

North Stonington Public Schools

Climate Plan

2025-26

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School Climate

According to legislation, school climate is “the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.”

Why is School Climate Important?

Providing a positive School Climate creates the foundation for learning and positive youth development. Students thrive in an environment where norms, values, and expectations support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe. People who treat one another with dignity and are engaged, respected, and solve problems restoratively. Leading to positive interpersonal skills and self-efficacy. A school community working collaboratively to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision improves outcomes and satisfaction for all parties. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning inspire lifelong learners. A school community that contributes to the school's operations and the care of the physical environment creates autonomy and leadership.

School Climate/Improvement Committee Goal

The goal of Wheeler’s Safe School Climate Committee is to develop and foster a safe school climate and address issues relating to challenging behavior in the school. Our mission is to foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment by establishing a diverse and representative committee that collaborates with the school community to assess and improve the school climate through data-driven strategies, inclusive planning, and transparent communication.

Vision of the Graduate

North Stonington Elementary School



A North Stonington Public School Graduate
demonstrates aptitude in the following school-wide expectations:

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Collaboration
Communication
Literacy
Problem-Solving

SOCIAL/CIVIC EXPECTATIONS

Respect
Responsibility
Resilience

MISSION

In collaboration with families and the community, NSES strives to foster an academically motivated environment that empowers all students to surpass their boundaries and achieve their utmost potential. Our mission is to cultivate a life-long passion for learning while nurturing the development of responsible, motivated and engaged individuals who actively contribute to society.

CORE VALUES

We believe that ALL children deserve a strong educational foundation to help them grow, discover new ideas, and become kind, caring and responsible members of their community. To help every child succeed, we focus on:

- **creating** exciting, innovative and engaging lessons that encourage curiosity and a love of learning through innovative instruction;
- **teaching** a rich and inclusive curriculum that helps to foster the development of globally aware citizens;
- **nurturing** a sense of belonging in order to ensure that ALL students feel safe and valued;
- **exploring** a variety of ways to monitor learning and adjust our instruction to meet students' needs; and
- **collaborating** with families and community members to strengthen the home-school connection.

We believe that in order to make our North Stonington Elementary School the best place it can be, we must always look for ways to improve and grow together.

Learning Today 🐾 Leading Tomorrow

Wheeler



A North Stonington Public School Graduate
demonstrates aptitude in the following school-wide expectations:

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Analysis
Collaboration
Communication
Literacy

SOCIAL/CIVIC EXPECTATIONS

Resilience
Respect
Responsibility

MISSION

The Mission of Wheeler, in partnership with families and the community, is to provide students with the education that will best help them to live lives of accomplishment and satisfaction in a complex and changing world.

CORE VALUES

We are committed to the belief that ALL children are capable and have a fundamental right to attain high levels of educational achievement so they can lead rewarding lives and demonstrate responsible citizenship.

We believe that in order to have the largest impact upon student learning and to provide opportunities for high-level achievement, it must start with the instructional core, specifically through:

- **transforming** the learning process through innovative instruction, to encourage life-long learning;
- **implementing** a complex and culturally-responsive curriculum;
- **nurturing** a sense of belonging in order to ensure that ALL students feel safe and valued; and
- **assessing** student work using our school-wide rubrics and using data to drive instruction across ALL grade levels and departments.

We believe that in order to ensure an environment for continuous improvement, we must constantly review and improve systems and structures.

