may include, but are not limited to: ¶

- ~~¶~~
- ~~(a) School rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(b) Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence are likely to occur;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(c) Inclusion of grade appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, which may include instruction regarding building safe and positive school communities including developing healthy relationships and preventing dating violence as deemed appropriate for older students;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(d) Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student, parents and school employees;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(e) School-wide training related to safe school climate, which training may include Title IX sex discrimination/sexual harassment prevention training, Section 504/ADA training, cultural diversity/multicultural education or other training in federal and state civil rights legislation or other topics relevant to safe school climate;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(f) Student peer training, education and support;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(g) Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(h) Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for a safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(i) Respectful responses to bullying and teen dating violence concerns raised by students, parents or staff;¶~~
- ~~¶~~
- ~~(j) Planned professional development programs addressing prevention and intervention strategies, which training may include school violence prevention, conflict resolution and prevention of~~

~~bullying and teen dating violence, with a focus on evidence-based practices concerning same;~~

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~~(k) Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;~~

~~¶~~

~~(l) Avoidance of sex role stereotyping;~~

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~~(m) Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of school employees and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;~~

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~~(n) Modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;~~

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~~(o) Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;~~

~~¶~~

~~(p) Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere; and~~

~~¶~~

~~(q) Culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.~~

~~¶~~

~~D. In addition to prevention and intervention strategies, administrators, teachers and other professional employees may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe mean spirited student conduct, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying.”~~

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~~E. Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement strategy may originate from public, private, federal or philanthropic sources.~~

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~~XI. Improving School Climate~~

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~~Early Years Center~~

~~At the preschool level, the Early Years Center addresses Safe School Climate and bullying by incorporating Restorative Practices into our Responsive Classroom model. The Early Years Center has a Safe School Climate Committee that is chaired by the Safe School Climate Specialist, the Early Years Center Program Director (if different from the Safe School Climate~~

Specialist) and a special education teacher. This committee meets monthly to discuss any referrals of bullying to the Safe School Climate Committee, the outcome of investigations of those referrals, and strategies to ensure the safety of our students.¶

Elementary Schools¶

At the elementary level, all schools address safe school climate and bullying by incorporating Restorative Practices into our Responsive Classroom model. Each elementary school has a Safe School Climate Committee chaired by the Safe School Climate Specialist. The committee consists of the Safe School Climate Specialist, the principal (if different from the Safe School Climate Specialist), a regular education teacher, and a parent. The committee meets regularly to discuss the number of referrals of bullying to the Safe School Climate Specialist, the outcome of investigations of those referrals, trends revealed from the referrals, and strategies to ensure the safety of our students.¶

Francis Walsh Intermediate School¶

Francis Walsh Intermediate School has a Safe School Committee composed of the Safe School Climate Specialists, administrators, school counselors, psychologists, teachers, students, and parents. The team meets monthly to discuss school-wide culture and information from grade-level liaisons. In addition to integrating the school values expressed in the “Core Four” and Restorative Practices into its daily work, Walsh provides an advisory program focusing on social and emotional development. The goal of this program is to create smaller environments where students feel comfortable interacting not only with their peers but also with their teachers. These small advisory groups provide a key structure in fostering a safe school climate at Francis Walsh Intermediate.¶

Branford High School¶

In keeping with Branford High School’s motto of “Improved Learning for Everyone,” the members of the Branford High School faculty and community work to ensure that the educational environment is not only a productive one but a safe one as well, conducive to learning and student achievement. In an effort to create a positive school climate, the high school promotes the use of Restorative Practices and provides monthly activities through the SPIRIT Program focused on helping students develop the skills they need to be well-rounded and productive members of the school and larger community. Pillars under the SPIRIT Program include social-emotional learning, personal involvement, integrity, resilience, independent learning, and transition, all of which support student growth, community expectations, and safe school climate.¶

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~~XXH. Annual Notice and Training~~

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- ~~A. Students, and parents or guardians of students shall be notified annually of the process by which students may make reports of bullying.¶~~

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- ~~B. The Board shall provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying.¶~~

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- ~~C. At the beginning of each school year, each school shall provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan and require that all school employees annually complete training on the identification, prevention and response to bullying as required by law.¶~~

~~¶~~

- ~~D. As required by state law, the Board, after consultation with the Department of Education and the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, shall also provide on its website training materials to school administrators regarding the prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students based on such students' (1) actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, 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 (2) association with individuals or groups who have or are perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.¶~~

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- ~~E. Any person appointed by the district to serve as district safe school climate coordinator shall complete mental health and first aid training offered by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services.¶~~

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~~XXH. School Climate Assessments~~

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~~Biennially, the Board shall require each school in the district to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The Board shall collect the school climate assessments for each school in the district and submit such assessments to the Connecticut State Department of Education.¶~~

