West Hill Elementary School - Safe School Climate Plan

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West Hill Elementary School Climate Improvement Plan

Introduction

The vision of West Hill Elementary School is to promote a healthy and safe school climate, conducive to teaching and learning. We believe that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. We aim to foster an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying. To achieve this vision, we are committed to fostering a positive, inclusive, and supportive school climate where all members of our community feel safe, valued, and empowered to thrive. Our School Climate Improvement Plan serves as a framework for creating and sustaining an environment through an ongoing cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Grounded in the Connecticut School Climate Standards, the Connecticut School Climate Policy (5131.911) and the Connecticut legislative expectations, this plan reflects our dedication to building strong relationships, fostering social and emotional learning, and using restorative practices to strengthen community connections and support students experiencing challenging behaviors.

The successful implementation of this plan relies on the leadership of the School Climate Coordinator at the district level and the School Climate Specialist at the school level. Their responsibilities include:

School Climate Coordinator (district-level)

- Provides leadership and support to each school in implementing the School Climate Improvement Plan.
- Collaborates with each School Climate Specialist to develop strategies for preventing, identifying, and responding to challenging behavior, including bullying and harassment.
- Ensures that strategies and expectations are communicated to the broader school community, including inclusion in the student handbook.
- Collects and maintains climate-related data, including climate survey results, discipline records, attendance, and the use of restorative practices.
- Meets at least twice per year with each School Climate Specialist to review progress, recommend revisions to the plan, and assist in completing climate surveys.

School Climate Specialist (school-level)

- Leads efforts to prevent, identify, and respond to challenging behavior, including handling reports of bullying and harassment.
- Implements evidence-based interventions, including restorative practices, to support a positive climate.
- Coordinates and leads the School Climate Committee, ensuring diverse representation from staff, students, families, and the broader school community.
- Oversees the day-to-day implementation of the School Climate Improvement Plan at the building level.
- Works closely with the School Climate Coordinator to analyze data and recommend updates to the plan.

Through this collaborative structure, our School Climate Improvement Plan not only meets state policy requirements but reflects our school's commitment to creating a culturally responsive, equitable, and restorative learning environment where all students feel safe, respected, and able to reach their full potential.

School Climate Committee

At each school, the School Climate Committee plays a critical role in supporting the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of the School Climate Improvement Plan. The committee is led by the School Climate Specialist and is responsible for ensuring that school climate efforts are informed by input from all members of the school community. The committee uses data from the school climate survey, along with other relevant information, to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to recommend strategies that foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students, families, and staff.

The School Climate Committee's responsibilities include:

- Assisting in the development, scheduling, and administration of the school climate survey.
- Analyzing survey results and other data to assess school climate strengths and challenges.
- Collaborating with the School Climate Specialist to draft, propose, and revise the School Climate Improvement Plan.
- Advising on and supporting the implementation of evidence-based strategies and restorative practices to improve school climate.
- Ensuring that the school community receives regular updates about the school's climate efforts.

The composition of the School Climate Committee ensures that diverse perspectives are represented. Membership includes:

- The School Climate Specialist (committee lead).
- A teacher, selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees.
- A representative group of students, chosen to reflect the school's demographics (as developmentally appropriate).

- Families of students enrolled at the school.
- At least two additional members of the school community, selected by the School Climate Specialist (this could include other staff, community partners, or local stakeholders).

This broad representation ensures that the committee's work reflects the voices, needs, and experiences of the entire school community. Together, the School Climate Specialist and School Climate Committee work to promote equity, foster positive relationships, and ensure that the school climate is continually improving to support academic, social, and emotional success for all students.

Data for and Evaluation of School Climate

The School Climate Improvement Plan should be informed by a holistic review of data that reflects both the overall climate of the school and individual student behavior. Key data sources include the school climate survey, which gathers input from students, families, and staff about safety, relationships, and the learning environment. Schools should also regularly review discipline data (including reports of bullying, harassment, and other challenging behaviors), attendance trends, and academic performance data to identify patterns that may indicate climate concerns. In addition, restorative practices data—such as the use and outcomes of restorative responses—provides insight into how effectively the school is building a culture of community, accountability, and repair.

