

Griswold Middle School

GMS School Climate Committee

Principal	Parent
Assistant Principal	Faculty Member(s)
Social Worker	Campus-Wide Athletics & Activities Director
Student representative/s,	Nurse

This committee serves as a liaison with all members of the school groups such as Team Leaders, PTO, and Student Council

Promoting a Safe School Climate

Providing a safe and welcoming climate for students is very important. Through high expectations in academics and behavior, tempered by comprehensive access to the Arts and Athletics, we build the structures that enable our students to excel. The following are examples of actions that promote a safe school climate.

- A program in the Health curriculum called *Tolerance and Diversity* teaches students how important it is to accept others' differences.
- The faculty and staff work daily to instill an appreciation of the fact that everyone has qualities to share with our community. The culture of the school fosters tolerance and acceptance of others.
- *Don't laugh at me* program is offered in Grade 5 as an anti-bullying program which includes developing student advocacy skills.
- School-wide assemblies by grade level at the beginning of the year where the administration outlines the behavioral expectations at GMS; including bullying and appropriate dating relationships.
- *High Five* program recognizes students for making a difference and makes them a positive member of the GMS community; weekly drawings with public recognition and certificates.
- Advisory groups conduct activities and lessons about bullying
- We have incorporated our six pillars of character
- The administration meets with staff to make them aware of healthy vs. unhealthy relationships
- School wide assemblies that support the ideals of respect, kindness, and tolerance
- The middle school has a comprehensive discipline vs. intervention model that is designed to improve student behavior and educate students on how to act respectfully and responsibly

- A student who has bullied must go through an anti-bullying program provided by support staff to improve his or her behavior

Reporting System

Any person can report an incident that he or she believes to be bullying, intimidating, harassing behavior and teen violence to any school employee. (School employees include but are not limited to building administrator, faculty, staff, social worker, coach, or any other person that has regular contact with students of Griswold as an employee of Griswold Public Schools.) Furthermore, that person may report the incident by completing the *Student Conflict Reporting Form* and turning it to the main office. Any school employee that witnesses or receives a report of possible bullying of harassment must report the behavior to building administration orally within **one school day** and file a written report **within two school** days after making the oral report. The Student Conflict Reporting Form is available in the main office, or can be downloaded off the GMS website.

Investigating a Report

All incidents reported will be investigated. Anonymous reports, however, will be more limited, because the investigating team will not have as many people they can interview and gather information. The investigating team can include the Building Principal, the Assistant Principal, the Support Staff, and the Campus-Wide Activities and Athletic Director, as well as other people when deemed necessary.

An investigation will include many strategies, all of which will begin based on the information provided by the initial report. It could include interviewing the alleged victim, the alleged perpetrator(s), and any other students, teachers, or staff that may have been witness to the incident(s) of bullying. During the investigation, any person with knowledge of the situation will be interviewed and asked to give a written statement explaining what they saw and heard and any other pertinent information related to the incident. No person interviewed is required to give a statement in writing, but it is encouraged. During the investigation, the cameras that are set up throughout the campus, and district owned technology items could be consulted to see if there is any visual evidence that supports the report.

Any anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated. No disciplinary action will be taken solely based on the anonymous report.

During the investigation, the parents of the alleged perpetrator and victim will be notified by phone by members of the investigating team and told what was reported and what the next steps are. They will be kept apprised of any developments related to the reported incident.

Notifying the Parents/Guardians of the Students Involved

At the conclusion of the investigation, the alleged perpetrator and victim will meet separately with members of the investigating team and be told the results of the investigation. If there are disciplinary consequences related to the incident, then they will be given at that time. The students will be provided counseling about how to avoid future conflict.

After meeting with all students involved, members of the investigating team will contact the parents/guardians of the perpetrator and victim and explain the results of the investigation. If any disciplinary consequences have been given, they will share them at that time. The parents/guardians will be given an opportunity to come in and meet with members of the team to go over all aspects of the situation.

Follow Up

It is vital to follow-up with the victim and his or her family afterwards to make sure that no further acts of bullying have occurred after the situation has been addressed by school officials. For that reason, **a team member will check in with both the victim and his or her family two weeks and four weeks after the situation has been resolved** if an occurrence of bullying has been determined. Throughout the follow-up process, strict confidentiality will be maintained. The purpose of the follow-up is to verify nothing further has happened, including any retaliation, and that the student once again feels safe and comfortable at school. If, through the follow-up, it is determined that another incident has occurred, it will be addressed immediately. During the follow-up, we will monitor and respond to any instances of retaliation against any individuals that report or assist in the investigation.

Recording and Filing

A case file will be started with the receipt of the Student Conflict Reporting Form reporting an alleged act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. At the conclusion of the investigation, the *Conflict Incident Summary Form* will be completed. This form will include detailed conclusions about the incident that has been reported, including whether or not the situation was determined to be bullying, disciplinary or other actions taken, and recording the dates and times when we follow up with the students involved in the incident and their families. A brief written summary of the incident will also be included. The form will be for office use, and it will only be used to refer back to in case future incidents occur.

Local law enforcement will be notified by the School Climate Specialist or designee of any acts of bullying that constitute criminal conduct.

Educating Students and Preventing Future Occurrences

Another aspect of our response to student conflict is to mediate between the children and to assist them in learning strategies or skills that will help them. Members of our guidance team will assist in this process.

- A program in the Health curriculum called *Tolerance and Diversity* teaches students how important it is to accept others' differences.
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- *Don't laugh at me* program is offered in Grade 5 which is an anti-bullying program which includes developing student advocacy skills.
- School-wide assemblies by grade level at the beginning of the year in which the administration outlines the behavioral expectations at GMS; the need to act with kindness and not meanness.
- School wide assemblies that support the ideals of respect, kindness, and tolerance
- *High Five* program which recognizes students for making a difference that makes them a positive member of the GMS community; weekly drawings with public recognition and certificates.
- On-going collaboration between the school and community groups like the youth center and with other local social service organizations, such as United Community Family Services (UCFS).
- Advisory/Pillars of Character Program