Roles and Responsibilities

District School Climate Coordinator Superintendent, Troy Hopkins

North Stonington Elementary School Climate Committee

Rob Cillino	Principal, School Climate Specialist
Kim Haggerty	Director of Teaching and Learning
Deanna Scanapieco	Lead Teacher
Nina Reardo	School Counselor
Dayna Mendolia	Parent
Jackie Barry	Teacher
Heidi Mehringer-Macina	Teacher
Renee Benett	Teacher
Abigail Merchant	Teacher
Carolyn Francis	Teacher
Megan Perkins	Teacher
Jane Servidio	Teacher
Diana Anderson	Teacher
Leah Stewart	Teacher
Stephanie Goodwin	Teacher
Sarah Hammerman	Teacher
Carly Barozi	Teacher
Alexa Jonas	Teacher
Marilyn Kiddy	Teacher
Terry Gabriel	Teacher

Wheeler School Climate Committee

Allison Reyes	Associate Principal, School Climate Specialist
Kristen S. Germain	Principal
Jayme Hansen	School Counselor
Carley Higginbotham	School Psychologist
Cailin Sorder	School Social Worker
Nancy Liner	School Counselor
Bernadette Macca	Athletic Director
Jessica Marsiglio	Parent
Shannon Curioso	Teacher
Noel Devine	Teacher
David Grande	Teacher
Adrianna Lublin	Teacher
Meghin Mason	Teacher
Matthew Mendolia	Teacher
Marc Tardiff	Teacher
Natasha Zannelli	Teacher

Restorative Practices

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

Restorative practices include the use of affective statements, affective questions, impromptu conversations, circles, and formal conferences. Through their use, school personnel encourage students to examine their actions and how they affect others. Restorative practices phrase conversations with and between students in a way that eliminates shame, increases understanding, and repairs relationships to create a strong, positive school climate.

Challenging Behavior

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

Tiered Response

North Stonington utilizes a tiered approach and a progressive discipline model. The first tier incorporates all teacher-driven restorative practices aimed at teaching students appropriate behaviors, building relationships, establishing trust, and developing an understanding of their behaviors' impact.

The administration follows a progressive discipline model for ongoing and severe behaviors. In some cases, the progression is stated in the student handbook. However, the goal is to positively change student behavior, not hand out discipline.

Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 10-222hh (b)(6), a tiered response (as detailed in the table below) is required for an incident of challenging behavior that meets any of the following criteria:

- a. Requires temporarily clearing a classroom or removing a majority of students to reduce the likelihood of injury;
- b. Indicates a credible intention to cause bodily harm to self or others; or
- c. Results in an injury requiring medical attention beyond first aid (or less severe injuries caused by the same person on more than one occasion, as verified by a school nurse or other medical professional)

Occasion Number – Tiered Response Incident	Tiered Intervention Required
First offense	Principal must notify the parents/guardians of each student involved in a manner that complies with FERPA.
Second offense	Principal must invite the parent/guardian of involved students to a meeting (virtual or in person) to discuss supports and interventions applicable to each student – including, but not limited to restorative practices.
Multiple subsequent offenses (or single incident that causes severe harm)	Principal must notify the parents/guardians of involved students of other resources for supports and interventions, including, but not limited to the following: the 2-1-1 Infoline program; services/programs available through the Behavioral Health Partnership, established through C.G.S. Sec. 17a-22h; or other resources for professional services, support, or crisis intervention.

Reporting and Response Procedures

Annual notice of the Climate Policy is provided in the North Stonington Elementary School and Wheeler handbooks. The Climate Policy is reviewed at professional development at the start of each year with all staff members. Administration reviews the policy, the anonymous alert system and the challenge behavior forms with all students at grade level meetings as well. The [Challenging Behavior Form](#) is on the website as well.

District-Wide Positive Climate Initiatives

Restorative Conferences: A facilitated conversation where those harmed can express the impact of the incident and have a say in how the harm is repaired. Those who caused the harm have an opportunity to understand the consequences of their actions and take responsibility by ‘making it right.’

Start with Hello and Say Something Week: Facilitated by Student Government, these two initiatives foster kindness and connectedness as part of the Sandy Hook Promise.

Spirit Weeks: Facilitated by Student Government, spirit weeks foster community and collaboration through school-wide activities.

Mentoring Program: This program pairs high school students with middle school students who are positive role models, developing school connectedness.

MS Counseling Lessons: Lessons developed and taught by our counseling department that target social-emotional learning and positive school climate.