This data should be shared transparently with the school community to ensure that students, families, and staff have opportunities to review, understand, and respond. The School Climate Committee should lead this process, sharing key data points and plan updates through regular updates, family forums, school websites, and climate committee meetings. Opportunities for families and students to offer feedback—through focus groups, listening sessions, or surveys—ensure that the School Climate Improvement Plan reflects the authentic experiences and needs of the entire school community. By making data review and climate improvement a shared responsibility, schools foster stronger relationships and build trusting, inclusive partnerships that strengthen school culture overall.

School Climate Improvement Plan Goals and Action Steps

To support the ongoing development and monitoring of the School Climate Improvement Plan, the School Climate Committee will use a structured School Climate Action Planning Table to document each identified climate goal and track progress over time. For each goal, the committee will outline the data sources that support the need for this focus area, the intended outcomes, and how the goal aligns with the Connecticut School Climate Standards. Each goal will be broken into specific action steps, with clear identification of whether each step involves professional learning, the creation of a procedure or protocol, or the development of new resources. The table will also indicate whether the action step is aligned to Tier 1, 2, or 3 supports, the person responsible for implementation, and ongoing progress and monitoring notes. This tool allows the School Climate Committee to set multiple goals if needed, ensuring that climate improvement

efforts are comprehensive, data-driven, and responsive to the evolving needs of the school community. By embedding this table into the climate improvement process, schools can foster transparency, accountability, and collaboration while maintaining a clear focus on equity, restorative practices, and positive school culture.

Goal 1: School Climate Standard 2a: West Hill Elementary School will create a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills through PBIS Practices.						
Intended Outcome: For all staff to deepen their understanding of school climate principles and learn strategies for preventing, identifying and responding to challenging behavior.						
Standard	Action Steps	Action Type	Person Responsible	Tier	Progress	Monitoring Notes Evidence/Data:
Standar...	The Safe School Climate Committee will include representatives from important stakeholder groups as well as members of the PBIS committee. We will expand participation on this team to include student leaders, a paraeducator, and a representative from the specials team to ensure broader stakeholder representation and diverse perspectives.	Procedure/Proto...	Safe School Climate Team PBIS Team Student Leaders	Tier 1	In Progress	• SSC Meetings- October and June • Monthly PBIS Team Meetings
Standar...	Create and implement a cohesive set of culturally responsive, kid-friendly school-wide behavior expectation posters with inclusive imagery and consistent language to clearly teach and reinforce positive behavior across all school settings.	Strategies	Safe School Climate Team PBIS Team Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• PBIS Posters
Standar...	Review and refine tiered behaviors and responses.	Procedure/Proto...	Safe School Climate Team PBIS Team Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Shared with staff • Posted in school hand-book for families

Standar...	Continue PBIS initiatives- YES tickets, YES Awards, Monthly SEL theme, monthly incentives, weekly PTO book giveaways, spirit days and school-wide assemblies.	Strategies	Safe School Climate Team PBIS Team Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Monthly tracking of YES ticket goals • Calendar of earned incentives • Calendar of school-wide events • Monthly tracking of YES Award Winners
Standar...	Analyze behavioral incident data monthly to identify trends and patterns, use the findings to provide targeted, responsive social-emotional learning instruction and proactive behavioral supports that address identified student needs.	Procedure/Proto...	Administration SSC/PBIS Teams Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Monthly tracking of behavioral incidents • Responsive SEL lessons
Standar...	Implement school climate surveys with staff, students and families.	Resource	SSC/PBIS Committee Admin Students Families	Tier 1	In Progress	• Provide time at staff meeting to complete survey • Administered in the spring • Ensure climate surveys are accessible to all students and families- ex. Language, time, format
Standar...	Analyze results from school climate survey and prioritize goals/areas for improvement	Strategies	Administration SSC/PBIS Teams Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Review of survey results • SSC Plan developed