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~~Legal References:~~

~~Public Act 19-166~~

~~Public Act 21-95~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222g~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222h~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222j~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222k~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222l~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222q~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222r~~

~~Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f~~

~~Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-8,
Series 2008-2009 (March 16, 2009)~~

~~Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-3,
Series 2011-2012 (September 12, 2011)~~

~~Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-2,
Series 2014-2015 (July 14, 2014)~~

~~Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-1,
Series 2018-2019 (July 12, 2018)~~

~~Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-1,
Series 2019-2020 (July 16, 2019)~~

~~7/31/202~~



FORM A

REPORT OF SUSPECTED BULLYING BEHAVIORS OR TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

(School Employees Should File with the School Principal)

(Parents and Students May File with the School Principal or Any Other School Employee)

ff

ff

Name of Person Completing Report: _____

ff

Date: _____

ff

Target(s) of Behaviors/Violence: _____

ff

ff

Relationship of Reporter to Target (self, parent, teacher, peer, etc.): _____

ff

ff

ff

Report Filed

Against: _____

ff

Date of Incident(s): _____

ff

Location(s): _____ Time: _____

ff

Describe the basis for your report. Include information about the incident, participants, background to the incident, and any attempts you have made to resolve the problem. Please note relevant dates, times and places. ff

ff

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ff

Indicate if there are witnesses who can provide more information regarding your report. If the witnesses are not school district staff or students, please provide contact information.

Name Address Telephone Number

Have there been previous incidents? (circle one) Yes No

If "yes", please describe the behavior of concern, or the violence that occurred; include the approximate date(s) and the location(s):

Were these incidents reported to school employees? (circle one) Yes No

If "Yes", to whom was it reported and when?

Was the report verbal or written?

Proposed Solution:

Indicate your opinion on how this problem might be resolved in the school setting. Be as specific as possible.

I certify that the above information and events are accurately depicted to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Reporter Date Submitted Received By Date Received

6/26/16



FORM B

INTERNAL INVESTIGATION NOTES FOR REPORTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIORS

For Staff Use Only:

Has student reporter requested anonymity? Y N

Does the school have parent/guardian consent to disclose that a complaint as to this student has been filed in connection with the investigation? Y N

Administrative Investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary):

Bullying Verified? Yes No

Remedial Action(s)

Taken:

(Attach bullying complaint and witness statements. If bullying is verified, attach notification to parents of students involved, invitation to parent meetings, and records of parent meetings).

6/26/16



FORM C

BRANFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REPORT OF BULLYING FORM/INVESTIGATION SUMMARY

For Staff Use Only:

School

Date

Location(s)

Reporter Information:

Anonymous student report

Staff Member report

Name

Parent/Guardian report

Name

Student report

Name

Student Reported as Committing Act:

Student Reported as Victim:

Description of Alleged Act(s):

Time and Place:

Names of Potential Witnesses:

Action of Reporter:

Administrative Investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary):

Bullying Verified? Yes ☐ No ☐

Remedial Action(s) Taken:

If Bullying Verified, Has Notification Been Made to Parents of Students Involved?

Parents' Names:	_____	Date Sent:	_____
Parents' Names:	_____	Date Sent:	_____
Parents' Names:	_____	Date Sent:	_____
Parents' Names:	_____	Date Sent:	_____

If Bullying Verified, Have Invitations to Meetings Been Sent to Parents of Students Involved?

Parents' Names:	_____	Date Sent:	_____
Parents' Names:	_____	Date Sent:	_____
Parents' Names:	_____	Date Sent:	_____
Parents' Names:	_____	Date Sent:	_____

Date of Meetings:

If Bullying Verified, Has School Developed Student Safety Support/Intervention Plan?

Y ☐ N ☐

(Attach bullying complaint and witness statements. If bullying is verified, attach: 1) notification to parents of students involved that includes a description of the school's response to the acts of bullying, the results of the investigation, and via e-mail if e-mail addresses are known, a statement that the parents may refer to the plain language explanation of rights and remedies available under Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-4a and 10-4b once such explanation has been provided to the Board by the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative and published on the District's website; 2) invitations to parent meetings; and 3) and records of parent meetings).

5/20/21



FORM D

Branford Public Schools

Report of Bullying/Consent to Release Student Information

ff

Date: _____

ff

Name of Student: _____

ff

School: _____

ff

To Parent/Guardian: _____

ff

A report of bullying has been made on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been the victim of bullying. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation of the report, the Branford Public Schools may wish to disclose the fact that this complaint has been filed in connection with investigation. ff

ff

ff

(Please check one): ff

ff

_____ I hereby give permission for the Branford Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its investigation of that complaint. ff

ff

_____ I do NOT give permission for the Branford Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its investigation of that complaint. ff

ff

ff

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date ff

ff

Name (Please print) ff

_____ ff

ff

ff

6/26/16 ff



FORM E

Branford Public Schools

Report of Teen Dating Violence/Consent to Release Student Information

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

School: _____

To Parent/Guardian: _____

A report of teen dating violence has been made on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been the victim of teen dating violence. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough review of the report, the Branford Public Schools may wish to disclose the fact that this complaint has been filed in connection with its review.

