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Learning for Leadership Charter School Student Bullying Prohibition Policy

Purpose

Learning for Leadership Charter School strives to provide safe, secure, and respectful learning environments for all students on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities. Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behavior, is conduct that interferes with a student's ability to learn and a teacher's ability to educate.

This Policy protects students against bullying and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, immigration status, sex, marital status, familial status, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, sexual orientation, including gender identity and expression, academic status related to student performance, disability, status with regard to public assistance, age, military status, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic defined in Chapter 363A. This policy also protects any student who voluntarily participates in any district function or activity whether the student is enrolled in the district or not.

Definitions

Prohibited conduct (bullying) means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students creating an actual or perceived imbalance of power between the student engaging in bullying and the target of bullying that has or can be reasonably predicted by repeated forms or pattern to have one or more of the following effects:

- Placing the student in reasonable fear or harm to the student's person or property.
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
- Substantially interfering with the student's educational opportunities and performance.
- Substantially interfering with the student's 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.
- "Cyberbullying" means using electronic information and communication technologies to bully. This may include, but is not limited to a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound or data, including a post on a social network, internet, website, or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device.
- "Remedial response" means a measure to stop and correct prohibited conduct, prevent prohibited conduct from recurring, and protect, support, and intervene on behalf of the student

who is the target of the prohibited conduct. Remedial response also means a measure to stop and correct retaliation for asserting, alleging, reporting or providing information about prohibited conduct or knowingly making a false report about prohibited conduct, prevent retaliation of false reports from recurring and protect, support and intervene on behalf of the student who is the target of the prohibited conduct.

- “Immediately” means as soon as possible but in no longer than 24 hours.
- “District Employee” includes school board members, administrators, educators, aids, school counselors, social workers, psychologists, other school mental health professionals, nurses, and other school-based/linked medical providers/health professionals, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, extracurricular activities advisors, paraprofessionals, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of the district and its students.

PROHIBITIONS

Bullying of a student or group of students is prohibited:

1. During any school-sponsored or school sanctioned programs, activities, events or trips.
2. In school buildings, school property, or on school district provided transportation.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school district computer or computer network, or other electronic school equipment.
4. When communicated through any electronic technology or personal electronic device while on school property, or school provided transportation, and at school sponsored or school sanctioned events and activities.
5. Off campus communication and use of technology which seriously disrupts any student’s education.

Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is prohibited. False accusations or reports of bullying against another student are also prohibited.

RESPONSE

The School Director is the person responsible for receiving reports of bullying at the school level. They will ensure this policy and its procedures are fairly and fully implemented and serve as the primary contact on policy and procedural matters implicating the district. If the complaint involves the School Director, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Board Chair.

When investigating a complaint, the School Director may take into account the following factors:

- The developmental ages and maturity levels of the parties involved.
- The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature of behavior.
- Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior.
- The relationship between the parties involved.
- The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Investigations of bullying incident shall be initiated within three school days of receipt of a report and be completed within 10 school days, unless the School Director grants in writing an additional five-day extension due to extenuating circumstances.

Consequences-Many student conflicts can be resolved immediately and do not require reporting or creation of an incident report. Schools must respond to bullying in a manner tailored to the individual incident, considering the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Appropriate responses and consequences are outlined in the Student Handbook.

Appeal- Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal to the district's Board Chair within 10 days of notification of the Learning for Leadership Charter School decision. The Board Chair will conduct a review of the appeal and within 10 school days of receipt of the appeal, will affirm, reverse or modify the findings of the report. The Board Chair shall notify the party requesting the appeal and the School Director that the decision is final and shall document that notification in the incident report.

District Employees-When it is determined that a district employee was aware prohibited conduct was taking place but failed to report it, the employee will be considered to have violated this policy. The School Director shall consider employee discipline for such violations. Remedies for offending contractors should be imposed according to district work agreements.

Reprisal-The school district will take appropriate action against any student or district employee who retaliates against any person who reports alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists or participates in a proceed or hearing relating to such bullying. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment or intentional disparate treatment.

NOTICE AND DISSEMINATION OF REQUIREMENTS

The school district will give annual notice of this policy to students, parents or guardians, and district employees, and this policy shall appear in the student handbook and posted in an electronic format in the languages appearing on its district/school website. This policy should also be:

1. Posted in the district building administrative offices and throughout each school building in the areas accessible to students and district employees.
2. Included in each school's student handbook on school policies.
3. Be given to each employee and independent contractor at the time of entering into the person's employment contract.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Staff-Professional development will be offered annually to build the skills of all district employees to implement this policy. The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent incidents of bullying and to intervene immediately and effectively to stop them in a manner that does not stigmatize the victim.
2. Information about the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an actor, target and witness to the bullying.
3. Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk, and any specific interventions that may be particularly effective for addressing bias-based bullying.
4. Recognizing, responding to and reporting bullying.
5. Information about the incidence and nature of cyberbullying
6. Information about Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.
7. A review of the districts reporting requirements related to bullying and cyberbullying.

