

BULLYING POLICY

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Bullying disrupts a school's ability to educate students and threatens public safety by creating an atmosphere in which such behavior can escalate into violence. All students have a right to work and study in a safe, supportive environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

Prohibition against Bullying. Bullying is prohibited in the public schools of Lincoln, RI [R.I.G.L. 16-21-26]. The prevention of bullying is part of the Lincoln School Department District Strategic Plan [R.I.G.L. 16-7.1-2(e)] and School Safety Plan [R.I.G.L. 16-21-24].

It is the policy of the Lincoln Public Schools that all students be treated with respect. Neither sexual harassment nor harassment on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender, ancestry, age, handicap, sexual orientation, or color will be tolerated and may also be punishable under our harassment policy, and that the victim also has the option of proceeding under that harassment policy.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued regulations under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 entitled Sexual Harassment and Title IX of the Education Act of 1972, Anti-Discrimination Laws.

General Definitions: Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means intentional written, verbal, or physical act or threat of an act or threat of a physical act that a reasonable person should know will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property or is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational experience for a student.

Definition of Bullying: Bullying occurs when a student, while at school, intentionally assaults, batters, threatens, harasses, stalks, menaces, intimidates, extorts, humiliates, or taunts another student. Bullying also occurs when a student or a group of students organize a campaign of shunning against another student or when a student or group of students maliciously spread rumors about another student. In most circumstances, bullying does not include a mutual fight between students of roughly equal strength who are angry with each other. Such fights are subject to discipline as a violation of school rules prohibiting fighting.

At School: In the context of these regulations the phrase at school includes the following places and situations:

- In any location of the school (classroom, lavatory, locker room, gymnasium, etc.)
- Anywhere on school property
- Immediately adjacent to school property
- On a school bus or other school vehicle
- At school bus stops and walking to and from bus stops
- While students are walking directly to or from school
- At any school-sponsored activity or event, whether or not held on school premises
- Bullying that occurs electronically (over the internet) by phone or in writing.

Disciplinary Sanctions: As a school community, we believe in progressive discipline to educate our students. Repeated offenses will result in more severe consequences. Disciplinary consequences will be determined on a case-by-case basis and reflect the number and severity of disciplinary issues. Parents are important partners in the disciplinary process. Communication will be open and frequent as we work together to solve disciplinary issues for the safety and well being of our students.

Disciplinary Sanctions for bullying may include:

- Loss of the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities
- Loss of the opportunity to participate in school social activities
- Loss of the opportunity to participate in graduation exercises
- Loss of school bus transportation
- Transfer to another school
- Assignment of additional community/school service
- Classroom exclusion
- Short term school suspension (10 or fewer days of suspension) or long term suspension (suspension of more than 10 days)
- Admonitions, warnings and counseling

Reporting Bullying: Lincoln Public Schools shall establish a procedure for reporting, filing, and acting upon reports of incidents of bullying. It will be publicized to staff, parents, students, and volunteers. The person(s) responsible for reporting bullying are:

- The victim of the bullying
- Anyone who witnessed the bullying
- Anyone with credible information that an act of bullying is taking place

Responsibility of Staff: School staff shall take all reasonable measures to prevent bullying and shall report all aspects of bullying that may come to their attention. All reports should be made to the principal. Such reporting should be documented. In this context, the staff includes volunteers working in the school. A school employee who promptly reports the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying to the appropriate school official designated by the school district's policy, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in the policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying is not liable for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident [R.I.G.L. 16-21-26 (8)].

Instruction in the Prevention of Bullying: Students and staff shall be given instruction in the District's Policy and Regulations against bullying. This instruction shall include discouraging and preventing bullying, how to file a complaint, and how to take disciplinary actions against those who commit acts of bullying.

Responsibility of Students: Students who observe the act of bullying or who have reasonable grounds to believe that bullying is taking place are obligated to report the bullying to school authorities. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. The victim of the bullying shall however, not be subject to discipline for failure to report the bullying.

Investigation of Bullying: The principal or his or her designee shall investigate all allegations of bullying. If the allegation is found to be credible, appropriate disciplinary sanctions, subject to appropriate due process procedures, will be imposed. The investigation will include an assessment of the effect the bullying has had on the victim.

