



Bullying Prevention Policy for Lawrence Hall School

Purpose

The Illinois General Assembly has found that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with their ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment and violence. It is the goal of the school to create a learning environment where students feel safe and supported, are protected from bullying, are able to succeed academically and develop socially and emotionally into responsible, caring individuals.

Scope

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion]. Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution. Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and this Policy is consistent with the Illinois School code. This Policy protects students against bullying and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race or ethnicity, color, religion, sex, national origin or immigration status, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender or sex (includes gender identity and gender expression), political belief or affiliation, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one of more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics. We recognize the vulnerability of students with actual or perceived disabilities and those that identify as or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Bullying and harassment are prohibited:

1. During any school sponsored or school sanctioned program or event.
2. In school, on school property, on school buses or other school provided transportation.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer or computer network or other electronic school equipment.
4. When communicated through any electronic technology or personal electronic device while on school property, on school buses or other school-sponsored or school-sanctioned event or activity.
5. When it is conveyed that a threat will be carried out in a school setting, including threats made outside school hours with intent to carry them out during any school-related or sponsored program or activity or on school-provided transportation.

Policy Evaluation

Revised Monday January 09, 2023



This Policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.

The Lawrence Hall Behavior Management Committee will reevaluate this Policy every two years as part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy under subsection (d) of the state's requirement. The policy evaluation process will assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. Lawrence Hall may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be made available on the Internet website of the school. If the Internet website is not available, the information will be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

Definition

"Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

"Bullying" means any physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students, and meets all the following criteria:

1. An observed or perceived imbalance of power exists between the person(s) engaged in the bullying behavior(s) and the targeted student(s); and /or student(s) were targeted based on prejudice or bias as defined below.
2. The behaviors are severe or pervasive (repeated over time), or there is a high likelihood that behaviors will be repeated. While bullying is often characterized by repeated acts, sometimes a single incident constitutes bullying depending on the severity and if other elements of bullying are present.
3. The intent of the person(s) engaging in the behavior is to cause physical or emotional harm to the targeted student(s).



“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation 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 system, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. “Cyber-bullying” includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. “Cyber-bullying” also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

Preventing Bullying

All staff shall work to develop a safe, supportive school environment that prevents bullying through:

- Developing supportive school climate strategies, including clear expectations and share agreements to guide interactions between students, and between staff and students. This includes the inclusion of the policy in the student/parent handbook. This handbook is distributed annually to students and parents at the start of each school year. It is also shared at the initial intake meeting for all new students and during the on-boarding meeting with new staff.
- Teach all students social and emotional skills and establish classroom and school-wide practices that promote relationship-building, including teaching all school stakeholders to speak out when they see or hear bullying, degrading language, and bias or prejudice.
- Establish predictable responses and effective disciplinary practices that address root cause, teach skills, build empathy, and repair harm. Ensure all students, staff and stakeholders know our school plan to respond to bullying and harassment.

Intervening to Address Bullying

A. Responsibilities of School Staff

All school staff who witness incidents of bullying or school violence or who possess reliable information to suspect that a person is a target of bullying must:

1. Intervene immediately in a manner that is appropriate and ensures that safety of all people involved.



2. Report the incident of bullying or retaliation to the Principal, Victoria Hicks vhicks@lawrencehall.org, or Director of Education, Jason Swangren jswangren@lawrencehall.org, as soon as practicable, but by the end of the school day.
3. Cooperate fully in any investigation of the incident and in implementing any safety plan established by the principal or director of education.

B. Responsibilities of Students, Parents and Guardians

No student who witnesses bullying may stand by or participate in the bullying but must notify a school staff or an adult at home as quickly as possible. Any parent or guardian who witnesses or is notified of bullying has an obligation to advise the Principal or the Director of Education as quickly as possible.

