

Ledyard Public Schools - District Safe School Climate Plan

Reference:

[Board of Education Policy 5131.92](#)

Forms:

[Bullying Complainant Reporting Form](#) ~ [Bullying Report](#)

District Safe School Climate and Title IX Coordinator:

Assistant Superintendent

4 Blonder Boulevard

Ledyard, CT 06339, 860-464-9255

Ledyard Public Schools Safe School Climate Plan

Background Information:

As part of Policy 5131.92, the Assistant Superintendent is designated as the Safe School Climate Coordinator. Each school principal is designated the Safe School Climate Specialist of their respective school. The responsibility of the Safe School Climate Specialist includes:

- Notifying students and the parents or guardians of students at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees;
- Investigating acts of bullying and teen dating violence promptly as established in the School Climate Plan;
- Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations;
- Act as the school official responsible for preventing bullying in the school;
- Complete the biennial Safe School Climate assessment.

The Ledyard Board of Education promotes a secure and happy school climate that is conducive to teaching and learning and is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior.

Safe School Climate Plan

The Board believes that a comprehensive program involving both staff and students of Ledyard Public Schools is essential to reducing incidents of bullying. To this end, the Board directs the Superintendent to promulgate such administrative rules and procedures as is necessary to implement the following Safe School Climate Plan elements in each school:

1. Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require that students and their parents/guardians be notified at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make such reports.
2. Enable the parents/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, 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 the 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 regarding bullying. Require that the Safe School Climate Specialist give prompt notice that the investigation has commenced

to the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and to the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed.

5. Require the Safe School Climate Specialist to review any anonymous reports of bullying, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
6. Include a prevention and intervention strategy, as outlined later in this policy, for school employees to deal with bullying.
7. Require each school to include language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying.
8. Require each school to notify the parents/guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents/guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation described in step 4, above. These notifications 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.
9. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of the 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 the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying. These invitations 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.
10. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separated and distinct from the meeting described in step 9, above, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying.
11. Require each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in the school, maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school, make such list available for public inspection, and annually report that number to the Department of Education in such manner as is 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 perpetuated bullying incidents by the same individual. Such interventions 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 school Principal, or his/her designee, to notify Ledyard Police when the Principal, or his/her designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.
16. Require that, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the District's Safe School Climate Plan.
17. Require that all school employees annually complete training on (1) the prevention of and response to youth suicide, and (2) the identification and prevention of and response to bullying. This training should specifically cover District-wide and school-specific procedures regarding these topics. Additionally, all school employees shall complete the annual training provided by the Department of Education on these topics.

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

Each school shall implement a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence that may include, but is not limited to:

1. Implementation of a positive behavioral intervention and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education.
2. School rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
3. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur.
4. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school.
5. Individual interventions with the bully, his/her parents/guardians and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, his/her parents/guardians and school staff.
6. School-wide training related to safe school climate.
7. Student peer training, education and support.

8. Promotion of parent/guardian involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.
9. Culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation. Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement strategy may originate from public, private, federal, or philanthropic sources. For the purposes of this policy, "interventions with the bullied child," includes referrals to a school counselor, psychologist, or other appropriate social or mental health service, and periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the bullied child.

District Safe School Climate Coordinator

The Board appoints the Assistant Superintendent as the District Safe School Climate Coordinator who shall:

- Be responsible for implementing the District’s Safe School Climate Plan;
- Collaborate with the Safe School Climate Specialists from each school, the Board and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying and teen dating violence in Ledyard Public Schools;
- Provide data and information, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education regarding bullying and teen dating violence; and
- Meet with the Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence in the District and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the District’s Safe School Climate Plan.

Safe School Climate Specialists

The Principal of each school, or his/her designee as approved by the Superintendent, shall serve as the Safe School Climate Specialist and shall:

- Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying in the school in accordance with the District’s Safe School Climate Plan;
- 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.

Safe School Climate Committees	
Ledyard High School	Leadership Team
Ledyard Middle School	Faculty Council
GFS/JWL School	School Climate Team
Gallup Hill School	Faculty Council
Ledyard Center School	Climate & Anti-Bullying Committee

Elementary School Action Plans

Elementary Process to Report Acts of Bullying

Students – Depending on their age, students may report bullying by making:

- An oral report to the principal or a school employee;
- An email to the principal or a school employee; or
- A written report to the principal or a school employee. The written report may be made anonymously; students may leave a note in the principal’s or a school employee’s mailbox.