(Please check one):

_____ I hereby give permission for the Branford Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its review of that complaint.

_____ I do NOT give permission for the Branford Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its review of that complaint.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Name (Please print)

6/26/16



USE OF PRIVATE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES BY STUDENTS

Students may possess privately owned technological devices on school property and/or during school-sponsored activities, in accordance with the mandates of this policy and any applicable administrative regulations as may be developed by the Superintendent of Schools.

A. Definitions

i. Board Technology Resources

For the purposes of this policy, “Board technology resources” refers to the Branford Board of Education’s (the “Board’s”) computers and instructional technologies; communications and data management systems; informational technologies and the Internet; and any other technology resources owned and/or used by the Branford Board of Education (the “District”) and accessible by students.

ii. Privately Owned Technological Devices

For the purposes of the this policy, “privately owned technological devices” refers to privately owned desktop computers, personal computing devices, cellular phones, smartphones, smartwatches, network access devices, tablets, laptops, personal gaming systems, Bluetooth speakers, e-readers, headphones, AirPods, and other electronic signaling devices.

iii. Generative Artificial Intelligence

For the purposes of this policy, “generative artificial intelligence” refers to a technology system, including but not limited to ChatGPT, capable of learning patterns and relationships from data, enabling it to create content, including but not limited to text, images, audio, or video, when prompted by a user.

B. Use of Privately Owned Technological Devices

i. Use of Cellular Phones, Smartphones, Smartwatches, Headphones, and/or AirPods

Except to the extent required by a student’s Individualized Educational Plan or 504 plan and/or for other reasons approved in writing by the building principal, all District students are prohibited from using cellular phones, smartphones, smartwatches, headphones, and/or AirPods (collectively, “cell phones and headphones”) during the

school day, which is defined as beginning at the first bell of the school day and ending at the last bell of the day.

The following rules apply specifically to student use of cell phones and headphones during the school day:

1. Branford High School

Students may bring cell phones and headphones to school but must ensure that they are turned off or on silent mode and locked in a District issued technology pouch throughout the entire school day. The administration shall develop administrative regulations regarding the use of District issued technology pouches.

2. Walsh Intermediate School

Students may bring cell phones and headphones to school but must turn them off or place them on silent mode. Cell phones and headphones must remain completely out of view (e.g., in the student's backpack) for the entire school day.

3. Elementary Schools

Students may bring cell phones and headphones to school but must turn them off or place them on silent mode. Cell phones and headphones must remain completely out of view (e.g., in the student's backpack) for the entire school day.

ii. Use of Other Types of Privately Owned Technological Devices

Other types of privately owned technological devices may not be used during instructional time, except as specifically permitted by instructional staff or unless necessary for a student to access the District's digital learning platform or otherwise engage in remote learning if remote learning has been authorized in accordance with applicable law.

iii. Improper Use of Privately Owned Technological Devices

On school property, at a school-sponsored activity, while in use for a remote learning activity if remote learning has been authorized in accordance with applicable law, or while being used to access or utilize Board technology resources, the use of privately owned technological device for an improper purpose is prohibited. Improper purposes include, but are not limited to:

- Sending any form of a harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to the extent such communication may violate other applicable Board policies, regulations, or school rules (such communications may also be a crime);
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to Board technology resources;

- Damaging Board technology resources;
- Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene, obscene as to minors, or contains child sexual abuse material;
- Cyberbullying;
- Using such privately owned device to violate any Board policy or school rule, including the unauthorized recording (photographic, video, or audio) of another individual without the permission of the individual or a school staff member;
- Using such privately owned device for the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence; or
- Taking any action prohibited by any Federal or State law.

C. Search of Privately Owned Technological Devices

A student's privately owned technological device may be searched if the device is on Board property or in a student's possession at a school-sponsored activity, in accordance with the applicable Board policy for search and seizure.

D. Responsibility for Privately Owned Technological Devices

Students are responsible for the safety and use of their privately owned technological devices. If a privately owned technological device is stolen, lost, or damaged while the device is on school property or during a school-sponsored activity, a report should be made to the building principal, who will investigate the loss, or cause it to be investigated, in a manner consistent with procedures for stolen or damaged personal property. Students and parents should be aware that the Board is not liable for any privately owned technological device that is stolen, lost, or damaged while at school or during a school-sponsored activity. For that reason, students are advised to use good judgment when deciding to bring such items to school and advised not to share or loan their privately owned technological devices with other students.