						and shared with SSC/PBIS Team for feedback

Goal 2: School Climate Standard 2b. West Hill Elementary will foster an **inclusive, culturally responsive, and restorative school environment** that removes barriers to teaching and learning by cultivating meaningful, trusting relationships with students, staff members and families.						
Intended Outcome: To foster a positive and enriching learning environment for the entire West Hill School community.						
Standard	Action Steps	Action Type	Person Responsible	Tier	Progress	Monitoring Notes Evidence/Data:
Standar...	Continue to implement and refine the use of restorative practices through restorative questions, circles, conferences and reflections.	Procedure/Pr...	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Daily use of proactive circles • Responsive social emotional learning lessons informed by current behavioral data • Reflective/restorative circles to address incidents/concerns • Reflections
Standar...	Expand and integrate opportunities for academic focused learning circles.	Strategies	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Academic circles integrated into regular practice across grade levels and disciplines • Incorporate

						academic circle prompts into curriculum development
Standar…	Ensure all new and non-certified staff members receive training in restorative practices to build a consistent, school-wide approach to fostering positive relationships, resolving conflict, and supporting a positive school climate.	Professional Le…	SSC/PBIS Team Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Provide access to Restorative Practices texts, slide shows, resources • Identify teacher leaders to facilitate professional learning • Identify staff members in need of professional learning • Schedule opportunities for professional learning
Standar…	Implementation of Second Step Curriculum- 2x/weekly during circle time	Strategies	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• scheduled meetings to identify classrooms in need of support • restorative circles, mediations
Standar…	Create common area signs that reflect and celebrate the diverse languages of our West Hill Community	Resource	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• 20 languages represented • All common/shared spaces
Standar…	Foster a school-wide culture of kindness, inclusion, and belonging by explicitly teaching and reinforcing upstander behaviors. Students will	Strategies	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Lesson plans • Walk-throughs • Reduction of

	learn to recognize when others need support, be a buddy, interrupt mean behavior, speak up and/or seek adult help.					behavioral incidents • Climate survey responses
Standar…	Incorporate regular visits with Delia, West Hill School's BluePath Therapy Dog, to provide all students with opportunities to promote emotional well-being, encourage positive behavior, reduce stress, and strengthen connections within the school community.	Strategies	Trained Handlers Staff Delia	Tier 1	In Progress	• Student sign up lists • Calendar of visits • Student/staff/family feedback
Standar…	Implement Comfortable Cafeteria initiative to support social emotional well-being and connectedness.	Strategies	Staff Occupational Therapists	Tier 1	In Progress	• Lesson plans • Walk-throughs • Track behavioral incidents in the cafeteria
Standar…	Continue to explore and integrate meaningful play based learning opportunities into daily practice.	Strategies	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Lesson plans • Walk-throughs • Kindergarten Team Professional Learning Work with Karen Gray, Play Based Learning Consultant • Participation in Global Day of Play, Get Outside and Play
Standar…	Continue to provide intentional, structured play opportunities that promote inclusion, belonging, and meaningful peer connections between KIP and general education students across all grade levels.	Strategies	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Student sign up • monthly calendar