Parents – Parents may report bullying by making:

- An oral report in person or via a phone call to the principal or a school employee;

- An email to the principal or a school employee; or
- A written report to the principal or a school employee. The written report may be made anonymously; parents may leave a note in the principal's or a school employee's mailbox.

Gallup Hill School

School Climate Specialist: Principal

Respect for others and respect for self is a daily lesson for our students. Focused instruction on positive behavior traits is the cornerstone of building and maintaining a positive school climate.

Gallup Hill School teachers implement Responsive Classroom techniques and build a classroom community through daily morning meetings via our Gallup Hill School news program. A whole-school community is promoted through the establishment of common expectations for student conduct and instruction provided during our morning newscasts and our monthly whole-school meetings.

The Gallup Hill School expectations for student conduct are based on the acronym **C.A.R.E.S.** which stands for:

- **COOPERATION** – Cooperation is working together to accomplish our goals.
- **ADVOCACY** – Advocacy is supporting myself and others through my words and actions.
- **RESPECT** – Respect is treating others with understanding, kindness, and tolerance.
- **EFFORT** – Effort is doing my best each and every day.
- **SELF-CONTROL** – Self-control is choosing to control my actions.

Students at Gallup Hill School are taught and expected to follow C.A.R.E.S. expectations every day. This helps all our students have success in their social relationships with peers and adults, as well as their academics. Students, teachers, and parents are asked to sign a pledge showing their commitment to C.A.R.E.S. at the beginning of each school year. Our morning newscasts and our monthly whole-school morning meetings emphasize on an aspect of C.A.R.E.S., along with other positive character traits, each month.

The Gallup Hill School color-coded leveled behavior system exists to remind students to always work to exhibit positive behavior. This system also helps us to point out inappropriate behavior, when it occurs, and have reflective discussions with our students as to where their behavior falls on the continuum of the leveled model. Discussions regarding inappropriate behavior follow a common framework: students identify the inappropriate behavior, attempt to determine its cause, and reflect on what they could do to avoid this reaction in the future. As a staff, we are always teaching and modeling "Blue" behavior as the goal for all. "Blue" behavior is making good choices and acting appropriately with confidence that it is the right way to act, regardless of whether there is an adult present. This model aligns with our character education model based on the Gallup Hill School C.A.R.E.S Pledge.

Curriculum materials and resources are available to classroom teachers to help with direct instruction of the components of C.A.R.E.S.

- The *Connected and Respected* curriculum is used (K-6) to implement social resilience lessons on a weekly basis. The program combines direct instruction of proactive strategies, role-play and corresponding mentor text, to help inform students about negative character traits and teach them how to "stand up" to negative impulses by relying on their positive character traits.
- Within each grade level, students are taught positive social behaviors through the use of various mentor text. Examples are: *Chester and the Big Bad Bully*, *Hooway for Wodney Wat*, *One, Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon*, *Chrysanthemum*, *How Full is Your Bucket?*, *Billy Bully* and *How to Handle a Bully*, *The Recess Queen*, *What are you so Grumpy About?*, *When Sophie Gets Angry-Really, Really Angry*.
- Grade 5 is instructed in the D.A.R.E. Program which focuses on student advocacy and resisting peer pressure regarding substance abuse.
- Grade 6 teaches a *Healthful Relationships Unit* which includes lessons on cyberbullying and how students can protect themselves from the dangers of social media.

- The following Special Education Resources are available for staff and parents: *How to Stop Bullying and Social Aggression, Cultivating Kindness in School, Lively Lessons for Classroom Sessions, All about Boundaries, I Didn't Know I Was a Bully, Asperger's Syndrome and Bullying, and No More Meltdowns.*

Gallup Hill School adheres strictly to all laws and responsibilities related to stopping bullying at Connecticut schools. In accordance with and in addition to that law:

- Gallup Hill School maintains a School Climate Team in unison with our Faculty Council. The committee members consist of: the principal, teachers, and a parent representative. During monthly meetings, the team reviews our school climate and related data that include discipline and bullying referrals. If patterns are evident; the Faculty Council develops an action plan to address the identified area of concern.
- Class lessons are provided at the beginning of each school year defining the conditions which lead to bullying, how to recognize bullying, and how each student has a responsibility to eradicate and report bullying as an active bystander.
- All students and parents are informed of the school procedures and consequences associated with bullying.
- All staff members are informed of the law and its implementation in accordance with Ledyard Board of Education policy.