MS Restorative Approach: Targeted restorative practices facilitated during club time.

Student Concerns Committee: A high school committee that meets regularly to discuss student concerns, develop strategies, and monitor progress.

Advisory Activities: Lessons and activities that build collaboration and student growth through community building.

MS Olympics: Fosters collaboration and team-building through activities and competitions.

MS Interdisciplinary Activities: Foster collaboration and connectedness through cross-curricular activities centered around a theme.

MS Fieldtrips: Foster collaboration and provide opportunities for students to develop appropriate social skills.

Staff Faculty Room and Beyond the Bell: Activities and opportunities for staff to get together and create a positive school climate.

7th and 8th Grade Monthly Student Concerns Meetings: Discuss student concerns, develop strategies, and monitor progress.

Why Character Matters Assembly

Screenagers Event

Training

All staff members complete yearly training on School Climate through GCN. Each school also facilitates training on restorative practices at the beginning of each school year. Administrators review the School Climate Policy with all students at the start of each year as well. The climate handbook is also shared with all parents and guardians at the start of each school year.

Climate Survey/Improvement Cycle

All staff, parents and students will be surveyed on school climate annually. Students will be offered an opt out opportunity. The Climate Committee will review these results to make changes to the Climate Plan.

School Improvement Plans

NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: 2025-2026

<p>District Goal #1: Safe, valued, and sense of belonging. Embed practices and procedures throughout the schools and curriculum experiences that ensure all students, staff, and families feel safe, valued and have a sense of belonging (social-emotional wellness, including cultural competency and global awareness, restorative practices).</p> <p><u>Rationale</u> - If people feel safe, and valued and have a sense of belonging, they are able to learn their best.</p>			
<p>School Goals: Restorative, Culture/Climate and Student Supports</p>			
School Action Plan	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create and implement a School Climate Safety Plan ● Post Social Civic Expectations throughout the school and in all classrooms. ● Implement initiatives to reduce the number of chronically absent students ● Increase use of our Diversity Spotlight ● Increase usage of Tier I interventions to promote equity and student success in the classroom ● Increase the follow-up from office referrals from administration to pertinent staff 	<p>Administration</p> <p>Program Supervisors</p> <p>All Staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff surveys ● Parent surveys ● Discipline Data ● Accountability Index ● Teacher observations ● Attendance Data
School Climate Action Plan	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate current climate status using CSDE 	School	12/25	Completed feedback forms

<p>provided rubric</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Modify existing Minor and Major Referral forms to include area for challenging behavior ● Administer Parent and Staff surveys annually ● Review feedback from surveys ● Review Attendance Council notes monthly ● Develop a more comprehensive Climate plan based on information from surveys and rubrics 	<p>Improvement Team Administration</p>	<p>12/25</p>	<p>New forms implemented and online for staff use</p>
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<p>District Goal #2: Innovative Instruction Design, document and implement innovative instructional opportunities that empower each learner</p> <p><u>Rationale</u> - When learners lead their own learning and experience success, motivation increases (Changing technologies have multiplied the opportunities for collaboration, communication, and research. Our classrooms should keep up with the possibilities)</p>			
<p>School Goal: Continually Improving Tiered Supports and Learning Opportunities</p>			
<p>School Action Plan</p>	<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Evidence of Success</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase professional development opportunities for teachers, especially around technology. ● Carve out time for small group work in both ELA and Math blocks 	<p>Administration</p> <p>Program Supervisors</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accountability Index Results ● SBAC/STAR Scores ● Midyear and End of Year Academic Expectation Assessments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actively use data to plan next level of instruction ● Begin shift towards standards based record keeping. ● Implement District Literacy Plan created last year with HFL. ● Have teachers visit and learn from their colleagues 	All staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher observations ● Curriculum documents
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<p>District Goal #3: Transparent and Efficient Develop and follow efficient and transparent processes to ensure a smooth flow of operations and enable increased focus on learning.</p> <p><u>Rationale</u> - Reducing time spent on non-instructional processes allows increased planning for learning and more overall internal and external support and pride for the school district</p>			
<p>School Goals: Sharing Updated Curriculum and Engaging Families</p>			
School Action Plan	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage families by inviting them to school events (New Family and Kindergarten Orientation, Conferences, Open House, Art Shows etc.) ● Use of Common Plan Time to look at data and plan next steps. ● Implement a standard’s based report card. ● Updated MTSS procedures in place and active 	Administration Program Supervisors All Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stakeholder Survey Feedback ● Attendance at family based school functions. ● Attendance data ● Website contents