E. Disciplinary Action

Misuse of the Board's technology resources and/or the use of privately owned technological devices to access or utilize the Board's technology resources in an inappropriate manner or the use of such privately owned technological devices in any manner inconsistent with this policy will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. For students, a violation of this policy may result in loss of access privileges, a prohibition on the use and/or possession of privately owned technological devices on school property or at school-sponsored activities, and/or suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Board's policies related to student discipline.

F. Access to Board Technology Resources

The Board may permit students, using their privately owned technological devices, to access the Board's computers and instructional technologies; communications and data management systems; informational technologies and the Internet; and any other technology resources used by the District and accessible by students. Additionally, it is the expectation of the Board that students who access these resources while using privately owned technology devices will act at all times appropriately in ways which are fully in accord with applicable policies concerning technology use as well as all local, state, and federal laws.

Through the publication and dissemination of this policy statement and others related to use of the Board's computer systems, as well as other instructional means, the Board educates students about the Board's expectations for technology users.

The Board's technology resources shall only be used to access educational information and to promote learning activities both at home and at school. Students are expected to act at all times appropriately in ways that are fully in accord with applicable policies concerning technology use as well as all local, state, and federal laws when using the Board technology resources. Failure to do so will result in the consequences outlined herein and in other applicable policies (including, but not limited to, the Student Discipline Policy and the Student Use of the District's Computer Systems Policy).

Students must abide by the procedures outlined in this policy and all policies and applicable regulations outlined in the Board's computer use and other applicable policies. Students will be given specific information for log-on and access procedures for using school accounts. No user may deviate from these log-on/access procedures. **Students are advised that the Board's network administrators have the capability to identify users and/or to monitor all privately owned technological devices while they are logged on to the network.** Students must understand that the Board has reserved the right to conduct monitoring of Board technology resources and can do so *despite* the assignment to individual users of passwords for system security. Any password systems implemented by the Board are designed solely to provide system security from unauthorized users, not to provide privacy to the individual system user. The system's security aspects, message delete function and personal passwords can be bypassed for monitoring purposes. Therefore, students should be aware that they should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of privately owned technological devices to access Board technology resources. This provision applies to any and all uses of the Board's technology resources and any privately owned technological devices that access the same.

G. Harm to Board Technology Resources

Any act by a student using a privately owned technological device that harms the Board technology resources or otherwise interferes with or compromises the integrity of Board

technology resources will be considered vandalism and will be subject to discipline and/or appropriate criminal or civil action.

H. Closed Forum

This policy shall not be construed to establish a public forum or a limited open forum.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233j

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182b; 53a-183; 53a-250, *et seq.*

Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, 28 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2523

New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325 (1985)

ADOPTED: 10-19-2022

REVISED:

**Sample Administrative Regulations Regarding the Use of Technology Pouches**

In order to promote a focused and distraction-free learning environment, while ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities, the following administrative regulations are established regarding the use of District-issued technology pouches for securing cellular phones, smartphones, smartwatches, headphones, and/or AirPods (collectively, “cell phones and headphones”) during the school day, which is defined as beginning at the first bell of the school day and ending at the last bell of the day. These regulations are intended to support the effective implementation of Board policy and to clarify expectations for students, staff, and families.

A. Locking and Unlocking of Technology Pouches

- i. Upon entry into the school building, all students required to utilize District-issued technology pouches shall secure their cell phones and headphones, in the pouch and lock the pouch.
- ii. Students shall maintain position of their devices, inside the locked pouch, throughout the school day.
- iii. Students shall not unlock or tamper with their technology pouches during the school day.
- iv. Technology pouches shall be unlocked only at dismissal, unless otherwise authorized pursuant to Section B of these regulations.

B. Instructional Use of Cell Phones and Headphones

- i. The use of cell phones and headphones during the school day shall be permitted only if specifically requested by a teacher for use in a particular instructional lesson.
- ii. The requesting teacher must submit a written request to the building principal or designee no less than twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the intended instructional activity.
- iii. The building principal or designee must approve the request in writing prior to the use of any privately owned technological devices.
- iv. Upon approval, the teacher shall be responsible for signing out the unlocking base for the technology pouches for the approved period of the day and ensuring that all devices are re-secured following the conclusion of the instructional activity.

C. Student Device Ownership

- i. At no time shall a student be required or obligated to possess, own, or provide a privately-owned technological device in order to meet their educational needs or participate in any instructional activity.
- ii. Alternative accommodations shall be provided to ensure equitable access to instructional activities requiring the use of technology.

