

Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was approved by the LSRHS School Committee on December 21, 2010, and submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for review. The plan was reviewed and revised by the administrative team in July 2011. This Plan will be reviewed and updated at least biennially, as mandated by M.G.L. c. 71, § 15.

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I. LEADERSHIP

- A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. The LSRHS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (henceforth “the Plan”) has been created by the LSRHS School Climate Committee, with input from the School Council. The School Climate Committee includes the School Violence Prevention Coordinator, the Coordinator of the Wellness Department, the three Housemasters, members of the METCO Task Force, the Gay Straight Alliance Advisor, and other interested faculty. The Plan was presented for public comment both on the LSRHS website and in a presentation Wednesday Dec 1, 2010 at L-S. The Plan was presented to the School Committee December 7, 2010 for final approval.
- B. Assessing needs and resources. The School Climate Committee is a group of faculty and administrators charged with analyzing and improving the climate of the school. The School Climate Committee seeks to prevent and respond to bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, the School Climate Committee will collect data from the Metro-west Adolescent Behavior Survey, the L-S Safety and Climate Survey, the school mediation program, incidents in the IPass database, the METCO Task Force survey on racial perceptions, and surveys of parents, students, and staff to assess the current school climate and the adequacy of our current programs. This information will help to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services. Policies and procedures will be reviewed and L-S Discipline Code updated to reflect these changes
- C. Planning and oversight. According to the Plan, the Housemasters and the Director of the Central Program will receive reports on bullying. The School Climate committee will collect and analyze data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes. The Housemasters and the Director of the Central Program will also track incident reports. The School Climate Committee will plan the ongoing professional development that is required by the law. The School Climate Committee, under the leadership of the Violence Prevention Coordinator and members of the Counseling Department will assess the supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors. The School Climate Committee, in conjunction with faculty members from the relevant disciplines, will create or choose, and then help to implement, anti-bullying curricula. The Housemasters, together with the Educational Technology Coordinator, will revise the Discipline Code and examine school policies on internet safety. The School Council will organize parent outreach and draft parent information materials. Finally, the Administrative Team, in conjunction with the School Climate Committee, will review and update the Plan each year,
- D. Developing priority statements. The school's Core Values -- Fostering of Cooperative and Caring Relationships, Respect for Human Differences, and the Development and Maintenance of a Purposeful and Rigorous Academic Program -- constitute the foundation of the operation of Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School. When members of the L-S community witness behaviors which violate these tenets, they are expected to ACT- Acknowledge their discomfort (A), and care enough about the school community (C) to take appropriate action (T).

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II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school.
- B. Ongoing professional development Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:
- (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
 - (ii) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
 - (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
 - (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
 - (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
 - (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities.

L-S faculty and administrators have been trained, and are periodically retrained, in the Visions Frameworks, and have worked to incorporate them into the culture of the school. These frameworks include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

- C. Written notice to staff. The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

- A. Identifying resources. The House System is organized to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. South, West, and East House each have 2.5 guidance counselors and one clinical counselor, in addition to a House Assistant, Campus Aide, and Housemaster. (Central House has one counselor, a house assistant, three House teachers and a Director.) This system supports the creation of a positive school environment by focusing on early interventions and providing appropriate services to the students in each house. The Violence Prevention Coordinator runs a mediation program which serves students and adults, and also trains students in mediation and violence prevention. Many faculty have taken part in Visions trainings, still others are Visions trainers. Students engage in many extracurricular activities (Breaking Barriers, Colors, Best Buddies) which promote tolerance. The School Climate Committee will recommend other resources as needed, based on the results of their needs assessment.
- B. Counseling and other services. House personnel and/or the violence prevention coordinator will create safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation. Social skills programs to prevent bullying are offered through collaboration between Special Education and the Counseling Department. Housemasters/the Central Director, the counseling staff, and the Violence Prevention Coordinator offer education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors.
- C. Students with disabilities. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing
- D. Referral to outside services. Students and families are referred appropriate outside services through the students' guidance counselors, or the Office of Student Services.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
 - helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
 - emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
 - enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
 - engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Each year, in their classes, students and teachers will have an opportunity to review the

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student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan together, at the same time the Discipline Code is discussed.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches, which are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment, are standard practice at L-S:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

These practices are continually reinforced through department work, the evaluation system, and on-going focused professional development.