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue work on updating curriculum documents in PE, ELA, Math and Science ● Use building subs more efficiently to provide more planning time for teachers 			
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WHEELER SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: 2025-2026

<p>District Goal #1: Safe, valued, and sense of belonging. Embed practices and procedures throughout the schools and curriculum experiences that ensure all students, staff, and families feel safe, valued and have a sense of belonging (social-emotional wellness, including cultural competency and global awareness, restorative practices).</p> <p><u>Rationale</u> - If people feel safe, and valued and have a sense of belonging, they are able to learn their best.</p>			
<p>School Goal (s): Continue to commit ourselves to creating a restorative climate at Wheeler. In order to support students and form better relationships, thus increasing their academic output.</p>			
School Action Plan	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborate with the counseling department to identify and support struggling students. ● Build connections with students during the new advisory program. ● Continue expanding the Peer Mentor Program. ● Utilize restorative circles and conferences ● Broaden the involvement of the Wheeler Diversity Council through interactive lessons 	Administration Program Supervisors All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By the end of the 2025-2026 school year and beyond if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student surveys ● Discipline Data ● Accountability Index ● Teacher observations ● Attendance Data ● Graduation rate

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set clear expectations and frame both behavior and learning with a growth mindset. ● Establish clear tiers of responsibility for behavior at all levels. ● Continue to offer programming for all students: NEIT Dual Enrollment, RISE, Westerly Ed, Pathways, EB Boat Program...etc and not just college focus ● Establish and foster a middle school approach in grades 7-8, including: interdisciplinary units, Student Led Conferences, team bonding and community building. 			
School Climate Action Plan	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate current climate status using CSDE provided rubric ● Modify existing Minor and Major Referral forms to include area for challenging behavior ● Climate Committee review advisory feedback ● Continued PD work on professionalism and restorative practices ● Administer Climate Surveys each spring ● Review and reflect on the school wide climate initiatives ● Administer “Trusted Adult” survey yearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By the end of the 2025-2026 school year and beyond if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting minutes ● New forms

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> during the Start with Hello week ● Reestablish Pawprint Press ● Climate Committee meet monthly to review climate data and plan initiatives ● Attendance Committee meet monthly to review student attendance 			
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<p>District Goal #2: Innovative Instruction Design, document and implement innovative instructional opportunities that empower each learner</p> <p><u>Rationale</u> - When learners lead their own learning and experience success, motivation increases (Changing technologies have multiplied the opportunities for collaboration, communication, and research. Our classrooms should keep up with the possibilities)</p>			
<p>School Goal: Continue to redesign curriculum, implement high impact instructional strategies and robust assessment to improve engagement and learning within the 88 minute block.</p>			
School Action Plan	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase professional development opportunities for teachers. ● Facilitate the implementation of meaningful and varied methods of assessment. ● Increase usage of 21st Century school-wide rubrics to evaluate and share student progress in all identified areas in a block model more formatively. ● Initiate a coaching model to better support instructional strategy growth among staff. 	<p>Administration</p> <p>Director of Instruction and Learning</p> <p>Program Supervisors</p> <p>All staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By the end of the 2025-2026 school year and beyond if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accountability Index Results ● NGSS/SBAC/SAT Scores ● Post-Secondary Preparedness ● Midyear and End of Year Academic Expectation Assessments ● Teacher observations ● Curriculum documents ● Graduation rate