When students struggle socially and emotionally, several programs are in place to provide support.

- The physical education (PE) teacher includes team building exercises and skills practice during weekly PE instruction. The PE teacher facilitates grades 1-6 recess 4 days a week to monitor application of strategies taught and provides additional social and emotional coaching to students who require support.
- Ledyard Youth Services supports our students through Lunch Bunch Groups focusing on making friends and developing appropriate social interactions; they also provide individual support as needed.
- Therapy Dogs and their handlers work with individual students, visit classrooms, and can be used as a reward for students working toward specific goals.
- A school Mentor Program consisting of certified staff members provides identified students an additional positive adult relationship within the school. Mentors meet with student mentees at a regularly scheduled time throughout the school year. Typically, this meeting takes place during lunchtime. Often mentors/mentees relationships remain consistent as students progress through grade levels. Parent permission is required for participation.

Gallup Hill School supports several events and activities designed to improve the overall climate of the school. These include an active Student Council comprised of elected 5th and 6th grade students, parent volunteers, and a teacher facilitator. The Student Council helps to organize events that support our Weekend Backpack Program. Food donations are collected throughout the year during whole-school meetings, PTO family nights, and from community organizations. This food is used to fill weekend backpacks; these packs go home with students on Friday afternoon and are returned on Monday morning. The Student Council helps maintain our school gardens and uses the harvest from our vegetable garden to supplement our annual Summer Reading Picnic. PTO sponsored events such as the Pumpkin Ball, Winter Wonderland, Game Nights, and our annual Celebration of Art and Science Days promote positive student-parent-school community. Other events, such as our annual Field Day and the Grade 6 Students vs. Faculty Basketball Game, are used to practice and model teamwork and positive competition.

Gales Ferry/Juliet W. Long Schools

School Climate Specialist: Principal

Our main focus is helping students build a strong character. We use the Connected and Respected program to help students learn and apply important skills. Monthly All School Meetings serve as a time to gather to share new learning and focus on specific character traits. All members of the learning community strive to be empathetic and inclusive.

Classroom teachers use Responsive Classroom techniques to build a sense of community and help each student develop a strong sense of self. From day one, students play an active role in developing classroom rules and establishing

appropriate consequences. Class meetings serve as a time for teachers and students to model and discuss appropriate behaviors as well as problem solve issues that arise. Classroom teachers use mentor texts to spark rich discussions about decisions we all face on a regular basis.

Our goal is to help students make good choices and take ownership of their actions. We want all students to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. Every staff member uses a levels of behavior chart to ensure constant language throughout the learning community. Students use the levels of behavior to “label” their actions and articulate their thinking. They are taught how to use “I” messages to share feelings and handle situations. Large, dangerous, or scary problems are immediately reported to an adult.

Students are recognized for making good choices. They can earn a Colonel Compliment when they are “caught” doing the right thing. These compliments are stored in a special jar in the office. One student is selected from the compliment jar each day and receives a small prize and has his/her name read over the morning announcements.

The Second Step and Zones of Regulation programs, used by the school psychologist, teach children empathy skills, impulse control, and anger management skills. The school psychologist also visits classrooms to conduct group character education lessons. Ideas from Michelle Garcia Winner’s Social Thinking that help students improve their perspective taking and social interactions serve as a wonderful springboard for class discussions. The school psychologist also facilitates lunch bunch groups to address specific issues and challenges students face.

To build upon what is done in the classrooms to promote a positive school climate, we involve parents and the community as much as possible. Parent volunteers are welcome and encouraged to give of their time and talents. We encourage students and their families to participate in community service projects and school sponsored events. The school is fortunate to house the Jaret Kulmann Food Locker, which allows students and their families to collect food items and toiletries to give back to the community. A weekly backpack program has served many needy families. Students with special needs use the food locker as a pre-vocational opportunity in collaboration with their classroom peers. Several classrooms participate in grants which provide them the opportunity to pair with students from a different socio-economic population. Many classes pair up with another grade level class in order to help students make connections and build friendships.

When students struggle socially and emotionally, we have several programs that provide support. Staff members who supervise the playground are trained to help students handle difficult situations that sometimes arise. These staff members monitor student behavior, provide students with breaks when necessary, and work with students on the playground to ensure that everyone is included in games. Our buddy benches also help students spot a peer who needs a friend. We have several therapy dogs who visit the schools on a weekly basis. These dogs and their handlers work with individual students, visit classrooms, and often serve as a reward for students working toward a specific goal. The D.A.R.E. program offers fifth grade students the chance to work closely with a youth officer to learn about the dangers of drug use and the challenges they will face with peer pressure. Ledyard Youth Services also works with students on site as needed.