D. Compliance and Disciplinary Action

- i. Students are expected to comply fully with all policies, regulations, and school rules regarding the use and management of technology pouches.
- ii. Any violation of policies, regulations, and/or school rules, including but not limited to unauthorized unlocking or tampering with technology pouches or inappropriate use of privately owned technological devices during the school day, may result in disciplinary action in accordance with applicable Board policies.
- iii. Each student will be issued one District-issued technology pouch at the beginning of the school year. Students are responsible for maintaining possession of the pouch for the duration of the school year.
- iv. A fine will be assessed to the student for any technology pouch that is lost or damaged.



USE OF PRIVATE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES BY STUDENTS

Students may possess privately owned technological devices on school property and/or during school-sponsored activities, in accordance with the mandates of this policy and any applicable administrative regulations as may be developed by the Superintendent of Schools.

A. Definitions

i. Board Technology Resources

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ii. Privately Owned Technological Devices

For the purposes of the this policy, “privately owned technological devices” refers to privately owned desktop computers, personal computing devices, cellular phones, ~~S~~smartphones, ~~S~~smartwatches, network access devices, ~~radios~~, ~~personal audio players~~, ~~CD players~~, ~~tablets~~, ~~walkie-talkies~~laptops, personal gaming systems, Bluetooth speakers, ~~personal data assistants~~e-readers, headphones, AirPods, and other electronic signaling devices.

iii. Generative Artificial Intelligence

For the purposes of this policy, “generative artificial intelligence” refers to a technology system, including but not limited to ChatGPT, capable of learning patterns and relationships from data, enabling it to create content, including but not limited to text, images, audio, or video, when prompted by a user.

B. Use of Privately Owned Technological Devices

i. Use of Cellular Phones, Smartphones, Smartwatches, Headphones, and/or AirPods

Except to the extent required by a student’s Individualized Educational Plan or 504 plan and/or for other reasons approved in writing by the building principal, all District students are prohibited from using cellular phones, smartphones, smartwatches, headphones, and/or AirPods (collectively, “cell phones and headphones”) during the

school day, which is defined as beginning at the first bell of the school day and ending at the last bell of the day.

The following rules apply specifically to student use of cell phones and headphones during the school day:

1. *Branford High School and 8th Grade at Walsh Intermediate School*

Students may bring cell phones and headphones to school but must ensure that they are turned off or on silent mode and locked in a District issued technology pouch throughout the entire school day. The administration shall develop administrative regulations ~~to account for the use of~~ regarding the use of District issued technology pouches. ~~Students will lock their technology pouches upon entry into the school building and they will be unlocked at dismissal. The use of cell phones and headphones in class will only be allowed if requested by a teacher as necessary for a specific lesson and must be approved by an administrator at least 24 hours in advance. If approved, the mobile kiosk for the technology pouches will be signed out to the teacher for that period of the day. At no time will students be obligated to possess or own a personal electronic device to meet their educational needs.~~

2. *Walsh Intermediate School*

Students may bring cell phones and headphones to school but must turn them off or place them on silent mode. Cell phones and headphones must remain completely out of view (e.g., in the student's backpack) for the entire school day.

3. *Elementary Schools*

Students may bring cell phones and headphones to school but must turn them off or place them on silent mode. Cell phones and headphones must remain completely out of view (e.g., in the student's backpack) for the entire school day.

ii. Use of Other Types of Privately Owned Technological Devices

Other types of ~~P~~privately owned technological devices may not be used during instructional time, except as specifically permitted by instructional staff or unless necessary for a student to access the District's digital learning platform or otherwise engage in remote learning if remote learning has been authorized in accordance with applicable law.

iii. Improper Use of Privately Owned Technological Devices

On school property, at a school-sponsored activity, while in use for a remote learning activity if remote learning has been authorized in accordance with applicable law, or

while being used to access or utilize Board technology resources, the use of **privately owned technological device**~~any such device~~ for an improper purpose is prohibited. Improper purposes include, but are not limited to:

- Sending any form of a harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to ~~any person~~**the extent such communication may violate other applicable Board policies, regulations, or school rules** (such communications may also be a crime);
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to Board technology resources;
- Damaging Board technology resources;
- Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene, obscene as to minors, or contains ~~pornography~~**child sexual abuse material**;
- Cyberbullying;
- Using such privately owned device to violate any **Board policy or** school rule, including the unauthorized recording (photographic, video, or audio) of another individual without the permission of the individual or a school staff member;
- Using such privately owned device for the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence; or
- Taking any action prohibited by any Federal or State law.