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add authentic feedback to all assessments so that students and families truly understand where students fall within the domains of each academic expectation ● Establish a variety of instructional methods to increase engagement and learning. ● Give students access to high quality, grade level materials. ● Develop innovative programming for MS Flex block that includes a progressive intervention model. ● Continue to embed technology in the classroom by implementing the District Sustainable Technology plan. 			
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<p>District Goal #3: Transparent and Efficient Develop and follow efficient and transparent processes to ensure a smooth flow of operations and enable increased focus on learning.</p> <p><u>Rationale</u> - Reducing time spent on non-instructional processes allows increased planning for learning and more overall internal and external support and pride for the school district</p>			
<p>School Goal (s): Increase family involvement and communicate important information effectively to all stakeholders.</p>			
School Action Plan	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Host parent advisory board meetings. ● Invite parents/guardians to serve on school based committees. 	Administration Director of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By the end of the 2025-2026 school year and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stakeholder Survey Feedback ● Attendance at family based school functions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase communication via Bright Arrow Weekly Emails and social media. ● Engage families by inviting them to school events (8th grade Transition Night, Conferences, Open House, Art Shows, SLC etc.) ● Encourage robust communication between staff and families. ● Communicate consistent grading policies and expectations across departments by publishing materials on school websites. ● Publish up-to-date curriculum documents in a Google format to the school website. ● Refine the MTSS process in Middle School ● Use Google Classroom and tools within Google beyond simple posting assignments. ● Use Securly to cut down on the loss of instructional time due to hallway wandering 	<p>and Learning</p> <p>Program Supervisors</p> <p>All Staff</p>	<p>if needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Graduation rate ● Attendance data ● Up-to-date Powerschool gradebooks ● Website contents
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School Climate Policy

North Stonington Public Schools Board of Education Policy Students 5131.911

Connecticut School Climate Policy

Policy Statement

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

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

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

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

The North Stonington District Board of Education adopts this policy.

Definitions

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

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

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

16. **“School community”** means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school\ system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.
17. **“Challenging behavior”** means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.
18. **“Evidence Based Practices”** in education refers to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.
19. **“Effective School Climate Improvement”** is a restorative process that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:
- a. Promoting decision-making that is collaborative and actively involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;
 - b. Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g., school climate survey, discipline data) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive and intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process;
 - c. Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students, educators, and broader school community. These goals shall be integrated into overall school improvement efforts thereby leveraging school strengths to address evidence-based areas of need, while sustaining the improvement process over time;
 - d. Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity building among school personnel and develop common staff skills to educate the whole child;
 - e. Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning and adult barriers to teaching; and

- f. Strengthening policies and procedures related to: a. climate and restorative informed teaching and learning environments; b. infrastructure to facilitate data collection, analysis, and effective planning; c. implementation of school climate improvement plans with the goal of becoming restorative; d. evaluation of the school climate improvement process; and e. sustainability of school climate and restorative improvement efforts.

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

The school climate coordinator shall be responsible for:

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

School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the principal of each school, or a school employee who holds professional certification pursuant to section 10-145 of the general statutes, is trained in school climate improvement or restorative practices and is designated as the school climate specialist by the school principal, shall serve as the school climate specialist for the school.

The school climate specialist shall be responsible for:

1. leading in the prevention, identification, and response to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, reports of alleged bullying and harassment;
2. implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices;
3. scheduling meetings for and leading the school climate committee; and
4. leading the implementation of the school climate improvement plan.

School Climate Committee

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

The school climate committee shall consist of:

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

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

The school climate committee shall be responsible for:

1. assisting in the development, annual scheduling, and administration of the school climate survey, and reviewing of the school climate survey data.

2. using the school climate survey data to identify strengths and challenges to improve school climate, and to create or propose revisions to the school climate improvement plan.
3. assisting in the implementation of the school climate improvement plan and recommending any improvements or revisions to the plan.
4. advising on strategies to improve school climate and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices, in the school community.
5. annually providing notice of the uniform challenging behavior and/or bullying complaint form, or similar complaint form used by the school, to the school community.