V. **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation 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. Staff members are required to report any instance of bullying or retaliation they become aware of or witnesses to an administrator. Reports may be made anonymously. There are a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including:

- The online Safety Reporting Form
- An email address for the Violence Prevention Coordinator
- A mailbox for the Violence Prevention Coordinator

A copy of the Safety Reporting Form will be included in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians, made available in the Main Office, the House Offices, and the Health Suite. It will also be posted on the school website. Reports may also be made directly to the Housemasters/Director of Central, either in person or by telephone.

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent/Principal's office will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

- Reporting by Staff: When staff members witness or become aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation, they will report it immediately to an administrator.

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Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others: We expect students, parents, guardians, and others who witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation to report it to a staff member. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. The Housemasters and the Director of Central will be responsible for investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation. Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, they will take steps to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target, or any witness or informant. Additional steps to promote safety during and after the investigation, will be taken as necessary.

C. Obligations to Notify Others

1. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Housemasters or the Director of Central will promptly call the parents or guardians of both the targeted person and the aggressor about the incident, and of the procedures for responding to it, as laid out by the L-S Discipline code and this Plan. There may be circumstances in which the Housemasters or the Director of Central contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

2. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Housemasters or the Director of Central first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

3. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Administrative Team has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Housemaster or the Director of Central will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and the MOU. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Housemaster or the Director of Central shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

D. Investigation. The Housemaster or the Director of Central will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. During the investigation the alleged aggressor, targeted person, and witnesses will be reminded that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, in accordance with the L-S Discipline Code. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, all staff members will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Housemaster or the Director of Central will maintain a written record of the investigation. Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation

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will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

- E. Determinations. The Housemaster or the Director of Central will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the targeted person is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The Housemaster or the Director of Central will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the targeted person and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Housemaster or the Director of Central cannot report specific information to the targeted person's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

- F. Responses to Bullying Consequences for bullying behavior will be assigned in accordance to the appropriate provisions of the L-S Discipline Code. Reports of bullying will always be addressed with a meeting of the student and Housemaster and contact with the parent/guardian. Disciplinary actions will range from a warning to suspension to exclusion from school depending upon the severity of the offense, and may include police involvement as appropriate. Aggressors may also be mandated to participate in counseling an educational anti-bullying group. Disciplinary actions will be progressive in nature. Aggressors who retaliate against targets, reporters, or witnesses will face suspension, and police involvement as appropriate. Students who knowingly falsely accuse others of bullying or retaliation will be subject to the same progressive disciplinary actions as others who engage in bullying behavior. House personnel and/or the violence prevention coordinator will create safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation. Social skills programs to prevent bullying are offered through collaboration between Special Education and the Counseling Department. Housemasters/the Central Director, the counseling staff, and the Violence Prevention Coordinator offer education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors.

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. The school communicates with parents and guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum, the dynamics of bullying, and online safety against cyberbullying. This is done in the beginning of the school year letter sent to all families, which conveys information that each student receives in opening meetings, where bullying prevention efforts are highlighted. This information is reinforced for all ninth grade parents at our annual Ninth Grade Parent Night and to all parents at our annual Back To School Night.

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- B. L-S will offer occasional education programs for parents and guardians that focus on school climate and bullying prevention. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the LSPO, the School Council, the School Climate Group (in conjunction with our School Climate Consultant, Stan Davis), and the Lincoln and Sudbury Public Schools. Bullying and cyberbullying is also addressed in the school's biannual public presentation of the Youth Risk Behavior Data and accompanying forum. Bullying Prevention and explaining the school's bullying prevention initiatives is also part of the School Council's Parent-to-Parent outreach.
- C. Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about school climate initiatives and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in hard copy and electronic formats.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

As stated in the L-S Discipline Code, acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, 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 a school district or school, if the acts create 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.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. The school protects the anonymity of those who report or provide information about bullying. Aggressors and their parent/guardians will be notified verbally and in writing that students who retaliate against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying will face suspension, or even exclusion from school depending upon the severity of the offense, and police involvement as appropriate.

School bullying prohibitions also apply to adults. Adults who engage in these behaviors on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities may be asked to leave the premises. L-S administrators shall involve local law enforcement as appropriate.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below. Schools or districts may add specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but may not alter their meaning or scope. Plans may also include additional definitions that are aligned with local policies and procedures.

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Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, 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, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.