

Lehigh Area School District
1000 Union Street
Lehigh, PA 18235

Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Anti-Bullying
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Legal	<u>1. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A</u> <u>2. 24 P.S. 1302-A</u> 3. Pol. 218 4. Pol. 233 <u>5. 20 U.S.C. 1232g</u> <u>22 PA Code 12.3</u> Pol. 000 Pol. 236 Pol. 248
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Purpose

The Lehigh Area School District is committed to providing all students and employees with the right to a safe and civil educational environment, free from harassment or bullying. Lehigh Area School District recognizes that bullying interferes with the learning process, and may present an obstacle to the academic, vocational, and social/emotional development of students.

Definition

Bullying shall be defined as unwelcome verbal, written, electronic (cyber) and/or physical conduct directed toward another person. This may include a wide variety of behaviors, with deliberate intent to hurt, embarrass, or humiliate the other person. Researchers have identified four (4) forms of bullying including, but not limited to:[1]

1. **Physical** - the most commonly known form; including hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing and taking personal belongings.
2. **Verbal** - includes taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, racist remarks, homophobic remarks, and making threats.

3. **Psychological or Relational** - involves spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, and engaging in social exclusion or intimidation.
4. **Cyberbullying** - forms of verbal and psychological bullying may also occur on the Internet through e-mail, text-messaging, or personal profile web sites such as MySpace, SpaceBook, etc. **Cyberbullying** includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher or employee of the district by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory e-mail messages, instant messages, cell phone text messages, digital pictures or images, or web site postings, including blogs. All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable and, to the extent that such actions are disruptive of the education process of the district, offenders shall be the subject of appropriate discipline.

Bullying shall mean unwelcome verbal, written, electronic (cyber) or physical conduct directed at a person(s) by a student that has the intent of or effect of:[1]

1. Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student or employee.
2. Damaging, extorting or taking a student's or employee's personal property.
3. Placing a student or employee in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm.
4. Placing a student or employee in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property.
5. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or employee's work environment.

The term **bullying** and **cyberbullying** shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

Authority

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to bully another person on district property, at any school activity, or on the way to or from school. The school district will not tolerate any acts of bullying occurring on school district property, at school-sponsored activities scheduled on or off school property, or during the time a student necessarily spends traveling to and from school or school-sponsored activities.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop administrative procedures to increase the awareness of the problems of bullying, and train teachers to effectively intervene if bullying is witnessed in their presence or brought to their attention.

Intervention

Teachers and other staff, including, but not limited to secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, support personnel, etc., who observe acts of bullying shall take reasonable steps to intervene to stop such conduct, unless intervention would threaten a staff member's safety. The nature of the intervention will vary depending upon the age of the person(s) involved, both the victim and aggressor, the severity of the bullying and the student's involvement in prior acts

of bullying. The purpose of the intervention is to take prompt remedial steps to ensure observed acts of bullying cease and to teach students that bullying is not acceptable behavior.

Each staff member shall be responsible to maintain an educational environment free of bullying and cyberbullying.

Each staff member shall be responsible to respect the rights of his/her fellow students and to ensure an atmosphere free from all forms of bullying and cyberbullying.

Students shall be encouraged to report bullying or cyberbullying complaints to district employees.

All employees who receive a bullying or cyberbullying complaint shall follow the procedures established by the district. If the behavior is found to meet the definition of bullying or cyberbullying, written documentation must be submitted to the building principal.

The building principal or his/her designee will inform parents/guardians of the victim and person accused.

Guidelines

Student, Parent/Guardian and Employee Reporting

The school district encourages all students and parents/guardians who become aware of any act of bullying to immediately report that conduct. Students shall report acts of bullying to their teachers, building principal or other school employees supervising school-sponsored activities.

Parents/Guardians shall contact the building principal to report acts of bullying. Reports from parents/guardians and/or students of bullying occurring outside of school-related hours shall be investigated when it is impacting school safety or the educational environment. Appropriate steps shall be taken to ensure students' safety.

If staff cannot reasonably remediate acts of bullying through their own intervention, they should report the bullying to the building principal. Other school employees who observe acts of bullying shall report that conduct to the building principal.

Investigation Procedures

Each building principal or designee is authorized to investigate reports of bullying brought to their attention by students, parents/guardians or school employees. Any investigation of a report may include meetings with students, parents/guardians, or employees, a review of student records, and other reasonable efforts to better understand the facts surrounding a reported incident.

Consequences/Discipline

Consequences for students who are found to have bullied others may include counseling, a parent/guardian conference, detention, suspension, expulsion, a loss of school privileges and/or exclusion from school-sponsored activities. All incidents of bullying will be documented.[2][3][4]

Depending upon the severity of a particular situation, the building principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. Such steps may include the implementation of a safety plan; separating and supervising the students involved; providing employee support for students as needed; reporting incidents to law enforcement, if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with parents/guardians.

Confidentiality

The Lehigh Area School District recognizes that both the complaining student and the alleged bully/extorter have a strong interest in maintaining the confidentiality of the allegations and relations information. The privacy of the complaining student, the individual (s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses will be respected as much as possible, consistent with legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any discovery or disclosure obligations. As limited by FERPA protections, the principal or his/her designee may inform the complaining students/parents/guardians of the outcome of the investigation.[5]

Reprisal

Any student who retaliates against another student for reporting bullying or extortion or for assisting or testifying in the investigation or hearing may be subject to disciplinary action.

Last Modified by Melissa Wagner on August 11, 2016