School Climate Survey

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

School Climate Improvement Plan

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

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

Training

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

1. social and emotional learning;

2. school climate and culture and evidence and research-based interventions; and
3. restorative practices.

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

Funding

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

Accountability

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

Connecticut School Climate Standards

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

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

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

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

- a. promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students;
 - b. enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities;
 - c. address barriers to teaching and learning; and
 - d. develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.
4. The school community creates a school environment⁴ where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities.
 5. The school community creates a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160, P.A. 11-232, P.A. 14-172 and PA 18-15 and PA 19-166.

10-222g Prevention and intervention strategy re bullying and teen dating violence

10-222h Analysis of school districts' efforts re prevention of and response to bullying in schools.

School climate assessment instruments

10-222i State-wide safe school climate resource network. [Repealed, Effective 7/1/2025
State-wide safe school climate resource network]

10-222k District safe school climate coordinator. Safe school climate specialist. Safe school climate committee (as amended by PA 21-95, Section 14)

10-222p Review of safe school climate plans by Department of Education.
Approval or rejection.

PA 23-167 An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

Policy adopted: 01/08/2025

Sample policies are distributed for demonstration purposes only. Unless so noted, contents do not necessarily reflect official policies of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc

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

North Stonington Public Schools Challenging Behavior Reporting FormInstructions

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

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

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

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

Name: First _____ Last _____

or check here for any **student** who would like to submit anonymously.

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

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Contact me by: Phone Email

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

Where did the incident occur? _____

Approximate date of incident (if known): _____

Check any boxes that apply:

- On school property
- At a school-sponsored activity or off school property
- Electronic communication, internet, and social media
- On a school bus
- On the way to/from school
- Outside of school
- Other _____

Please describe what happened?

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

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

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

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

Date form submitted: _____

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

Date received by school climate specialist: _____

Signature of receipt by school climate specialist: _____

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

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

North Stonington Public Schools Investigation Form

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

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

Date “Challenging Behavior Reporting Form” received: _____

Today’s Date: _____

Name of school climate specialist who received the report: _____

Were these events already reported to any school employee? _____

If yes, please identify to whom, when, and what was reported _____

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

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

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

Where did the alleged incident occur? _____

Date and time alleged incident occurred: (if known): _____

Description of the alleged incident: _____

What investigative processes occurred? Answer all of the following questions below. A single incident may require an assessment into multiple areas. Please check all that apply.

- Was this investigated as bullying? YES NO
- Was this a verified act of bullying? YES NO
- Was this investigated as cyberbullying? YES NO
- Was this a verified act of cyberbullying? YES NO
- Was this investigated as teen dating violence? YES NO
- Was this verified teen dating violence? YES NO
- Was this investigated as an assault? YES NO
- Was this a verified assault? YES NO
- Was this investigated as an act of physical violence? YES NO
- Was this a verified act of physical violence? YES NO
- Was this investigated as a protected class violation/ harassment? YES NO

Was this a verified protected class violation/harassment? YES NO
Was this investigated as a Title IX violation? YES NO
Was this a verified Title IX violation? YES NO
Was this a verified act of challenging behavior not listed above? YES NO

What was the response by the school climate specialist? (E.g., utilization of restorative practices, school-based threat assessment, safety plan, student support services). Additionally, provide the date of each response.

If applicable, please provide any additional notes, observations, or actions taken as a result of this incident:

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

Printed name: _____

Date of response: _____

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

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

North Stonington Public Schools Response Process(es) Notification Form

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

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

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

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

Signature or E-signature of school climate specialist: _____

Printed name: _____

Date completed: _____

Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline

Introduction

Related to all matters of student discipline, the Board of Education requires district staff to make every effort to correct student challenging behavior through school-based resources and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school climate and avoid challenging behavior.