Help for the Victim of the Bullying: If the assessment determines the victim's mental health has been placed at risk, appropriate referrals will be made. If the bullying included a violent criminal offense, the victim will be informed of any school transfer rights he or she may have under the Federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. Refer to bullying complaint form.

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Prohibiting Against Retaliation: Retaliation or threats of retaliation in any form designed to intimidate the victim of bullying, those who are witnesses to bullying, or those investigating the incident of bullying shall not be tolerated. In most cases retaliation or threat of retaliation will result in imposition of a short or long-term school suspension, and in appropriate cases, referrals to the policy [R.I.G.L. 11-42-2. Extortion and Blackmail] [R.I.G.L. 59-2 Stalking Prohibited]. Incidence of retaliation will automatically be referred to the school resource officer.

Prohibiting Against False Report of Bullying: False reports concerning bullying will be subject to appropriate school discipline, including short and long term suspension from school.

Individualized School Safety Plan: If a student is the victim of serious or persistent bullying, the principal of the school will prepare a written school safety plan outlining what steps will be taken to provide the student with a safe educational environment. This plan will be developed, if possible, with input from the parents of the student. Staff members who are to implement the plan will help formulate it.

Police Notification: When the bullying involves conduct that involves criminal law, the police will be notified.

Mediation Board: The principal of each school in the district of Lincoln may establish a Mediation Board to resolve complaints of bullying in circumstances where mediation may provide an appropriate remedy. The Mediation Board may, when appropriate, include students.

Voluntary Participation in Mediation: No student who is the victim of bullying shall be required to participate in mediation or to accept any apology tendered by the bullying student. The decision of a victim of bullying not to participate in a mediation program shall not diminish the obligation of the school to impose discipline against the student who has committed the act of bullying.

Bullying Prevention Task Force: The principal in each school in this district shall establish a Bullying Prevention Task Force. This Task Force may include parents, school staff, and law enforcement officers, as well as community members and, if age allows, students. The purpose of this Task Force will be to develop policies and programs to educate students and staff about the harm caused by bullying. The Task Force may also create programs to prevent or diminish bullying. The program recommendations of the Task Force shall be subject to review by the School Committee before programs are implemented. The duties of the Bullying Prevention Task Force may be assigned to the school's student intervention team [R.I.G.L. 16-7.1-2] or the school's School Improvement Team [R.I.G.L. 16-53.1-2].

School Atmosphere: School staff at all times will model correct and courteous behavior to each other, to students, and to visitors to the school. Abusive or humiliating language or demeanor will not be accepted. An effort will be made to ensure that each student is well known by at least one certified teacher so that the student will have someone to turn to if a bullying situation develops. To the extent possible the influence of cliques and other exclusive school groupings will be diminished by the creation of a range of inclusive school activities in which students will be encouraged to participate [R.I.G.L. 16-38-4. Exclusive clubs].

Social Skills Training: The school health program and school counseling services will include appropriate social skills training to help students avoid isolation and to help them interact in a healthy manner.

Reports to the Superintendent and to the School Committee: School principals will provide the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee with a quarterly report on incidents of bullying which have taken place in the

schools under their respective supervision. This report will include a statement describing what remedial action has been taken to address bullying. These quarterly reports will be filed in addition to any of the individual filed complaints. See attached incident report.

Adopted: November 22, 2004
Amended:

TOWN OF LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE, Lincoln, Rhode Island

HARASSMENT/BULLYING COMPLAINT FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Date(s) of Alleged Incident(s) _____

Name of alleged Harasser/Bully _____ Position/Grade _____

Description of event(s) _____

Reported Incident(s) to: _____ Date: _____

Signed _____ Date: _____

(Complainant)

DATE	INTERVENTION	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE

Administrator/Supervisor

Date Received _____

Intervention Personnel

Date Received _____

Superintendent of Schools

Date Received _____

HARASSMENT/BULLYING COMPLAINT RESOLUTION FORM

Name of Complainant: _____

Position: _____

Complaint Filed Against: _____

Position: _____

Investigation Indicates:

Informally at the building level

Formally at the district level

Signatures indicate agreement and acceptance of the stated resolution and that all parties have received a copy of this form, complaint form and the investigation report.

Complainant _____

Date _____

Accused Party _____

Date _____

Administrator _____

Date _____

Completed Complaint Form is to be attached to this Resolution Form.