The School Climate/Safety Committee meets monthly to review discipline data. If patterns are evident, the committee develops an action plan to address the identified area of concern. We often host parent-child activity nights to help strengthen relationships between parent and child, as well as build connections to other families in the community.

Ledyard Center School

School Climate Specialist: Principal

Ledyard Center School addresses positive school climate through its educational program. The Responsive Classroom is an approach to teaching and learning that fosters safe, rigorous, and positive experiences in the classrooms. Many classrooms adhere to the fundamentals of this approach. To accomplish this, Ledyard Center School holds daily Morning Meetings, delivers school-wide morning announcements, uses buddy classrooms, and demonstrates levels of classroom democracy and student choice whenever possible.

School-wide positive behavioral interventions are evidence-based frameworks for developing positive behavior which creates a positive climate for learning. Continual teaching, modeling, and reinforcing of positive behavior are implemented to reduce discipline problems and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety, and learning. To achieve this school wide, Ledyard Center School has developed a school-wide theme publicly identified as LCS has H.E.A.R.T.

H.E.A.R.T= Helpful, Effort, Acceptance, Respect, Thoughtful

Our school theme was created and selected by our Ledyard Center School community. It promotes character trait expectations that are celebrated at our All School Meetings and in the classrooms during Morning Meetings. The H.E.A.R.T. theme utilizes guest speakers, student performances, character education in the classroom, school-wide behavioral expectations and positive behavioral response practices.

The H.E.A.R.T. traits are recognized and awarded through acknowledgements at our all-school meetings, and in the hallways as students work towards filling the large hearts with individual paper hearts. When students demonstrate one of the characteristics of H.E.A.R.T, they can receive a paper heart their name to add to the wall.

Creating a culture of kindness has significantly decreased the number of behavior referrals to the office this year. However, there are times where students do visit the office for disciplinary matters. The Board of Education approved elementary discipline policy, found in the Student handbook, outlines logical consequences for discipline issues. Consistency in both expectations and consequences around discipline maintains a safe and orderly environment.

Lastly, Ledyard Center School designates a Safe Haven room where students who need to de-escalate from a situation can go to do so. Staffed by a trained Safe Haven paraprofessional, this space is quiet and calm, allowing students to simply take a break and regroup. Our school psychologist serves students who are in need of a more significant intervention.

Climate and Anti-Bullying Committee

The committee is comprised of the School Climate Coordinator (the principal or the designee), school staff and a parent representative. The committee meets periodically throughout the year and will meet Connecticut bullying legislation requirements. The committee analyzes student, faculty, staff and parent surveys to make informed decisions regarding the climate of the school. Additionally, the committee reviews bullying data keeping a close eye on emerging patterns or concerns.

Ledyard High School

School Climate Specialist: Principal

High School Process to Report Acts of Bullying

Anyone (students, parents, staff, other concerned parties) should report bullying directly to the principal or an assistant principal, but there are a number of options when choosing how to report. Reports may be oral, in the form of email, or through a formal, written report. Reporting anonymously is possible by mailing or placing a written report directly in the mailbox of the principal. It should be noted that anonymous reporting, while perfectly acceptable, may make the subsequent investigation a bit more difficult. Nonetheless, any form of reporting bullying is far better than choosing not to do so. Complainants will be assisted, as necessary, in submitting the district bullying reporting form.

Ledyard High School makes every effort to maintain a positive and safe school climate and to instill in our students the qualities of our Civic and Social Expectations. They read as follows:

Students and graduates of Ledyard High School will:

1. Demonstrate citizenship, integrity, and respect for self and others.
2. Contribute to a safe and supportive learning environment.
3. Demonstrate independence and self-reliance.