For most behaviors, schools should minimize the use of in-school and out-of-school suspensions, recommendations for expulsion, and referrals to law enforcement to the extent practicable while in compliance with state statutes, local ordinances, and mandatory reporting laws. It is the goal of the North Stonington Public Schools and the Board of Education that the juvenile and criminal justice systems be utilized rarely to address all forms of challenging behavior.

All challenging behavior procedures and responses shall ensure due process and be enforced uniformly, fairly, consistently, and in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or disability.

For the school year beginning July 1, 2025, the North Stonington Board of Education adopts this “Restorative Practices Response” policy to be implemented by school employees for incidents of challenging behavior or student conflict that is nonviolent and does not constitute a crime. This policy shall not include the involvement of school resource officers or other law enforcement officials unless the behavior or conflict becomes violent or criminal.

The Board of Education (Board) supports the District’s fundamental mission to provide all students the opportunity to achieve academically and socially and emotionally, ethically, civically, and intellectually at the highest levels and to become a contributing and engaged citizen in our diverse society. All students should have the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge, and competencies in a nurturing and accountable school setting. Schools play an important role in helping families and children make responsible decisions, cooperate with others, and have a successful life. Children, at times, find it difficult to manage their emotions and focus on their studies effectively. Developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills building allows students to cope with stress so they can access learning and develop into productive adults. Learning is a social activity, meaning children must be ready to learn by regulating their emotions and working constructively with others. Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps build a positive school climate by developing emotional intelligence through self-awareness, self-management, goal setting, social awareness, relationship building, collaborative skills, and responsible decision-making. Students should receive effective and engaging teaching, with curriculum, instruction, and assessment designed to address the needs of diverse learners.

Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline (continued)

Restorative approaches recognize students' unique strengths, needs, and interests and present an opportunity for schools to develop a structure that utilizes practices that will create a more equitable path for all students. Utilizing restorative practices allows schools to embody more equitable approaches and meet students' short—and long-term needs.

The Board believes that all students have a right to attend schools that are safe and free from unnecessary disruption. Appropriate student behavior, reinforced by an effective system of discipline, is essential to creating and maintaining a positive school climate. This is the joint responsibility of students, staff, parents, and the community.

The Board requires District schools to implement restorative practices in response to conflict and harm. The “Restorative Practices Response” philosophy supported by the Board views misconduct as a violation against people and damaging to relationships in the school and throughout the community. The Board recognizes that schools may involve a wide range of people in the “Restorative Practices Response” process, voluntarily including victims, who are often teachers, school staff, bystanders, other students, and the school community.

The four main goals of Restorative Practices Response are:

1. **Relationship Building:** creating a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities and focuses on high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community members;
2. **Accountability:** Restorative Practices Response strategies hold each student accountable for any challenging behavior;
3. **Community Safety:** Restorative Practices recognize the need to keep the school community safe through strategies ensuring that all students have a role in repairing relationships affected by challenging behavior. In safe, supportive education environments students feel a sense of belonging and allow schools to challenge policies and procedures that prevent student growth;
4. **Competency Development:** Restorative Practices Response seeks to increase the social-emotional intelligence skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead students to engage in the form of challenging behavior, and build on strengths.

Definitions

Through adopting the Connecticut School Climate Policy (5131.911), the Board endorses a “Restorative Practices Response” approach to student discipline. As defined in Policy 5131.911,

Restorative Practices mean evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable

for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

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Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline

Definitions (continued)

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

“**Evidenced-Based Practices**” in education refer to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.

“**School Climate**” means the quality and character of school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community. It is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects the norms, goals, and organizational structures within the school community.

“**Social and Emotional Learning**” means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

“**Emotional Intelligence**” means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem-solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.

