

How do I report bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation?

If you are a **teacher, other staff person, or volunteer**, you must **tell the Principal** of your school of the incident as quickly as possible. You can make your *initial report* in person, by writing a note, sending an email, or leaving a voice mail message. You will then be required to *complete an Incident Report Form within 72 hours* of seeing, stopping, or hearing of an incident that might be bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

If you are a **student, parent/guardian or other community member** simply **tell an adult at the school**

what happened. You can tell them in person, write them a note, send an email or leave a voice mail message. **The adult you tell will report the incident to the Principal** and fill out the required forms.

You can also **report bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation** yourself:

- Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/bully_report, or
- Call the **telephone hotlines**
English hotline—617-629-5222
Spanish hotline—617-629-5224
Portuguese hotline—617-629-5226
Haitian hotline—617-629-5228.

Follow the instructions and leave a detailed message on the Web or the hotline so we can carefully investigate your report.

You can **report bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation anonymously**. You can also leave your name if you want to.



Parents tell us their children report that bullying usually happens in the lunch line, hallways, bathrooms, and on the playground at school.



Bullying prevention & education resources

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/no_bullying—Somerville's bullying prevention and intervention site, anonymous reporting Web portal, links to additional information

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/prevention—Questions and answers about Somerville's curriculum and philosophy of helping students make good choices in school

www.netsmartz.org—Somerville uses the Netsmartz cybersafety curriculum in Library/Media classes

www.doe.mass.edu/bullying—Legal, regulatory, educational and other helpful resources from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed.

www.adl.org/combatbullying—Bullying prevention resources from the Anti-Defamation League

www.glsen.org—Links to resources for teachers, families and students from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network

Incidents related to a student's identification with any **protected classes**, may be considered harassment and referred to the appropriate authorities. This includes:

- Students receiving *special education services*
- Students who identify themselves as *lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)*, or students who identify themselves as the children of *parents who are LGBT*
- *Girls and young women*
- Students who identify themselves as *racial or ethnic minorities*.

Somerville Public Schools

Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation Prevention & Intervention



www.somerville.k12.ma.us/no_bullying

Somerville Public Schools
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Children can't learn if they don't feel safe



Keeping the learning environment safe for all teachers, volunteers, families and students is a priority of the Somerville Public Schools.

A safe learning environment is one in which every student develops emotionally, academically, and physically in a caring and supportive atmosphere

free of intimidation and abuse. A goal of the Somerville Public Schools is to enhance and sustain safe and healthy learning environments. One way we are doing this is by **reducing the incidence** of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation in every school through prevention, effective and compassionate intervention, and community-wide social promotion.

Bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation **are prohibited** on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs (whether on or off school grounds), at bus stops, on school busses or other vehicles owned or operated by the Schools or their contractors, or through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased or used by the District.

What are bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation?

Bullying is “*the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of school staff including but not limited to an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:*

- *causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;*
- *places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;*
- *creates a hostile environment at school for the target;*
- *infringes on the rights of the target at school; or*
- *materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.”*

Repeated teasing that causes a student or group of students to feel unsafe may be bullying.

Incidents that take place outside of the Somerville Public Schools, but impacts the safety of the learning environment may be bullying.

A single incident of teasing that purposefully tries to make another student feel unsafe may be bullying.



Cyberbullying can happen through social networking sites like Facebook, via email, or through text messages.

Parents/guardians tell us bullying is most likely to happen in **hallways, the bathrooms, playgrounds and the cafeterias** at school. “Bystander Empowerment” training is being offered to staff and volunteers in order to (a) **improve the attention** we give to students’ interactions everywhere in our schools, and (b) strengthen our ability to **stop bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation when we see it.**

What happens when a bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation report is made?

The **Principal** of the school where the bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation is alleged will **investigate and respond** carefully and compassionately.

The **parents/guardians of the students involved**—both the aggressor(s) and the target(s)—**will be notified** near the beginning of the investigation.

Immediate changes may be made, if needed, to the learning environment **to protect the students involved**—this might mean assigning the aggressor to a specific table in the lunchroom or changing the order of the lines to music class.

Support services will be offered to students affected by the incident—targets, aggressors and witnesses. Services will depend on the specific needs of the students and might include classroom education, counseling or peer mediation, or a change in afterschool activity club schedule.