

***LPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Policies and procedures for reporting and responding
to bullying and retaliation
For Parents***

Creating a safe environment where students can take learning and social risks has always been a core value at Learning Prep School. Learning Prep is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and address all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. Learning Prep School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. We investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement. LPS affords all students the same protection from bullying regardless of their legal status. LPS also recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics (or by association with such a person). Some of these characteristics include: race, color, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, and/or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability. Our students have often been the target of bullying in previous placements based on their special education status. We strive for our students to feel safe at school regardless of these perceived differentiating characteristics.

In addition to our on-going professional development for staff regarding preventing and addressing bullying at LPS, all of our students participate in our Health and Students Issues Curricula which includes anti-bullying education. Learning Prep School uses a research based curriculum for each level (Grades 2-12) from Voyager- Sopris Learning: Bully Proofing Series.

The Bully Proofing Series Curricula is taught in the Health and Student Issues (HSI) classes throughout the program.

All curriculum material for HSI classes is presented to students at their comprehension level by a Master's level clinician and involves an interactive and dynamic class format. Students are encouraged to share opinions, problem-solve and role play during classes. Through the use of worksheets, Choices Magazine articles (Choices Magazine is a weekly reader publication by Scholastic concerning health and student issues topics), videos, role-plays, games and discussions, students define, identify and understand bullying and its effects as well as ways to prevent and handle bullying in and outside of the school setting. Starting within the next year, students will also participate in a student survey every four years (per the DESE) to assess "school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying" at LPS. This will commence once the DESE develops the student survey.

The following definitions have been provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and are used by Learning Prep. It is a violation for anyone, including another student or a staff member, to bully or intimidate a student through conduct or communication as defined below.

Aggressor is a student or staff member (including but not limited to educators, administrators, cafeteria workers, school nurses, therapists, maintenance workers, after school workers, volunteers) who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

Bullying: Bullying is defined in M.G.L. c. 71 370 as the severe or repeated use of written, verbal or electronic communication or a physical act or gesture by one or more students or staff members directed at a student that has the effect of:

- Causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to his or her property;
- Placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- Creating a hostile environment at school for the bullied student;
- Infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or
- Materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Bullying may include indirect, direct and repetitive: tripping, hitting, shoving, spitting, punching, pinching, blocking an entrance/exit or passageway, excluding or leaving others out, spreading hurtful or untrue stories, abusive name-calling, harassment, threats or trying to scare someone, threats to control another student or their friendship with someone else, disrespect for a student's family members, disrespect for the property of others and/or the disrespect of someone's race, ethnic group, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means such as a cell phone, the Internet or a social networking site. It includes but is not limited to email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. Cyberbullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog 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. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of 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 conditions enumerated above.

Hostile Environment as defined in M.G.L. c. 71 370 is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, pre-vocational instructors, administrators, counselors, therapists, school nurses, custodians, advisors to extracurricular activities and support staff.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated. It is important for students to make it clear to others (parents, counselor, teacher) when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

What Bullying is not: It is important to understand that conflict is not automatically synonymous with bullying. Arguing, bantering, verbal abuse (not repeated), ignoring, roughhousing and fighting, while potentially serious forms of conflict are not necessarily instances of bullying. Bullying is characterized by intention, repetition and a power imbalance. Not every conflict meets these criteria. Whether it is a case of bullying or conflict, all incidents should be reported to LPS staff.

Protocols for Reporting Bullying

An LPS staff member is **mandated** to report immediately to the Dean of Students (from the building of the target) or Designee any instance of and or suspicion of bullying or retaliation that the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. The exception is if a reported bullying incident involves the Dean of Students or Designee. In such cases, the Principal or Director shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target.

Reports of bullying may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing on an Incident Report Form for Bullying (“the form”). Reports may be given over the phone to the Dean of Students or a counselor and will then be recorded in writing. Parents, guardians and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Reports may be made anonymously by voice mail to the Dean of Students or by downloading “the form” from the LPS website and sending via U.S. Mail. However, no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Incident Report Form for Bullying is available in the Main Office, the Elementary/Middle School office, both of the Dean of Students’ offices and is also posted on the LPS parent website

Investigation and Safety

All reports are given to the Dean of Students (the Principal if the alleged aggressor is the Dean of Students) or Designee who immediately assesses the need to restore a sense of safety to the identified target and/or to protect the identified target from possible further incidents. The target will be provided with a “safety plan” including designating a person to check in with as needed (identified by the target; usually the individual counselor), change in schedule if needed, regular check-ins for safety by the Dean of Students as well as assessing whether the alleged aggressor requires more supervision. The report will then be fully investigated including interviewing the target, and any possible staff and student witnesses. The Dean of Students or Designee will preserve confidentiality during the investigation process and maintain written documentation of the investigation. All precautions will be taken to protect students who report or witness bullying or retaliation and students who provide information during an investigation from bullying or retaliation.