Accordingly, Ledyard High School adheres strictly to all laws and responsibilities related to stopping bullying at Connecticut schools. In accordance with and in addition to that law:

- Ledyard High School maintains a Climate Team consisting of all building administrators, our director of guidance, the special education coordinator, all Interdisciplinary Leaders (department heads), our director of agricultural sciences and technology, and our school librarian. During meetings, the team discusses our perceptions of school climate and related data, such as survey results, school discipline and bullying numbers.
- Ledyard High School administration conduct monthly Parent Advisory Council meetings, at which we engage parents in discussions on all aspects of school climate and other issues.
- At introductory student assemblies, held each year, the Principal reviews the laws and consequences associated with bullying, the definition of bullying, the conditions which can lead to bullying, ways to recognize bullying, the means to report bullying, and how every person can meet his or her responsibility for stopping bullying.
- During sophomore CAPT testing, an extended advisory lesson is presented to all freshmen, allowing them to work in small groups to explore their own opinions and experiences around bullying and then to write a "kindness manifesto" as a group.
- Teacher Professional Development time is used to ensure complete understanding by staff of the law and its proper implementation in accordance with Ledyard Board of Education policy. Teachers are reminded of proper reporting protocols and timelines.
- The LHS Health class is a requirement of all students. Its curriculum deals extensively with issues related to self-image, healthy choices, and developing respect through understanding psychological and physiological differences inherent in the make-up of peers and other human beings.
- The comprehensive guidance curriculum includes a "Peer Relations" lesson for freshmen.
- The English 9 curriculum uses a series of articles about bullying to teach the various structures of informational text and then links those articles to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* in the following unit.

Other actions and events which contribute to a positive school climate include:

- Blue and White Day (fall and spring) – an all-school assembly in the gymnasium designed to establish community, emphasize unity, and herald the accomplishments of students
- Spirit Week – a friendly, creative competition among graduating classes culminating in a school spirit pep rally and our Homecoming Dance
- Front showcase displays of student work, including artwork, student writing and photography, pre-engineering and calculus projects, and handcrafted creations from our metals and woods students
- Hallway showcase and bulletin board displays of student work, particularly of visual art work in the 200s and 600s hallways, both of which have been converted in "galleries," through which student work is rotated.
- Maintenance of main hallway bulletin boards that recognize:
 - Quarterly posting of honor roll lists
 - Daily announcements of birthday wishes and noteworthy student achievements whenever appropriate
 - Ongoing slideshow display on the three large TVs (in the foyer and cafeteria), showcasing student accomplishments and upcoming student events
 - Administration, guidance, and agri-science led spring and summer orientations for all incoming students
 - Administrative practice of greeting arriving students every morning, both outside and in our front lobby
 - An annual College Fair which brings representatives from over one hundred colleges to our school and leads hundreds of our students and their parents to visit and gather information on a variety of schools and other career options
 - An annual Career Day which brings representatives from nearly one hundred professions so that students can have a series of twenty-minute meetings which explore in detail careers which may be of interest to them

LHS sponsors student organizations which contribute to creating a positive school climate. These include:

- Gay/Straight Alliance: this group meets regularly during Activity Period and promotes tolerance and support for and among all students. The members of this organization and their faculty advisor also attend the annual True Colors Conference.
- More than Words: this group is a collaboration of students and faculty from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Ledyard High School, New London High School, and Robert E. Fitch High School. Nearly 40 students and 10 adults, including administrators, participate in each meeting. Meetings function as discussion seminars, and group members focus on diversity. Most recently, More Than Words members have delivered two very successful outreach lessons at the elementary and middle school levels.
- Peer Mediation: over 20 students, selected through an interview process, receive training for the purpose of providing student-led opportunities to resolve many issues which lead to negativity. These interventions have

proven to be highly effective at resolving differences and teaching students how to manage differences before they become heated issues.

- National Honor Society: this group conducts “coffeehouses” for student performances, holiday food and toy drives, and academic tutoring for all student peers who request it.
- Student Congress: this group holds student recreational activities such as dances, coordinates Spirit Week and the Homecoming Dance, and collaborates with the American Red Cross to organize two blood drives a year.

LHS provides the forum for student events or student-centered displays, which contribute to creating a positive school climate. These include:

- Regular fundraising activities, such as dodgeball, three-on-three basketball, a 5k road race, and pickle ball and badminton tournaments to raise money for scholarships.
- In-house leadership training for athletes. These training sessions emphasize qualities necessary to bring about positive change in both athletic teams and beyond.
- Maintenance of bulletin boards around the building, heralding the music student of the month, the efforts of the Ocean Bowl team, the topics of Agri-Science senior projects, etc.
- Honors assemblies, which recognize student achievement in academics and many other areas in which our students are involved.
- Assemblies which bring in military veterans, Holocaust survivors, poets, drug and alcohol awareness professionals, filmmakers, financial advisors, and others, which engage students by appealing to their interests and level of physical and mental development.
- Assemblies which feature performances by our highly enrolled choral and instrumental groups, affording students within those groups the opportunity to demonstrate their talents before an audience of their peers.
- Floral, landscape, and fish tank displays set up and maintained by our agricultural sciences and technology students, affording students within agriscience the opportunity to demonstrate their talents in a broader school context.
- The opportunity for art students to make a lasting impression by creating decorative murals around the school on unifying themes.