C. Search of Privately Owned Technological Devices

A student's privately owned technological device may be searched if the device is on Board property or in a student's possession at a school-sponsored activity, **in accordance with the applicable Board policy for search and seizure.**~~and if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. Any such search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.~~

D. Responsibility for Privately Owned Technological Devices

Students are responsible for the safety and use of their privately owned technological devices. If a privately owned technological device is stolen, lost, or damaged while the device is on school property or during a school-sponsored activity, a report should be made to the building principal, who will investigate the loss, **or cause it to be investigated,** in a manner consistent with procedures for stolen or damaged personal property. Students and parents should be aware that the Board is not liable for any

privately owned technological device that is stolen, lost, or damaged while at school or during a school-sponsored activity. For that reason, students are advised **to use good judgment when deciding to bring such items to school and advised** not to share or loan their privately owned technological devices with other students.

E. Disciplinary Action

Misuse of the Board's technology resources and/or the use of privately owned technological devices to access or utilize the Board's technology resources in an inappropriate manner or the use of such **privately owned technological** devices in any manner inconsistent with this policy will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. For students, a violation of this policy may result in loss of access privileges, a prohibition on the use and/or possession of privately owned technological devices on school property or at school-sponsored activities, and/or suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Board's policies related to student discipline.

F. Access to Board Technology Resources

The Board^a may permit students, using their privately owned technological devices, to access the Board's computers and instructional technologies; communications and data management systems; informational technologies and the Internet; and any other technology resources used by the District and accessible by students. Additionally, it is the expectation of the Board that students who access these resources while using privately owned technology devices will act at all times appropriately in ways which are fully in accord with applicable policies concerning technology use as well as all local, state, and federal laws.

Through the publication and dissemination of this policy statement and others related to use of the Board's computer systems, as well as other instructional means, the Board educates students about the Board's expectations for technology users.

The Board's technology resources shall only be used to access educational information and to promote learning activities both at home and at school. Students are expected to act at all times appropriately in ways that are fully in accord with applicable policies concerning technology use as well as all local, state, and federal laws when using the Board technology resources. Failure to do so will result in the consequences outlined herein and in other applicable policies (including, but not limited to, the Student Discipline Policy and the **Student Use of the District's Computer Systems**~~Use of Computers~~ Policy).

Students must abide by the procedures outlined in this policy and all policies and applicable regulations outlined in the Board's computer use and other applicable policies. Students will be given specific information for log-on and access procedures for using school accounts. No user may deviate from these log-on/access procedures. **Students are advised that the Board's network administrators have the capability to identify users and/or to monitor all privately owned technological devices while**

they are logged on to the network. Students must understand that the Board has reserved the right to conduct monitoring of Board technology resources and can do so *despite* the assignment to individual users of passwords for system security. Any password systems implemented by the Board are designed solely to provide system security from unauthorized users, not to provide privacy to the individual system user. The system's security aspects, message delete function and personal passwords can be bypassed for monitoring purposes. Therefore, students should be aware that they should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of privately owned technological devices to access Board technology resources. This provision applies to any and all uses of the Board's technology resources and any privately owned technological devices that access the same.

G. Harm to Board Technology Resources

Any act by a student using a privately owned technological device that harms the Board technology resources or otherwise interferes with or compromises the integrity of Board technology resources will be considered vandalism and will be subject to discipline and/or appropriate criminal or civil action.

H. Closed Forum

This policy shall not be construed to establish a public forum or a limited open forum.



Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233j

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182b; 53a-183; 53a-250, *et seq.*

Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, 28 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2523

New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325 (1985)

ADOPTED: 10-19-2022

REVISED: 4-24-24



Sample Administrative Regulations Regarding the Use of Technology Pouches

In order to promote a focused and distraction-free learning environment, while ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities, the following administrative regulations are established regarding the use of District-issued technology pouches for securing cellular phones, smartphones, smartwatches, headphones, and/or AirPods (collectively, “cell phones and headphones”) during the school day, which is defined as beginning at the first bell of the school day and ending at the last bell of the day ~~privately owned technological devices during the school day~~. These regulations are intended to support the effective implementation of Board policy and to clarify expectations for students, staff, and families.

A. Locking and Unlocking of Technology Pouches

- i. Upon entry into the school building, all students required to utilize District-issued technology pouches shall secure their ~~privately owned technological devices, including but not limited to cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, headphones, and AirPods~~ cell phones and headphones, in the pouch and lock the pouch.
- ii. Students shall maintain position of their devices, inside the locked pouch, throughout the school day.
- iii. Students shall not unlock or tamper with their technology pouches during the school day.
- iv. Technology pouches shall be unlocked only at dismissal, unless otherwise authorized pursuant to Section ~~B2~~ of these regulations.

B. Instructional Use of ~~Privately Owned Technological Devices~~ Cell Phones and Headphones

- i. The use of cell phones and headphones during the school day shall be permitted only if specifically requested by a teacher for use in a particular instructional lesson.
- ii. The requesting teacher must submit a written request to the building principal or designee no less than twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the intended instructional activity.
- iii. The building principal or designee must approve the request in writing prior to the use of any privately owned technological devices.