The target's counselor follows-up with the student on an ongoing basis to ensure continued safety and notify the Dean of Students if needed.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation are consistent with school policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Dean of Students or Designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation. If a crime has been committed, the designee is required to call the local police department.

Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

All LPS employees are expected to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and to employ successful behavior management techniques. The employee handbook stresses the need for all staff to interact in a respectful and professional manner with all students, staff and administrative personnel. This includes establishing rapport and appropriate boundaries with students as well as using professional language at all times. Each employee has an obligation to observe and follow the school's policies and procedures and to maintain proper standards of conduct at all times. The LPS employee handbook details conduct which may result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to the following: mistreatment of an individual served by LPS as well as failure to implement school policies and procedures (Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan). If an individual's behavior interferes with the orderly and efficient operation of the school, corrective disciplinary measures will be taken. Reports of bullying by staff will be thoroughly investigated. If any bullying is substantiated, disciplinary measures may include: written warning, suspension with or without pay, and/or discharge. If the staff person remains at LPS, education and additional supervision will be provided in order to avoid any further incidents.

At LPS, the bullying of a student by a staff member will not be tolerated. The investigation of a staff member will follow the same procedures as any investigation. Therefore, the Dean of Students/Designee (the Principal if the Dean of Students is the alleged aggressor) will complete the following: safety plan for the alleged target, notification of parent/guardian of the investigation, full investigation as well as follow up after investigation is completed. It is important to note that all LPS staff needs to understand the importance of the investigation. It is important and necessary for the alleged staff aggressor, alleged student target and any potential witnesses to be truthful. It is also important for staff and students to understand that retaliation against a reporter/target is strictly forbidden and will result in disciplinary action.

Determination/Notification

The Dean of Students or Designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Dean of Students or Designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or on benefiting from school activities. The Dean of Students or Designee will 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. Parents or guardians will be notified about the results of

the investigation. If bullying or retaliation has been identified, the Dean of Students or designee will notify parents/guardians of what action is being taken to prevent further occurrences. Should a bullying incident involve actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, the notification process will include the development of a notification plan that involves the Dean of Students/Designee, the student and his/her counselor and will be informed by an assessment of the student's safety and the resources to support the student.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Dean of Students or Designee may choose to consult with the students' teachers and or counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social, emotional or learning issues(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional interventions, education or social skills development.

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Dean of Students or Designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this and the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Dean of Students or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. At any point during an investigation, if the Dean of Students or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the local law enforcement agency will be notified. If the Dean of Students or Designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student is subject to disciplinary action. The Dean of Students or Designee will work with the student and his/her counselor to ensure understanding of the significance of false accusations and communicate the appropriate consequences. Parents/guardians will be notified.

Disciplinary Action

If the Dean of Students or Designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of the identified facts, the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the LPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and with the school's code of conduct.

Bullying and Retaliation Prohibited: Bullying in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. In addition, retaliation against a student who has brought a bullying complaint to the attention of school staff or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is also prohibited and will not be tolerated by Learning Prep School. Acts of Bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school ground and property immediately adjacent to school ground, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, while student is waiting to be picked up for transport to or from school or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by Learning Prep, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Learning Prep, if

the acts created a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Students whose behavior is found to be in violation will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include detention (Behavior Support Slip in Elementary School), in-school suspension, out of school suspension and police notification. If, during a bullying investigation or at any other time, it is found that a student is being or has been discriminated against by another student, a staff person, or an administrator, under the anti-discrimination statutes that are enforced by the Office of Civil Rights, a report will be made to the Office for Civil Rights and Learning Prep School will further investigate and bring consequences to any individual found guilty of discrimination. All students and staff are responsible for adhering to the current rules and regulations set forth by the state of Massachusetts.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Problem Resolution System

After reporting concerns/bullying incident reports to the Dean of Students at LPS and an appropriate amount of time has been given for investigation and determination, all parents and guardians have the right to seek assistance or file a claim through the DESE's Problem Resolution System (PRS) if they feel the problem has not been addressed properly or completely by Learning Prep School. The Problem Resolution System intake information form is available from the LPS Dean of Students Offices as well as on the LPS website under the "Anti-Bullying" tab. Parents/guardians fill out, sign and return the intake form to the Problem Resolution System Intake Coordinator at DESE in Malden by US mail, email or fax. Instructions for submission are on the intake form.

Updated: November 2016
LPS Plan against Bullying
For Students

The state of Massachusetts has written a law that says there is no bullying allowed in schools. Every school in Massachusetts needs to follow these rules. Learning Prep has always believed in a Safe Learning Environment. This means we want all students and staff to feel safe while they are at LPS. This means safe physically (no hitting, pushing etc.), safe emotionally (no teasing, name-calling etc.) and safe academically (no teasing about your learning difficulty). We believe that if a student feels safe, s/he will be able to learn and feel good at school. We at LPS believe it's important to prevent and address all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can interrupt student learning. Learning Prep School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a polite way and with respect for differences. We will look into all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation right away. We also will act to end the bullying behavior and help the target feel safe again. The safe learning environment includes all places such as: classes, therapy areas, after school programs, extracurricular activities and field trips.

The following vocabulary words have been provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and will be used at Learning Prep. It is against the rules for anyone, including a student, staff member or adult to bully or intimidate a student through behavior or communication (talking) as defined below:

Aggressor is a student or staff member (includes teachers, counselors, OT, Speech therapist, cafeteria worker, nurse, maintenance worker, volunteers) who does the bullying.

Bullying: Bullying means the severe (really mean) or repeated (happens more than once) use of written, verbal (talking) or electronic communication (computer, cell phone, iPad etc.) or a physical act or gesture by one or more students or staff members that causes:

- Physical or emotional (feelings) harm to the other student or damage to his/her property;
- Placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm or damage to property;
- Creating a hostile environment at school for the bullied student;
- Infringing on the rights of the other student; or
- Disrupting the education process so much that the student can't learn or doesn't want to go to school

Bullying may include indirect or direct and repeated: tripping, hitting, shoving, spitting, punching, pinching, blocking an door or passageway, leaving others out, spreading hurtful or untrue stories, abusive name-calling, threats or trying to scare someone, threats to control another student or their friendship with someone else, disrespect for a student's family members, disrespect for the property of others and/or the disrespect of someone's race, ethnic group, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of a cell phone, the Internet or a social networking site. It includes but is not limited to email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. Cyberbullying also includes making a web page or blog in which the creator pretends to be another person, if the information posted meets the definition of bullying.

Hostile Environment is a situation in which ongoing bullying causes school to be full of intimidation, teasing or insult that is bad enough to change the conditions of a student's education or cause them to not want to go to school.

Retaliation is any comments or actions directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. This means that saying things like: "What did you say about me", "You better not tell on me", "I am mad at you for telling", "you're a snitch" are absolutely not allowed and the student will earn consequences for saying this to someone who has reported someone as a bully.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, teachers, administrators, counselors, therapists (OT and Speech teachers), school nurses, custodians, after-school program teachers and support staff. Staff includes anyone that works or volunteers in your school.

Target is the student who is being bullied. It is important for students to make it clear to others (parents, counselor, teacher) when someone is bullying them.

What Bullying is not: It is important to understand that conflict is not the same as bullying. Arguing, verbal abuse (not repeated), ignoring, roughhousing, being mean and fighting, while against the rules and forms of conflict are not necessarily bullying. Bullying is characterized by intention (when someone wants to hurt you), repetition (happens over and over) and a power imbalance. Not every conflict meets these criteria. Whether it is a case of bullying or conflict, all incidents should be reported to LPS staff.

How to Report Bullying

An LPS staff member needs to report immediately to the Dean of Students from the building of the target (victim) or Designee any bullying or retaliation that the staff member becomes aware of or sees. If the Dean of Students is accused of bully behavior, the principal will do the investigation.

Bullying reports can be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral (told to someone) or written. If you tell a staff member, the staff member will write it on an Incident Report Form for Bullying ("the form"). Reports may be given over the phone to the Dean of Students or a counselor and will then be recorded in writing. Parents, guardians and students may ask for help from a staff member to write up a report. Reports may be made anonymously (nobody knows who the reporter is) by voice mail to the Dean of Students or by downloading "the form" from the LPS website and sending via U.S. Mail. However, no consequences (detention, suspension) will be given to an alleged bully if the report is anonymous.

The *Incident Report Form for Bullying* is available in the Main Office, the Elementary/Middle School office, the Dean of Students' offices and is also posted on the LPS parent website.

Investigation and Safety

All reports are given to the Dean of Students or Designee who immediately makes sure the identified target feels safe and/or is protected from more bullying. The target will be given a "safety plan" including a person to check in with as needed (identified by the target; usually the individual counselor), change in schedule if needed, regular check-ins for safety by the Dean of Students as well as figuring out whether the alleged aggressor (bully) needs more supervision. The report will then be fully investigated including interviewing the target, and any possible staff and student witnesses. The Dean of Students or Designee will keep information private during the investigation process and write down information from the investigation. The Dean of Students will do everything possible to protect students who report or witness bullying or retaliation and also to protect students who give information during an investigation.