Student Education-Each School shall incorporate into the school curriculum developmentally-appropriate programmatic instruction to help students identify, prevent and reduce bullying and create a safe learning environment. The social workers shall determine the scope and duration of the units of instruction and topics covered but should include evidence-based social emotional learning to prevent and reduce discrimination and other improper conduct to engage all students in creating a safe and supportive school environment. **See Attachment C.**

REMEDIAL RESPONSES AND REFERRALS

The School Director and the Dean of Students shall design and implement remedial measures to correct the problem behavior prevent another occurrence of the problem, protect and provide support for the target of the bullying, and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to bullying.

The School Director shall refer students who bully to positive behavior interventions within the school, if possible, to reinforce the behavioral expectation they violated and increase their social emotional competency. Learning for Leadership Charter School staff may refer the target of bullying to the School Psychologist where the student can openly express their feelings about their bullying experience, or social skills training where they can practice assertiveness or coping mechanisms.

Attachment A

The School Director should perform the evaluation.

1. Investigation will be initiated in 3 school days of receipt of the report and be completed within 10 school days, unless the incident requires an extension for extenuating circumstances. The School Director must document the reasons for the extension and notify the parties involved. The School Director is responsible for maintaining confidentiality of persons involved.
2. Prior to the investigation of an incident, the School Director will take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the alleged actor(s), target(s), bystander(s) or reporter pending completion of an investigation. Once investigation is concluded, further steps will be taken as needed to assure the continued safety of the complainant from additional incidents of bullying or retaliation.
3. The purpose of the investigation is to make a determination as to whether a reported incident constitutes a case of bullying. These determinations will be made in consideration of the totality of the facts and the circumstances surrounding the incident, such as the nature of the behavior, past incidents, the relationship between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred.
 - Identify the alleged actors, targets, bystanders or adult witnesses.
 - Conduct individual interviews in a private setting. Investigations may include other documents or evidence deemed pertinent.
 - Determine when conduct occurred or continued pattern of behavior, and whether the target's education was negatively impacted.
 - Assess the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety and assigning school staff to create an implement a safety plan to prevent the recurrence of an incidence that will restore a sense of safety for the target and other students who have been impacted.
 - If the School Director determines the reported incident may involve criminal activity or the basis for criminal charges, information about the incident must be conveyed to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Law enforcement shall only be contacted if all other available remedies have been exhausted.
 - When appropriate, preparing a report identifying the recommendation for individual consequences.
 - Comprehensively documenting the details of the investigation.

- When the investigation is complete, the Program Coordinator shall ensure the investigation report is attached to the incident report.

Attachment B

Remedial Actions

For the student harmed: protect, support, and intervene.

Support may include: referral to the School Psychologist for one-to-one support, daily check in with trusted adult in the school, choice to participate in restorative process by trained facilitator.

For the student who violated the prohibited conduct policy: Schools may use multi-tiered levels of response that are individualized, consistent, reasonable, fair, age-appropriate and should match the severity of the student's behavior and their developmental age. Consequences must be paired with meaningful instruction and guidance and must have well defined outcomes.

Consequences may include: referral to appropriate staff for teaching, mini-courses to guide restitution, a referral to participate in a restorative process facilitated by a trained facilitator if the student admits to having caused harm, a meeting between the advisor of the student and the parent of the student, a coordinated behavior plan, or individual counseling. Consequences may also include warning, suspension, exclusion, or expulsion.

The school will use data to review whether there are school climate needs and whether school wide training is needed.

When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the consequences shall be imposed immediately and consistently. The School Director will continue to communicate with all parties until the situation is resolved. Indicators that the situation is resolved:

- The actor is no longer bullying and is interacting civilly with target
- The target reports feeling safe.
- School staff observe an increase in positive behavior in the actor and/or the target
- School staff observe a more positive climate in the physical location where bullying incidents were high.

Attachment C

Learning for Leadership Charter School Staff are encouraged to take such actions as deemed appropriate to accomplish the following goals:

- Engage students in creating a safe/supportive school environment
- Partner with parents and other community members to develop and implement prevention and intervention programs.
- Train student bystanders to intervene and report incidents of bullying.
- Teach students to advocate for themselves and others.
- Prevent inappropriate referrals to special education of students who may engage in bullying or prohibited conduct.
- Foster student collaboration to create a more supportive school climate.

Possible units of instruction:

- Social emotional learning
- Appropriate online social media behavior/awareness
- Diversity in school and society
- Advocacy skills, assertiveness training
- Problem solving, managing conflict, and recognizing and responding to bullying.