Standar…	Intentionally celebrate and showcase authentic student work, with all teachers and specialists contributing to the celebration of student learning.	Strategies	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Monthly bulletin board displays • Monthly staff assignments
Standar…	Leverage ParentSquare as a platform for KIP, TLC, and COMPASS programs to celebrate and share student learning.	Strategies	Staff	Tier 1	Not Started	• Work with IT to ensure access, professional learning
Standar…	Continue peer mentorship with Rocky Hill High School Students and West Hill Students	Strategies	Staff High School Mentors	Tier 2 …	In Progress	• Student sign up lists • Calendar of visits
Standar…	Plan and host a school-wide Cultural Fair that highlights student-led learning experiences, cultural presentations, and opportunities for families and community members to share their cultural traditions.	Strategies	Staff Students Families PTO	Tier 1	Not Started	• Tentatively scheduled for April 2027 • Partnering with PTO to plan this event
Standar…	Partner with Effective School Solutions to proactively and collaboratively address the social and emotional well-being and mental health needs of students and families.	Strategies	ESS Staff	Tier 3	In Progress	• Partnership to begin Fall 2026 at West Hill School
Standar…	Paraeducator Book Club: Build shared understanding and practical application of trauma-informed and restorative practices through *Becoming a Trauma-Informed Restorative Educator*.	Professional Le…	Staff	Tier 1	In Progress	• Seek participant feedback

Appendix

Connecticut Legislation

The development and implementation of this School Climate Improvement Plan is grounded in the requirements set forth in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222h. This statute mandates that all schools in Connecticut establish and maintain a School Climate Improvement Plan designed to promote a positive and safe school climate, prevent and respond to challenging behaviors, and foster environments where all students feel valued, respected, and connected to their school community.

The School Climate Improvement Plan template used by our school aligns directly with the Connecticut School Climate Policy, which was developed to support compliance with C.G.S. Sec. 10-222h and the broader requirements established by Public Act 23-167. Each element of the plan—including the identification of climate goals, data sources, intended outcomes, climate standards alignment, action steps, and monitoring processes—reflects state expectations for building equitable, restorative, and culturally responsive school climates. This ensures that our school is not only meeting state requirements, but also embedding best practices that reflect the voices, needs, and experiences of our diverse school community. Below is a list of highlighted points from this legislation:

- C.G.S. Sec. 10-222hh requires each school to develop a school climate improvement plan, based on the results of the school climate survey, school climate committee recommendations, protocols and supports outlined in the law, and other relevant data.
- The school climate specialist, in collaboration with the school climate coordinator, is required to develop this plan and update it as necessary.
- The plan must be submitted to the school climate coordinator on or before December 31 each year and must be made available to the school community upon approval.
- Under the law, the plan is to be used in the prevention of, identification of and response to "challenging behavior".
- C.G.S. Sec. 10-222hh(b) outlines that the plans must include protocols and supports to enhance classroom safety and address challenging behavior, and, must, at a minimum, include the components detailed below.
    - Contact information for an administrator to be notified when incidents of challenging behavior result in student discipline or removal of a student from the classroom.
    - The process by which this designated administrator will assess the facts, severity and intentionality of an incident of challenging behavior.
    - The designated location that students may be sent when removed from class for disciplinary reasons pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 10-233b. In addition, protocols and supports must include the supports each student may receive in this location, including, among other things, interventions from trained school employees, therapeutic resources and mental health supports.

- The ways to "address challenging behavior, enhance resiliency, increase the use of de-escalation strategies and improve social and emotional skills."
- Safeguards to ensure that supports, services or interventions are in compliance with the special education laws, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.
- A requirement that the Superintendent submit, at least annually, a report to the local or regional board of education concerning the number of tiered response incidents that occurred in the prior year.
- A prohibition on discrimination or retaliation against individuals who report or investigate tiered response incidents.

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 behavior.
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:
    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 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.

School Climate Glossary (per policy):

The following definitions related to creating a positive school climate and the write of the school climate improvement plan are taken directly from the Connecticut School Climate Policy (5131.911)

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
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.
Social 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.
Bullying	means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
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.
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.
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.

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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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
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.
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 Climate Survey Focus Area for Improvement- "Families" - *Students at my child's school will try to stop students from insulting or making fun of other students.*

School Climate Survey Focus Area for Improvement- "Students" - *Students at my school will try to stop students from making fun of other students.*

School Climate Survey Focus Area for Improvement- "Staff" - *Students at this school will try to stop students from insulting or making fun of others.*