Ledyard Middle School

School Climate Specialist: Principal

Middle School Process to Report Acts of Bullying

Anyone (students, parents, staff, other concerned parties) should report bullying directly to the principal or an assistant principal, but there are a number of options when choosing how to report. Reports may be oral, in the form of email, or through a formal, written report. Reporting anonymously is possible by mailing or placing a written report directly in the mailbox of the principal. It should be noted that anonymous reporting, while perfectly acceptable, may make the subsequent investigation a bit more difficult. Nonetheless, any form of reporting bullying is far better than choosing not to do so. Complainants will be assisted, as necessary, in submitting the district bullying reporting form.

At Ledyard Middle School we are committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. This learning community is obligated to cultivate this positive and supportive school climate through: a common vision by all stakeholders, open lines of communication, positive youth development, effective teaching and learning practices, and a growth mind set for programmatic school climate improvement practices.

Anti-bullying Strategies/Activities:

- Transitioning to Middle School – At the beginning of the school year, our school counselors meet with all students on various topics on bullying, cyber-bullying, and sexual harassment and our school rules and expectations. Our counselors will visit the classrooms to explain what depicts bullying, cyber-bullying, and sexual harassment and how students can safely seek out support for themselves or their peers.

- Bullying Prevention – Students will participate in an evidence-based approach, program or process that is designed to ensure a positive school climate and prevent bullying. All Students will be made aware of school rules prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying, and harassment. LMS will adhere to our bullying and disciplinary policies when determining appropriate consequences. Proper documentation and records keeping of verified acts of bullying will be maintained.
- How to Report Bullying – Students and/or parents may make verbal or written reports of suspected bullying behavior, and students are permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Reporting forms are available online and in the main office and school counselor's office and in the nurse's room of the school. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed by the Safe School Climate Specialist. If acts of bullying are verified, the school will take prompt, corrective action that is reasonably calculated to stop the bullying and prevent any recurrence of such behavior. School Counselors and administration process with the bully and bullied. In responding to cases of bullying we are sure to process with all parties involved. During this time we work to help students learn from the situation and equip the students with the strategies to appropriately react to a similar situation in the future.
- Staff Training and A Common Vision – Yearly, provide all certified school employees training on the prevention, identification and response to bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide via in-service training. Agree on common vision with our anti-bullying practices, school behavioral priorities and on what a positive school climate looks and feels like.
- The monthly classroom school counselor lessons on tolerance and anti-bullying strategies – Our guidance counselors coordinate with the classroom teachers to spend the day in their classes and facilitate guidance lessons to the students. The Second Step curriculum is the curriculum used to plan their monthly lessons. This curriculum covers topics such as:
- School counselor conferences – School counselors meet with students individually to process situations as needed. These meetings are carried out separately with the bullied and the bully. Parents are often included in these meetings or are contacted and kept informed through the process. This is where important learning takes place and provides the students with better tools to react or make better choices in these types of situations in the future.
- Student Support Data Team – Generates strategies for at risk academic and behavioral students. Our SSDT team meets weekly to discuss, plan for and implement strategies to support at risk students. Strategies include in class differentiation (Tier I) along with Tier II and Tier III recommendations.
- Parent Education – Open House, our LMS CHARGE Website, and Parent Information Meetings – Parent education about bullying and promotion of parent and stakeholder involvement, participation, and feedback with regard to bullying prevention will be made available throughout the school year during designated meetings and through postings on the school website/newsletter.

