RESTORATIVE PRACTICES RESPONSE POLICY 5132

The Meriden Board of Education (the "Board") is committed to identifying strategies to improve school climate, including, but not limited to, by responding to challenging behavior and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including restorative practices. Restorative practices may be implemented by school employees for incidents of challenging behavior, bullying, and/or harassment in the school environment, or other forms of student conflict that is nonviolent and does not constitute a crime. Restorative practices shall not include the involvement of a school resource officer or other law enforcement official unless such challenging behavior or other conflict escalates to violence and/or constitutes a crime. In addition, the Meriden Public Schools (the "District") shall address challenging behavior, bullying, and harassment in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy and any other applicable Board policy, administrative regulations, and/or school rules.

For purposes of this policy:

- "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.
- "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.
- "Bullying" means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. "Bullying" includes "cyberbullying", which 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.
- "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.
- "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.
- "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 the Board, 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.

The Board directs the administration of the District to develop a continuum of strategies to prevent, identify, and respond to challenging behavior, bullying, and harassment. Such strategies shall include research-based interventions, including restorative practices, and may be included in each school's school climate improvement plan. Such strategies shall be shared with the school community, including, but not limited to, through publication in the relevant student handbook.

The Board further directs the Superintendent or designee to collect and maintain data regarding types of challenging behavior addressed using the Restorative Practices Response Policy and data concerning the implementation of restorative practices.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222aa

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222dd

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222jj

ADOPTED: November 17, 2026

Approved 11/17/2026
Previous Policy Number: