



LMSD POLICY NOTIFICATION

Lower Merion School District Policies Prohibiting Harassment, Bullying, and Other Behavior

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I BELIEVE MY CHILD IS A VICTIM OF HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION OR BULLYING-TYPE BEHAVIORS?

In Short: Please Report.

We recognize that while we strive to maintain a culture and climate free of such behaviors, there may be times when we fall short of this goal. Thus, it is important for you to report your concern to your building principal, assistant principal, and/or school counselor. Alternatively, you may report your concern directly to the Office of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, or the Senior Director of Policy, Personnel, and School Programs by calling 610-645-1800 or 610-645-1930.

INTRODUCTION

- There are many ways in which the District endeavors to cultivate a climate of inclusivity through instructional practices and curriculum, counseling and conversation, and building relationships between and among students, families, and staff. • Each of our schools offers an environment to learn about ourselves and others while growing to understand the value of diversity in our world. • While these are not easy lessons, we believe deeply that they are important ones. • A part of this work includes making explicit in our policies that certain behavior, such as harassment, bullying, and discrimination, will not be tolerated.
- This summary sheet is intended to focus on these prohibited behaviors and practices so that families are aware of these rules, reinforce with them with their children, and know what to do if they have questions or concerns.

SUMMARY OF PROHIBITED HARASSMENT POLICY

- In order to maintain a learning environment which promotes self-worth and respect for the dignity and worth of others, it is the policy of the Lower Merion School District to prohibit sexual and other forms of harassment, based upon or relating to an individual's handicap/disability, race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity or national origin. Collectively, we refer to these types of harassment as Prohibited Harassment. For information about this and other types of prohibited behavior/treatment, please refer to the reverse side of this document.
- The purpose of the District's policy on Prohibited Harassment is threefold: to provide education about the problem of Prohibited Harassment; to provide guidelines for prompt and appropriate responses to allegations; to provide guidelines for prompt and appropriate remedies for any instance of Prohibited Harassment.
- Within each school, we have appointed designated school resource representatives to whom students may direct their questions or concerns. These staff members are identified in the school's handbook and posted on the school's webpage found on the District's website (www.lmsd.org). In addition to the building principal, they are available to talk with students or parents/guardians who feel that their children are victims of Prohibited Harassment by another student or students. They can counsel children, investigate circumstances surrounding any incident and mediate disagreements.
- If a concern or complaint of Prohibited Harassment involves a District employee, please direct that concern to the building principal or to the Office of the Superintendent so that immediate and appropriate action can be taken to address the situation.



TYPES OF PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

While the following list is not all-inclusive, a few key terms are defined below:

DISCRIMINATION means partiality toward or prejudice against someone based on handicap/disability, race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity or national origin.

In general, **PROHIBITED HARASSMENT** means verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's handicap/disability, race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity or national origin when such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects a student's educational performance/opportunities or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT is a form of Prohibited Harassment and refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other inappropriate verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's educational program or activities; or unreasonably interferes with a student's academic performance; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following: (1) Substantially interfering with a student's education; (2) creating a threatening environment; or (3) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

HAZING is defined as any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which results in the willful destruction or removal of public or private property for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or continued membership in any organization recognized by the District.

WHEN YOU REPORT AN INCIDENT OR SHARE INFORMATION REGARDING A CONCERN

When you report a concern, please anticipate that the administrator you contact will ask questions to gather information in order to determine a course of action. We would ask that you be prepared to share information regarding **who** is engaging in the concerning behavior, **who** is the target or victim of the concerning behavior, **where** and **when** did the incident(s) occur, and, giving as much detail as possible, **what** happened.

We understand that, at times, it is difficult to report a concern. It may be due to a worry of "getting someone in trouble" or a fear of retaliation. The District's policies specifically prohibit retaliation in connection with the asserting of a complaint or participating in an investigation. In addition, we take every effort to protect the confidentiality of an individual who has contacted us with a concern. We also want you to know that in situations arising between students, we work very hard to balance protecting the student who is the victim with efforts to ensure that the student engaging in the harmful behavior understands the impact of their conduct. For both students, there are a range of approaches that we use and there is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please visit the District's website (<http://www.lmsd.org/departments/board/policies/index.aspx>) where you can find the complete text of the District's policies and regulations, including the list of key policies noted below.

Policy/AR	Title	Policy/AR	Title
006	Civility	235	Student Rights and Responsibilities
103	Equal Opportunity Program for School and Classroom Practices	246	Prohibited Harassment By and Of Students
104	Equal Opportunity Program for Employment Practices	249	Bullying
114	Individualized Student Supports and Services	259	Gender Expansive and Transgender Students
119	Controversial and Value Issues	261	Anti-Hazing
130	Guidelines Concerning Religion	346, 446	Prohibited Harassment By and Of Employees
151	Student Athletics (Title IX Compliance)	354, 454	Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries with Students