Positive School Climate Strategies/Activities:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) – *LMS will integrate PBIS strategies into school-wide climate plan. PBIS is a proactive strategy for defining, teaching and supporting student behavior resulting in academic and social gains and a positive school environment. These will include, but are not limited to: School-wide monthly recognitions, classroom PBIS incentives, and creating individual systems of support through targeted behavior plans, as needed. PowerSchool is utilized as our school's discipline management and behavioral data collecting and reporting tool.*
- Student Leadership Group – Student leaders are coached on supporting their peers in academic and social settings to further promote a positive school environment for all members of the LMS community. These students work in a mentoring role and with their peers as a whole to promote tolerance for all students.
- Special Olympics Project Unify – In 2012 LMS initiated its Unified Sports program, Project Unify. Special Olympics Project UNIFY acts as an education and sports based strategy powered by our own Ledyard Middle School Leadership Group and our special education population. Both youth groups volunteer to participate in this statewide interscholastic athletic community that increases teamwork and leadership opportunities, while promoting social and civic responsibilities, for students with and without intellectual disabilities, while creating communities of acceptance for all.
- Assessment of School Climate/School Climate Surveys – Each Spring, a safe school climate survey is offered to the students, teachers and families. Based on the information and data that is collected, building improvement plans and individual professional growth goals are set by school administration and certified staff.
- Safe School Climate Committee – This committee is comprised of staff, administration, and a parent. The mission of this committee is to be proactive in building on a positive school climate for all members of the LMS community.
- CHARGE Honor Assemblies – At the conclusion of each quarter we hold an awards ceremony to celebrate our students' successes from the quarter. We hand out certificates for the different levels of honors and we also distribute the Positive CHARGE awards. Awards are given to the students teachers feel best demonstrated these characteristics.

- School Safe School Climate Theme – We Take CHARGE of Our Learning, Actions, and Success is our Safe School Climate Theme at LMS. We refer to taking CHARGE continuously throughout the year in addition to giving Positive CHARGE Awards at our quarterly CHARGE Honor Assemblies.
- School rule: Be Respectful; Be Safe –This is our consistent rule from the day students walk into LMS. We are proactive with this rule and incorporate it into our monthly school counselor lessons and CHARGE Block Lessons. Also while processing issues with students we always refer back to our school rule, and any staff member is able to acknowledge random acts of kindness by issuing a “CHARGE” card. The student turns this into the office and the student is presented with a certificate during homeroom.
- Advisory Program – The CHARGE Block is our bi-weekly student advisory program. The program is designed to foster relationships between the students and a supportive adult within the school community. Lessons are created and provided to the teachers by the Safe School Climate Committee. The lessons are designed in conjunction with our monthly school themes:

The Ledyard Middle School Monthly CHARGE Climate Themes:

Months	CHARGE THEMES
August/September	Community
October	Respect
November	Responsibility
December	"Pay It Forward"
January	Courage
February	Diversity
March	School-Spirit
April	Integrity
May	Leadership - "Take CHARGE"
June	Reflect and Celebrate

- Faculty Council – A representation of LMS faculty that plans, practices, and support students, teachers and families learn about and plan for barriers in student learning. This group ensures that our infrastructure, building schedule, building capacity, and students are prepared to meet the challenges of the initiatives in public secondary education.
- School to Home Communication – The LMS website, School Messenger phone calls, the student and parent PowerSchool portals and Twitter posts act as an effective communication tool for our students and families.
- School counselors and school psychologist run student lunch groups – Based on student surveys, our guidance assesses the need among their students and then creates groups to help support these needs.
- School dances – All students that are in good standing with behavior are able to attend our dances. We have a dance every couple of months and our students really enjoy them.
- Student Council – Our student council meets twice a month and they are very active in supporting or creating fundraisers or activities that support our Ledyard community along with our LMS community.
- Ledyard Youth Services – Counselors from LYS come to LMS and work individually with our more emotional at-risk students.
- Spirit Week – School spirit activities throughout the week. Each day represents a different activity; however, each activity is planned around a cooperative, team building approach.
- Adventure Days – Our PE teachers incorporate collaborative, team building activities in their classes to stress teamwork and cooperation.