Reports can be made by contacting either the Principal, Victoria Hicks at 773-727-6200 or vhicks@lawrencehall.org and The Director of Education, Jason Swangren at 773-474-0315 or jswangren@lawrencehall.org. Anonymous reports will be accepted by the principal or the director of education. No disciplinary action will be taken on the sole basis of an anonymous report.

Reprisal/retaliation or the submission of knowingly false bullying allegations is prohibited and will result in the imposition of appropriate intervention/consequences including but not limited to restorative practices, parent conferences, community service, IEP review/revisions and possible suspension.

C. Process for Investigating Reports of Bullying

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

"Restorative measures" means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that

- (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,
- (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety,
- (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate,
- (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society,
- (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and



(vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

(vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

1. **Ensure Safety.** The principal will determine if a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. If there are overt or implied risks of safety, the Chicago Police Department may be contacted. The principal will provide immediate support to any targeted students to ensure safety.
2. **Notify parents/guardians of all involved students.** Within one school day of receipt of a bullying report, the principal will report to the parent/legal guardian of all involved students, via telephone, personal conference and or in writing, the occurrence of any alleged incident or bullying, and shall document these notifications in the student's file.
3. **Document all allegations of bullying.** Within two school days of receiving a report of bullying, the principal will document the allegation and notifications to guardians in the school's data base system.
4. **Conduct an investigation.** The Principal , or Director of Education will conduct the investigation. Investigation of reported bullying will be initiated within 5 school days of receipt of a report and completed within 10 school days.
The investigation will include:
 - a. Identifying all involved parties, including the student(s) alleged to have engaged in the bullying behaviors, alleged target(s) and bystanders(s), as well has any adult who witnessed the incident or may have reliable information about it.
 - b. Conducting an individual interview in a private setting with all involved parties. The alleged target should never be interviewed in public or with the student(s) alleged to have engaged in the bullying.
 - c. Determining how often the conduct occurred, any past incidents or continuing pattern of behavior indicated on written reports.
 - d. Assessing the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety.
5. **Make a determination whether allegations of bullying are substantiated or not and document determination.** The Principal/Director of Education shall consider whether the four elements of the bullying definition are met, or if all four elements of bullying are not present, whether the behavior qualifies as another inappropriate behavior. When the investigation is complete, the Principal/Director of Education will ensure that the investigation and findings are documented in the school's data base system. If the investigation determines that a student(s) engaged in bullying behaviors and or other inappropriate behaviors, the Principal/Director of Education will complete an incident report.
6. **Notify all involved parties of the outcome of the investigation.** Within one day of making a determination, the Principal/Director of Education will notify, in writing, the parents/legal guardians of all students involved of the outcome of the investigation. Parents/legal guardians of the student who are parties to the investigation may request a personal conference with the



Principal/Director of Education to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying, and any resources available in or outside the school to help the students address the underlying reasons for the bullying.

D. Determining an Appropriate Response

The goal of the response is to ensure the targeted student feels safe and welcome, and the student engaged in bullying behaviors understands the harm s/he caused and changes his/her behavior.

1. Identify school risk factors and ensure a universal strategy for school climate improvement and social and emotional development.
2. Provide the targeted student with information on available services including counseling and support services.
3. Determine interventions and or consequences that address the root cause of the student's bullying behavior.
4. For incidents that impact the larger school community, provide opportunities in safe, structured environments for affected students, staff, and/or parents to speak about the incident, its impact, and what is needed to repair the harm.

E. Practices to avoid or consider

1. Do not solicit an apology from the student who engaged in bullying behavior
2. Do not require a targeted student to participate in mediation until they are comfortable doing so.
3. Dismiss bullying as typical student behavior or assume that it is not serious.

Appeal

Any party that is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal to the Chief Program Officer, Sean McGinnis at smcginnis@lawrencehall.org, at Lawrence Hall (telephone 773-769-3500) within 15 calendar days of notification of the principal's decision

Lawrence Hall School's Bullying Prevention Policy is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.