- iv. Upon approval, the teacher shall be responsible for signing out the unlocking base for the technology pouches for the approved period of the day and ensuring that all devices are re-secured following the conclusion of the instructional activity.

C. Student Device Ownership

- i. At no time shall a student be required or obligated to possess, own, or provide a ~~personal~~ privately-owned ~~electronic~~ technological device in order to meet their educational needs or participate in any instructional activity.
- ii. Alternative accommodations shall be provided to ensure equitable access to instructional activities requiring the use of technology.

D. Compliance and Disciplinary Action

- i. Students are expected to comply fully with all ~~policies~~, regulations, and ~~school rules~~ regarding the use and management of technology pouches.
- ii. Any violation of ~~these~~ policies, regulations, and/or school rules, including but not limited to unauthorized unlocking or tampering with technology pouches or inappropriate use of privately owned technological devices during the school day, may result in disciplinary action in accordance with applicable Board policies.
- iii. Each student will be issued one District-issued technology pouch at the beginning of the school year. Students are responsible for maintaining possession of the pouch for the duration of the school year.
- iv. A fine will be assessed to the student for any technology pouch that is lost or damaged.



Branford High School

IMPROVED LEARNING FOR EVERYONE

Lee Panagoulas, Jr., Principal

Joseph J. Briganti, Assistant Principal
Stephanie, L. Byrd, Assistant Principal

To: Dr. Christopher Tranberg, Superintendent of Schools
Allison Moran, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

From: Lee Panagoulas, Jr., Principal, Branford High School

Date: April 21, 2025

Subject: Recommendation for Revision of BOE Policy 6150 – GPA Calculation

I am writing to formally recommend a revision to BOE Policy 6150 regarding the calculation of official Grade Point Average (GPA) for Branford High School students. After careful review by the BHS faculty committee, consideration of best practices, and a comparison with policies in surrounding districts, we believe that a change is warranted to more accurately reflect the academic work and achievements of our students, particularly current seniors.

Current BOE Policy 6150 states:

“Official Grade Point Average (GPA) will be determined at the end of the seventh semester. Only grades earned in Branford High School will be included in calculating weighted and unweighted GPA. Students must be enrolled in Branford High School for at least three semesters (including junior year) and have earned 7.5 credits in ‘core academic courses’ in order to receive a GPA.”

Recommended addition:

The BHS faculty committee recommends that, beginning with the **2025–26 school year**, third quarter senior year grades be **included in the GPA calculation used to determine valedictorian and salutatorian** honors.

This recommendation is grounded in the desire to more fully represent students’ academic performance through their senior year and to align our practices with those of comparable high schools in the region. A review of current practices at nearby schools reveals the following:

The mission of Branford High School is to prepare students to be independent and collaborative learners who are responsible, informed, and contributing members of society. In partnership with the community, we strive to provide a learning environment that supports all students in embracing diversity, acting with integrity, and achieving their personal and academic potential.

School	Practice Regarding GPA Calculation
North Branford High School	7th semester; includes only semester courses in senior year
East Haven High School	7th semester; includes only semester courses in senior year
North Haven High School	Uses grades from freshman, sophomore, and junior years only
Guilford High School	Includes third quarter grades from senior year
Foran High School	Includes third quarter grades from senior year
Xavier High School	Includes all 8 semesters (final grades through mid-May)
Old Lyme High School	Includes third quarter grades from senior year
Woodland Regional High School	7th semester; includes only semester courses in senior year
Shelton High School	Includes third quarter senior year grades (via Infinite Campus)

Including third quarter grades from senior year provides a more comprehensive view of student performance and better honors sustained academic effort throughout high school. We believe this change aligns with our commitment to academic excellence and equity.

Respectfully,



Lee Panagoulis, Jr.
Principal, Branford High School



Instruction

6150 P

WEIGHTED GRADING AND CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGES

The Branford Board of Education (the “Board”) understands the importance of parents and students understanding the manner in which grade point averages are calculated within the Branford Public Schools (the “District”). In accordance with Connecticut law, this policy shall explain the manner in which grade point averages are calculated within the District.

I. Calculation of Grade Point Average for Purposes of the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program

The Board understands its obligation under state law to identify students in the District who are eligible for the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program (“CAAP”).

In accordance with state law, for each student who completes eleventh grade, the District will: (1) calculate the unweighted grade point average for purposes of the CAAP (“CAAP GPA”), and (2) determine whether such student’s CAAP GPA is above or below the minimum established by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (“BOR”). The District shall share a student’s CAAP GPA and whether the student is above or below the minimum established by the BOR with the student, the student’s parent or guardian, the Connecticut State Department of Education (“CSDE”), and, upon request, a participating institution for purposes of applying to such institution under the CAAP.