- Department and grade level meetings – To discuss strategies and or improve academic and social concerns/successes. These meeting times are provided as a time to collaborate around strategies to help all students succeed.
- Student Study Center – A safe place for students to take a time out to regroup. We have a Safe Haven aide that works to process the situation as well as complete the work the student is missing while in the SSC. We also use this program to help students with organization, work completion as well as our after school homework help program.
- School counselor conferences – School counselors meet with students individually to process situations as needed. These meetings carried out separately with the bullied and the bully. Parents are many times included in these meetings or are contacted and kept informed through the process. This is where important learning takes place to help students better react or make better choices in these types of situations in the future.
- Naviance – A program that helps students stay focused on their self-generated academic, social and career goals. These Student Success Plans will guide student all the way through graduation. Our school counselors work with students monthly as they navigate their way through the year in conjunction with their SSP. Parents are provided access to students' SSP's as well.
- Incoming 7th grade visit – Our incoming seventh grade comes and visits to participate in group activities to help ease the transition into middle school and let them know we're a safe and comfortable school. This helps lessen anxiety come the end of summer as they enter LMS.
- Health curriculum – Self-concept and peer interaction. Our health teacher teaches strategies to improve one's outlook on themselves as well as their social interactions with peers.
- Student Support Data Team – Generates strategies for at risk academic and behavioral students. Our SSDT team meets weekly to discuss, plan for and implement strategies to support at risk students. Strategies include in class differentiation (Tier I) along with Tier II and Tier III recommendations.
- Enrichment and 21st Century Classes – New programs that provide students with choice of pursuing their interests and/or applying new learning and innovation skills to prepare them for a more complex life and work environments in the 21st Century. A focus on the "whole-child" through choice, creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration and information access and technology skills is essential to prepare students for the future.
- Monthly classroom school counselor lessons on tolerance and anti-bullying strategies – Our school counselor department schedules time in the classrooms with all of the students to facilitate these lessons. The Second Step curriculum is the curriculum used to plan their monthly lessons. This curriculum covers topic such as:

District Procedures

Each school has a process whereby students report acts of bullying to any school employee. That process is announced and posted throughout the year. See Plans above.

School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying are required to orally notify the principal or their designee no later than one school day after the school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report no later than two school days after making the oral report.

District Investigation Process

1. The principal or designee will investigate all reports of bullying and ensure that the investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. The student who has made a report of bullying and his/her parent or guardian will be provided with the Ledyard Public Schools Board of Education Policy on Bullying and the Ledyard District Safe School Climate Plan.
2. The principal/designee will review anonymous reports, except no consequences will be taken based solely on an anonymous report.
3. The principal/designee will assess whether there is a need to take interim steps to prevent further allegations of bullying or retaliation during the investigation.
4. The principal/designee will remind all parties that retaliation and discrimination against an individual who reports or assists in an investigation of an act of bullying is prohibited.
5. At all times the principal/designee will be mindful of the requirement of confidentiality of education records.
6. If the allegations of bullying involve acts that may also constitute unlawful harassment based upon a student's race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, the investigator will immediately notify the District's Civil Rights Coordinator, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

7. After a prompt investigation, the principal or designee should ascertain whether the alleged conduct occurred and whether such conduct constitutes bullying as defined by Board of Education policy.

District Response To Verified Acts of Bullying

1. The principal/ designee will take prompt corrective action that is reasonably calculated to stop the bullying and prevent further recurrence of such behavior.
2. Parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying will be notified by the principal or their designee.
3. Parents or guardians of students against whom bullying acts were directed will be notified not later than 48 hours after the completion of the investigation.
4. Each principal/designee is required to invite the parents or guardians of the student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting with the principal.
5. Each principal/designee is required to invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed and to communicate to the parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student and to further discuss how the school will reasonably attempt to prevent further acts of bullying.
6. Case by case interventions shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include counseling and discipline.
7. As part of the disciplinary and remedial action, the offender may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action which may include, but is not limited to one or a combination of the following: counseling, awareness training, warning, reprimand, reassignment, transfer, suspension, termination, or expulsion.
8. The principal or his/her designee shall notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or designee believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.

District Documentation and Record Keeping

1. Principals will maintain records and data related to reports of bullying and investigations of bullying in their schools.
2. The principal will report data to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools in December and at the end of June.

District Periodic Assessment of School Climate

1. The Assistant Superintendent will oversee a school-by-school climate survey. The data will be reviewed by each School Climate Team in order to make revisions to the District School Climate Action Plan.
2. Each year the School Climate Team will review the District School Climate Plan with the faculty.
3. Professional development, which may include webinars, books, and case studies will be made available to faculty members.

District Notification Requirements

1. At the beginning of each school year, each principal/ designee will provide all school employees a written or electronic copy of the school district's Safe School Climate Plan.
2. Students and parents/guardians will be notified at the beginning of the year at each fall at Open House, in the School Handbook, on the School and District Websites, and in a school newsletter of the ways by which students can report incidents of bullying.
3. Principals and/or their designee will provide students with the definition of bullying, cyberbullying and the potential consequences of engaging in such acts in the School Handbook.
4. The district School Climate Plan will be available on the District and School websites and in all school handbooks.