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

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

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support school discipline that:

1. The school district community has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, identification and response to all challenging behavior;
2. Maintains safe and engaging learning communities;

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Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline

Purpose (continued)

3. Assures consistency and coherence across all schools in the District;
4. Defines and communicates expectations for student behavior;
5. Defines and communicates expectations for staff responsibility related to school discipline;
6. Balances the needs of the student, the needs of those directly affected by “challenging behaviors,” and the needs of the overall school community;
7. Assures equity across racial, ethnic, and cultural groups and all other protected classes, including, but not limited to, gender, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

General Principles

1. A positive school climate is best accomplished by preventing challenging behaviors before they occur and using effective restorative practices, in response to those challenging behaviors that may occur despite proactive measures;
2. School safety and academic success are formed and strengthened when all school staff and employees build positive relationships with students and their parents and/or guardians;
3. Effective school climate maximizes the amount of time students spend learning academically, socially, and emotionally, ethically, civically, and intellectually and minimizes the amount of time students cause disruption or are removed from their classrooms due to an act of challenging behavior;
4. School discipline should be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and should be proportionate to the student’s challenging behavior. Response to an act of challenging behavior that is rooted in restorative practices will provide meaningful instruction and guidance, offers students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and is more likely to result in engaging rather than punitive responses to challenging behavior. The school

community should adopt policies that promote a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally re-engaging and disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community;

5. Effective school climate improvement is a restorative process that engages all school community members in promoting a positive school climate. The vast majority of challenging behaviors should be addressed at the classroom level by teachers; however, behaviors that cannot be addressed at this level should receive more targeted and intensive interventions, as determined by an individualized assessment;

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Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline

General Principles (continued)

6. The District serves a diverse community. In order to serve all students and to prepare them to be members of an increasingly diverse community, schools and staff must build cultural competence. We must commit to eliminating institutional racism and any other discrimination that presents barriers to success. The school community should create a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities;

7. Challenging behaviors, which may be subject to disciplinary action, including any within the school environment, but not limited to those occurring during either curricular or extracurricular activities, in classrooms, in school buildings, on school grounds, or in school vehicles, when such conduct is detrimental to the school environment and to the welfare or safety of other students or school personnel.

General Policy Guidelines

The District's system of school climate improvement is built on the incorporation of restorative practices, which should include:

Evidence and research-based system-level restorative practices that focus on:

- 1) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community,
- 2) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and
- 3) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

Restorative practices should be guided by the Connecticut School Climate Standards:

1. The school district community has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to all challenging behaviors.

2. The school district community adopts policies that promote: a) a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and b) a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally reengaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community.

3. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized, and supported to: a) promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students. b) enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities. c) address barriers to teaching and learning; and d) develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.

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Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline

General Policy Guidelines (continued)

4. The school community creates a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities,

5. The school community creates a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

a. Practicing early identification and assessment of struggling students;

b. Using a problem-solving/collaborative process to provide interventions matched to student needs;

c. Ensuring timely progress monitoring and feedback; and

d. Delivering scientific research-based interventions.

The District shall post this policy on the District website and in each school. A copy of this policy and accompanying procedures shall be readily available in each school's administration office.

Copies of this policy, any accompanying procedures/regulations, and school rules will be made available, upon request, to each student and parent/guardian and, upon request, promptly translated into a language that the parent/guardian can understand.

Applying the goals related to Restorative Practices Response, this policy's definitions, purpose, principles and guidelines, the Superintendent, or his/her/their designee shall develop such procedures and provide for any training necessary as may be needed to effectively implement this policy.

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Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

4-177 through 4-180. Contested Cases. Notice. Record, as amended.

10-233a through 10-233f Suspension, removal and expulsion of students, as periodically amended.

21a-240(9) Definitions.

53a-3 Definitions.

GOALS 2000: Educate America Act, Pub. L. 103-227.

18 U.S.C. 921 Definitions

Title III - Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act Sec. 314

Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1968, as amended by the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994

PL 105-17 The Individuals with Disabilities Act, Amendments of 1997

P.L. 108-446 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

State v. Hardy, 896 A.2d 755, 278 Conn 113 (2006)

Public Act 23-167, Section 74, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

Policy adopted: December 10, 2025 NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

North Stonington, Connecticut

