

A Message from the Milton Town School District Board of School Trustees

The well-being of each and every student in our district is at the heart of everything we do.

We have taken on our respective roles of educators, administrators, support staff and school board members because we care deeply about helping the children in our community thrive. Many of us are parents ourselves, and we have all felt pain, frustration, and sometimes anger when our own child has been hurt. We have also experienced concern and anxiety when our child has been accused of hurting another.

We wanted to share the following information to help you understand how our procedures and policies help protect Milton families and students, and to emphasize our dedication to keeping all of our students from being hurt, emotionally or physically.

When families have concerns, their first point of contact should be the child's teacher or guidance counselor. If the problem is not resolved, families should bring their concerns to the principal, then the superintendent and finally to the school board.

MTSD follows the Vermont bullying policy, which sets strict standards for how schools respond to reports that bullying may have occurred. Each school has administrators and guidance counselors who have been trained in investigating reports of bullying and in determining whether bullying occurred.

Per Vermont state law, bullying is defined as an act directed against a student, which is:

- Repeated over time
- Intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate and
- Occurs during the school day or during school activities OR
- Does not occur during the school day or school activities but interferes with another student's right to access educational programs.

Sometimes, after investigating an incident, a decision is made that although bullying did not occur, misconduct did. Whether the incident is misconduct or bullying, there are consequences. Schools are places of learning, and depending on the situation, the most effective response may be educating a student about how their actions affect others and encouraging them to make amends. Other consequences could include loss of privileges and suspension from school.

Schools are prohibited by federal law from telling the victim's parents about discipline imposed on the accused. This can understandably be very difficult for families, who may feel that nothing has been done.

MTSD has made substantial investments in building safe and respectful school cultures. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports teaches and reinforces positive social behaviors. The Responsive Classroom approach teaches social skills such as cooperation, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. Professional development on the impact of childhood trauma helps us to make children feel safe so they can learn.

Bullying and misconduct are serious community issues that impact both education and psychosocial development, and we will continue to work together to ensure each student in our district feels safe and able to succeed at school.

