



45 Congress Street
Salem, Massachusetts 01970

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
2010 – 2011

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❖ BULLYING AND RETALIATION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Salem Academy Charter School (SACS), in partnership with parents, guardians, and the community, and in keeping with the SACS core value of respect for human differences, believes that a positive, safe, and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve. Bullying disrupts a student's ability to learn by preventing that student's full engagement with his or her education. Moreover, bullying compromises a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Therefore, Salem Academy Charter School prohibits bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, and retaliation are prohibited:

- On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school district; and
- At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Salem Academy Charter School, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against any person associated with a report of bullying or the investigation thereof shall be prohibited, as is falsely accusing another as a means of harassment or bullying.

I. DEFINITIONS

“Aggressor” means a student who engages in bullying or retaliation.

“Target” means a student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- directly or indirectly causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile learning and/or social 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.

“Retaliation” means a single or repeated act of reprisal against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

For the purposes of Salem Academy Charter School policy, bullying and retaliation include cyber-bullying as defined herein.

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, 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, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

II. LEADERSHIP

Salem Academy Charter School acknowledges the importance of leadership at all levels in developing and implementing our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. On or before December 31, 2010, the Salem Academy Charter School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and posted on the school system website. Moreover, the Plan will be reviewed annually and updated as needed, as mandated by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.

A. Priority Statements

Salem Academy Charter School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other with respect. The school is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from all forms of unkindness, including bullying and cyber-bullying. The school is committed to preventing and eliminating all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We understand that members of certain student groups, including but not limited to, students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and students of low socio-economic status may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. Salem Academy will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take timely action to end that behavior and restore any target’s sense of safety. We will support

this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying, and Salem Academy is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Heads of School are responsible for the implementation and oversight of this plan.

B. Needs Assessment

The Heads of School and/or his/her designee is charged with the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all school stakeholders. These stakeholders may include parents and guardians, teachers, school staff, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, and/or students. As noted earlier, the bullying prevention and intervention plan will be reviewed annually and updated as needed through a process to be determined by the Heads of School or his/her designee.

The following steps have been taken to assess the needs of the school community.

- September 15, 2010: Analyze school data on bullying events during the 09-10 school year.
- September 29, 2010: Survey families on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying at SACS.
- October 4, 2010: Survey students on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying at SACS.
- October – November 2010: Community meetings and workshops with students.
- October – November 2010: Discussions with families at “Coffee & Conversation” events.

Salem Academy will continue to assess the needs of the school community on an annual basis.

C. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

The following steps have been taken to involve staff members and the appropriate stakeholders in the development of the Plan.

- Friday, November 5, 2010: Finalize Initial Draft
- By Wednesday, November 10, 2010: Feedback from Student Services Team
- Friday, November 12, 2010: Feedback from Administrative Team
- Wednesday, November 17, 2010: Board of Trustees Review Initial Draft
- Tuesday, November 30, 2010 through Tuesday, December 7, 2010: Public Comment Period
- Wednesday, December 8, 2010: Student Services Team Discussion of Master Plan
- Friday, December 10, 2010: Administrative Team Final Review of Master Plan
- Wednesday, December 15, 2010: Board of Trustees Review of Master Plan
- By Friday, December 17, 2010: Finalize Master Plan
- By Friday, December 31, 2010: Submit SACS BPIP to DESE
- January, 2011: Begin Implementation of Master Plan

D. Planning and Oversight

- The Heads of School are responsible for implementation and oversight of this plan.
- The Dean of Students will receive, investigate, record and track incidents reports that include information related to targets and aggressors.
- The Student Services Team will be responsible for collecting and analyzing school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problems and to measure outcomes.
- The Student Services Team will plan for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law.
- The Student Services Team will plan supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors.
- The Student Services Team will choose and oversee the implementation of the curricula that the school will use.
- The Student Services Team in consultation with the Administrative Team will develop new or revise current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designate key staff to be in charge of implementation of them.
- The Administrative Team will amend the student and personnel handbooks and codes of conduct as needed according to the Plan.
- The Student Services Team in coordination with the Administrative Team will lead the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials.
- The Student Services Team in consultation with the Administrative Team will review each year and update the Plan as needed. The Plan will then be approved by the Board of Trustees.

III. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Salem Academy Charter School will meet the requirements under M.G.L. c.71, S 370 to provide ongoing professional development for all staff.

A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan

Annual training for all SACS staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Heads of School and/or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

B. Ongoing Professional Development

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of professional development will be informed by research and will include:

- Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent and respond to bullying;
- Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop and respond to bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
- Internet and electronic device safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school for professional development could include:

- Promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- Building relationships and communicating with families;
- Managing classroom behaviors constructively;
- Using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- Applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- Engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- Maintaining safe and caring classrooms for all students.

C. Written Notice to Staff

Salem Academy Charter School will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school personnel handbook and the code of conduct.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Evaluating Curriculum

The Heads of School and/or designee, with input from appropriate stakeholders, will assess the adequacy of current curricular programs. This may include the following:

- Review of current policies and procedures;
- Review of available data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying and behavioral incidents;

- Assessment of available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services;
- Reading of current and relevant articles and research on best methodology to prevent and intervene to address bullying and cyber-bullying;
- Research and review of “field-tested” and research-based anti-bullying curricula and instructional guides;
- Review of the Massachusetts comprehensive Health and Wellness Curriculum Frameworks to provide a working curriculum context for anti-bullying curriculum; and
- Assessments of initial and periodic needs, by surveying students, staff, parents, and guardians on school climate and school safety issues.

A bullying prevention and intervention curriculum will be in place across the school on or before September 2011.

B. Identifying Resources

The Heads of School and/or designee, with input from appropriate stakeholders, will identify counseling and other service resources currently available to targets, aggressors, and their families.

Salem Academy will identify current staffing and programs, which support the creation of a positive school environment by focusing on early interventions and intensive services. Recommendations of additional resources, supports, and/or action items will be made relative to any service gaps identified by the review process. Administrators, the Student Services Team and other educators and support providers may participate in identifying resources and areas of need.

C. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches

Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research that, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

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

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, the SACS staff will review developmentally appropriate versions of the definitions, reporting and responding sections of this Plan with students by October 1st of each year.

D. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of the SACS bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students including, but not limited to students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- Using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- Using technology safely; and
- Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

V. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

A. General Guidelines for Reporting and Responding

All SACS employees will utilize the following guidelines in dealing with reported or observed bullying or retaliation situations:

- Staff will not ignore bullying. Aggressors count on adults to ignore bullying behaviors, and this allows them to continue bullying activities.
- Staff will intervene immediately.
- Staff will separate alleged aggressor(s) and target(s). Staff will remain neutral and calm dealing with alleged bullying situations. The tone that employees take with students during investigations will affect their ability to defuse the bullying.
- Staff will reassure reporters and target that they have done the right thing by reporting.
- Staff will make sure that target(s) and witness(es) know that they will be protected from retaliation.
- Staff will seek to empower aggressors to change by reminding aggressors that they have power to stop the bullying. We will teach strategies to assist aggressors to stop.
- Staff will maintain confidentiality, but information on bullying must be reported to Dean of Students.
- Staff will be objective in note-taking.
- Staff will be timely.

B. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. Staff members will report immediately to the Heads of School or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals, may be made anonymously, although no formal disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. SACS will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, a Bullying Incident Report Form (see Appendix A), a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of a Bullying Incident Report Form is not required as a condition of making a report. However, SACS will provide access to a Bullying Incident Report Form as follows:

- Include a copy of the Bullying Incident Report Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians;
- Make the form available in the main office of each school and other locations determined by the Heads of School; and
- Post the form on the SACS website.