The target's (victim) counselor follows-up with the student on an ongoing basis to make sure s/he feels safe and notifies the Dean of Students if needed.

Investigating bullying reports will follow school policies and procedures for investigations. If needed, the Dean of Students or Designee will talk to a lawyer or policeman about the investigation. If a crime has been committed, the designee is required to call the local police department.

Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

All LPS teachers/workers are expected to be respectful and to correct student behavior in an appropriate way. The employee handbook says that all staff needs to interact in a respectful and professional way with all students, staff and administrators. This includes establishing rapport and appropriate boundaries with students as well as using professional language at all times. Each employee needs to follow the school's policies and procedures and to maintain proper standards of behavior at all times. The LPS employee handbook says which behaviors are not allowed. This includes but is not limited to the following: mistreating an LPS student as well as failure to use and follow school policies and procedures (Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan). If a teacher or employee breaks these rules, s/he will be disciplined. Reports of bullying by staff will be thoroughly investigated. If any bullying is substantiated, discipline may include: written warning, suspension with or without pay, and/or discharge. If the staff person remains at LPS, education and additional supervision will be provided in order to avoid any further incidents.

At LPS, the bullying of a student by a staff member is not allowed. The investigation of a staff member will follow the same procedures as any investigation. Therefore, the Dean of Students/Designee will complete the following: safety pan for the alleged target, calling the parent/guardian about the investigation, full investigation as well as follow up after investigation is completed. It is important to note that all LPS staff needs to understand the importance of the investigation. It is important and

necessary for the alleged staff aggressor, alleged student target and any potential witnesses to tell the truth. It is also important for staff and students to understand that retaliation against a reporter/target is not allowed and will result in consequences.

Determination/Notification

The Dean of Students or Designee will decide if bullying happened based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after the investigation, bullying or retaliation has been found, the Dean of Students or Designee will take needed steps to prevent it from happening again and will make sure that the target is not kept from participating in school or on benefiting from school activities. The Dean of Students or Designee will decide what needs to happen so the target can attend activities and school without feeling scared/worried. Parents or guardians will be called about the results of the investigation. If bullying or retaliation has been identified, the Dean of Students or designee will notify parents/guardians of what action is being taken to prevent it from happening again. If the student is worried about something happening again, a plan will be made by the student's counselor and the Dean of Students to help the student feel safe and supported in school.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Dean of Students or Designee may talk to the student's teachers and/or counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to see if any social, emotional or learning needs that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to decide if additional education is needed.

If it is decided that bullying or retaliation has happened, the Dean of Students or Designee will call the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this and the action that will be taken. There may be circumstances in which the Dean of Students or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. At any point during an investigation, if the Dean of Students or designee has a reason to believe that the target's parents may file charges (call the police), the Dean of Students will call the local police department. If the Dean of Students or Designee finds out that a student knowingly made up a bullying or retaliation situation, that student could get consequences (detention, suspension). The Dean of Students or Designee will also work with the student and his/her counselor to make sure the student understands the seriousness of a false bullying report. Parents/guardians will be notified.

Consequences for Aggressor (Bully)

If the Dean of Students or Designee decides that consequences are appropriate, consequences will be determined on the basis of the identified facts, how severe the bullying was, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance taking responsibility with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the LPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and with the school's code of conduct and may include behavior support slip (ES), detention, in-school suspension or out of school suspension.

Bullying and Retaliation Is Not Allowed: Bullying in any form or for any reason is absolutely not allowed. In addition, saying something or doing something against a student who has complained about a bully or who has helped in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is also not allowed and will not be tolerated by Learning Prep School.

Acts of Bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school ground and property immediately around the school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, while student is waiting to be picked up for transport to or from school or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by Learning Prep, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Learning Prep, if the acts created a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students whose behavior breaks these rules will be given consequences, which may include detention (behavior support slip in Elementary School), in-school suspension, out of school suspension and if needed, police notification. If, during a bullying investigation or at any other time, it is found that a student is being or has been discriminated against by another student, a staff person, or an administrator, under the anti-discrimination statutes that are enforced by the Office of Civil Rights, a report will be made to the Office for Civil Rights and Learning Prep School will further investigate and bring consequences to any individual found guilty of discrimination (saying/doing something against someone because of their race, religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.). All students and staff are responsible for following the current rules put in place by the state of Massachusetts.