The District shall notify each student enrolled in the student’s final year of high school, and the parent or guardian of such student, whether the student may be admitted to at least one participating institution under the CAAP based on the academic threshold established by such institution.

II. Calculation of Calculating Grade Point Averages For All Other Purposes

The Board believes that, due to the rigorous nature of certain classes, the grades earned in such classes deserve additional weight for purposes of calculating grade point average and determining class rank. These rigorous classes include the following: honors classes, advanced placement classes, dual credit or early college. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to grant grades earned in such courses additional weight for the aforementioned purposes.

A student's grade point average shall be calculated in the following manner:

Official Grade Point Average (GPA) will be determined at the end of the third quarter of senior year. Only grades earned in Branford High School will be included in calculating weighted and unweighted GPA. Students must be enrolled in Branford High School for at least three semesters (including junior year) and have earned 7.5 credits in "core academic courses" in order to receive a GPA.

Courses will be designated "Standard," "Honors," or "AP," the last to include advanced placement classes, dual credit or early college credits. Grades of a C or lower will not be weighted differently depending on the course designation. Grades of a C+ or higher will receive different weighting depending on the course designation, with grades in courses identified as "AP" receiving the greatest weight. The precise weighting of grades shall be provided on annual basis in the Student Handbook.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for implementing this policy and developing procedures in furtherance of this policy, if necessary.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220g
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220q
Connecticut General Statutes § 10a-11h

Public Act 24-47, "An Act Modifying the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program"

ADOPTED: 10-19-2022

REVISED:

11/26/2024



Instruction

6150 P

WEIGHTED GRADING AND CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGES

The Branford Board of Education (the “Board”) understands the importance of parents and students understanding the manner in which grade point averages are calculated within the Branford Public Schools (the “District”). In accordance with Connecticut law, this policy shall explain the manner in which grade point averages are calculated within the District.

I. Calculation of Grade Point Average and Class Rank Percentile for Purposes of the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program

The Board understands its obligation under state law to identify students in the District who are eligible for the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program (“CAAP”).

In accordance with state law, for each student who completes eleventh grade, the District will: (1) calculate ~~a the unweighted~~ grade point average ~~using the standardized method established by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (“BOR”) for~~ purposes of the CAAP (“CAAP GPA”), and (2) determine whether such student’s ~~class rank percentile~~ CAAP GPA is above or below the minimum established by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (“BOR”). The District shall share a student’s CAAP GPA and whether the student is above or below the minimum ~~class rank percentile for the CAAP established by the BOR~~ with the student, the student’s parent or guardian, the Connecticut State Department of Education (“CSDE”), and, upon request, a participating institution for purposes of applying to such institution under the CAAP.

The District shall notify each student enrolled in the student’s final year of high school, and the parent or guardian of such student, whether the student may be admitted to at least one participating institution under the CAAP based on the academic threshold established by such institution.

~~The District shall calculate each student’s CAAP GPA, identify institutions to which students are eligible for automatic admission under the CAAP, and generate student letters in accordance with guidance issued by the CSDE, as such guidance may be amended from time to time.~~

II. Calculation of Calculating Grade Point Averages For All Other Purposes

The Board believes that, due to the rigorous nature of certain classes, the grades earned in such classes deserve additional weight for purposes of calculating grade point average and determining class rank. These rigorous classes include the following: honors classes, advanced placement classes, dual credit or early college. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to grant grades earned in such courses additional weight for the aforementioned purposes.

A student's grade point average shall be calculated in the following manner:

Official Grade Point Average (GPA) will be determined at the end of the third quarter of senior year. ~~at the end of the seventh semester.~~ Only grades earned in Branford High School will be included in calculating weighted and unweighted GPA. Students must be enrolled in Branford High School for at least three semesters (including junior year) and have earned 7.5 credits in "core academic courses" in order to receive a GPA.

Courses will be designated "Standard," "Honors," or "AP," the last to include advanced placement classes, dual credit or early college credits. Grades of a C or lower will not be weighted differently depending on the course designation. Grades of a C+ or higher will receive different weighting depending on the course designation, with grades in courses identified as "AP" receiving the greatest weight. The precise weighting of grades shall be provided on annual basis in the Student Handbook.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for implementing this policy and developing procedures in furtherance of this policy, if necessary.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220g
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220q
Connecticut General Statutes § 10a-11h

~~Connecticut State Department of Education, Information and Resources to Support Connecticut School for the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program (CAAP), available at~~
~~<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Information-and-Resources-to-Support-Connecticut-Schools-for-CT-Automatic-Admissions-Program>~~
Public Act 24-47, "An Act Modifying the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program"

ADOPTED: 10-19-2022

REVISED: ~~September 20, 2023~~

~~12/22/2023~~

11/26/2024