The Bullying Incident Report Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the Heads of School will provide the school community, including staff, students, and parents or guardians with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the school building-level administrators (Executive Director, Heads of School, Dean of Students, and Special Education Coordinator), will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

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

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

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

C. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Heads of School or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on a transportation vehicle; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Heads of School or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Heads of School or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who: has reported bullying or retaliation; has witnessed bullying or retaliation; provides information during an investigation; or has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to Parents or Guardians

Upon completion of an investigation of a report of alleged bullying or retaliation, the parents of the aggressor(s) and the target(s) will be informed of the results of the investigation, whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of system policy was found, and (to the extent consistent with federal and state law) whether disciplinary action has or will be taken and whether or what steps will be taken to prevent retaliation or further actions of bullying.

b. Notice to Another School or District

If a reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Heads of School or designee who was informed first of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Heads of School or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and Federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Heads of School or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Heads of School or his/her designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00, system policy, and agreed upon standard practice with the Salem Police Department. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21, who is no longer enrolled in school, the Heads of School or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with Salem Academy Charter School policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Heads of School will consult with legal counsel about the investigation. The Heads of School or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation, including the preservation of all email and text communications.

The Heads of Schools or designee shall investigate promptly a report of bullying or retaliation, giving consideration to all the circumstances at hand, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The following are general guidelines for responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. The guidelines will be adapted as necessary to respond appropriately to the complaint.

Pre-Investigation

Even before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, school personnel will consider whether there is a need to take immediate steps to support the alleged target and/or protect the alleged target from further potential incidents of concern. In taking any such action, however, the rights of both the alleged target and alleged aggressor must be considered.

Written statement of the complaint

The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gathering information from the complainant, including such matters as: what specifically happened, who committed the alleged acts, who was present or may have information about the events, when the events occurred (date, time of day), and where the events occurred.

It is helpful to have these facts in writing. If age appropriate, the complainant may be asked to put the complaint in writing and to sign and date it. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to write a complaint, the investigator will record the allegations, read them to the complainant to confirm accuracy, and ask the complainant to sign the document. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to sign, the investigator may sign and date the document her/himself.

Interviews

Once the allegations of the complainant are established, the investigator will gather other evidence, which often involves interviews of the alleged aggressor and/or other witnesses. If appropriate, the investigator should remind the alleged aggressor and witnesses that retaliation against persons whom they believe might have reported the incidents or cooperated with the investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the complainant and the other witnesses will be maintained to the extent practicable given the school's obligation to investigate and address the matter.

E. Determination(s)

The Heads of School or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after an investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Heads of School or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The Heads of School or designee will:

- Determine what remedial action is required, if any, and
- Determine what responsive action and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

The Heads of School or designee will inform the parents or guardians of both aggressors and targets of the results of the investigation, consistent with applicable state and Federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Heads of School or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations. In addition, the Heads of School or designee may consult with appropriate staff to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

Specifically, state regulation (603 CMR 49.07), speaks to the following major issues with respect to confidentiality:

- The Heads of School or designee may not disclose information from a student record of a target or aggressor to a parent unless the information is about the parent's own child;
- The Heads of School or designee may disclose a determination of bullying or retaliation to local law enforcement without the consent of a student or his/her parents; and
- The Heads of School or designee may disclose student record information about a target or aggressor to appropriate parties in addition to law enforcement in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. This determination is limited to instances in which the Heads of School or designee has determined that there is an immediate and significant threat to the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

The Heads of School shall maintain a file of all reports of bullying and retaliation, along with the appropriate investigative materials. Each trimester, a report shall be provided to the Heads of School or his/her designee.

The Salem Academy Charter School Student Handbook describes the due process and appeals policy guaranteed to all students.

F. Responses to Bullying

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills Building

Upon the Heads of School or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he/she will use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v)). Skill building approaches that the Heads of School or designee may consider include:

- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home; and
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Heads of School or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Heads of School or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the code of conduct for the school. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, which will be considered in conjunction with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the Heads of School or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action equivalent to that for acts of bullying or retaliation.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Heads of School or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. Specific examples of responses to promote safety are included in “Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation,” Section C1.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Heads of School or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Heads of School or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

IV. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent Education and Resources

Salem Academy Charter School in collaboration with the School Family Community team (SFC), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC), and others will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by each school.

B. Notification Requirements

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

VII. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and Federal laws, and the policies of Salem Academy Charter School, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents Salem Academy Charter School from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or Federal law, or Salem Academy Charter School policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H1/2, other applicable laws in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.