

The Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Act

The Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Act, NH Statute 193-F was amended during the 2010 NH Legislative session. School Districts have specific policy and procedural requirements as a result of this amendment. The districts within SAU #39 are actively working toward fulfilling the legislature's affirmation relative to "protecting children from physical, emotional, and psychological violence by addressing the harm caused by bullying and cyberbullying in our public schools." (RSA 193-F:2, 1).

Each School District now has an updated Policy JICK, entitled "Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Policy Under RSA 193-F". They are posted on the SAU #39 website and can be accessed through the following links: <http://www.sprise.com/policyamherst.aspx>, <http://www.sprise.com/policymv.aspx>, or <http://www.sprise.com/policysouhegan.aspx>.

RSA 193-F:5 requires the school districts to provide specific training and educational programming. Training for all staff members is scheduled for February 2, 2011 for middle and high school staff and February 16, 2011 for all elementary school staff. The training will be conducted by Sharon Cowen, the Family and Consumer Resources Educator with UNH Cooperative Extension. This training is for all Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan staff members, including athletic coaches.

On March 9, 2011 from 6:30-8:00 p.m., Sharon Cowen will present a program for parents in the prevention, identification, response and reporting of incidents of bullying or cyberbullying. This program will be conducted at the Amherst Middle School Cafeteria. Child care will be available. This presentation is for parents and parents who volunteer in any school.

Throughout the 2010-2011 school year, each school within SAU #39 has scheduled the required developmentally appropriate, evidence based educational programming to their students. An example of one of these programs is the TIGER program available through Plymouth State University. TIGER is a program designed for elementary aged students that is "Based entirely upon the anonymous writings of New Hampshire school children. The TIGER performance incorporates live actors, puppets, theatre, movement, and music to engage school audiences from K-8. By using childrens' own words, TIGER enables children to hear their own voices as they step back from the experiences of bullying and the intolerance of individual differences to move into more positive social interactions at school and in their community. Workshops can be booked to follow a performance, allowing students, teachers and school counselors to interact with actors to explore and discuss solutions to bullying and intolerance in their own environment." (<http://www.plymouth.edu/outreach/tiger/>). Mont Vernon Village School and Clark/Wilkins school have scheduled TIGER presentations and workshops.

Each district must also provide training for "employees of companies under contract to the school district who have significant contact with pupils". (RSA 195-F:5) To this end, the SAU has made contact with the contracted transportation companies (First Student and The Provider), as well as other contracted vendors in order to fulfill this requirement.

Finally, each school district is required to annually report substantiated incidents of bullying or cyberbullying to the NH Department of Education, who, in turn, prepares a report to the NH State legislature and the legislative educational committees.

SAU #39 believes that all students have the right to attend public schools that are safe, secure and respectful environments. Each school board has adopted a policy that not only prohibits bullying, but also provides for ongoing prevention and intervention activities in order to protect students.