

BULLYING & HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN POLICY

Lawrence Family Development Charter School (LFDCS) is committed to maintaining a school environment where students and staff members, including and not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals, are free from bullying, harassment and cyberbullying and the effects thereof. Certain individuals may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

In consultation with teachers, school staff, its wellness committee, school Board Trustees (volunteers), administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement (Lawrence Police Department), students, parents and guardians, LFDCS has identified the following steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community and provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment or teasing. LFDCS will notify parent(s), guardian(s) and/or staff members who have been targets of bullying of the availability of the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education's (ESEs) problem resolution system and will assist these parent(s), guardian(s) and/or staff member(s) in understanding the problem resolution process.

Data reporting and collection obligations (SSDR reports) require LFDCS to collect and report the following data to ESE: 1) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliations; 2) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying and retaliation; 3) the number of students and/or staff members disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation and 4) other information required by ESE who in turn will analyze the data and issue a report annually to the legislature which contains statewide aggregated data on the nature and frequency of bullying in schools.

At least once every four years beginning in SY'2018-2019, LFDCS will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in our school. LFDCS will use survey results to assess the effectiveness of bullying prevention curricula and instruction and identify long-term trends and areas of improvement and will make its findings available to school officials.

After the administration of a bullying survey to grades 4-8 and following a process as listed above for input on the policy, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the Plan) will be adopted by the LFDCS School Board as stated herein. The LFDCS Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the Principal or Head of School as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee will be responsible for investigating the report and other steps necessary to implement the Plan. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the President of the Board of Trustees or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target.

Acts of bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited:

- a. 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
- b. 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 witness(es), infringes on their rights at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

A. Definitions

Aggressor is a student or a member of school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation towards a student.

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

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

Cyberbullying 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 cyberbullying.

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 or staff member who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

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

Target is a student or staff member against whom bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

B. Bullying and Retaliation Are Prohibited and Will Lead to Discipline

LFDCS absolutely prohibits bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation as defined above. Students and/or staff members who engage in bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action; however, disciplinary action taken must balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. The range of disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following: verbal warnings, written warnings, reprimands, detentions, short-term or long-term suspensions or expulsions from school as determined by the Principal or designee and/or LFDCS Board, subject to applicable procedural requirements. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent the school administration and/or LFDCS Board from taking disciplinary action against a student or staff member for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying or cyberbullying, as defined above, but never the less is inappropriate for the school environment.

C. Annual Staff Training on the Plan

Annually during in-service professional development week, LFDCS trains every staff member in recognizing the signs of bullying and how/when to report bullying to an administrator when a student, staff member or student discloses bullying. They also learn about bullying's prevalence through its statistics and recognizing the signs of bullying. A component of Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), a mandatory training for all staff during in-service professional development week, helps staff focus on preventing student conflict by managing the learning environment, minimizing negative behaviors and recognizing when a student may be starting to present escalated behaviors. Most importantly, this includes how to de-escalate a situation before it disrupts and affects other students. This training for all LFDCS staff on the Plan includes 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 or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

To further bullying prevention and in an effort to address social-emotional learning, LFDCS has adopted *The Leader in Me* program. This approach empowers educators with effective practices and tools to teach leadership to every student and create a culture of student empowerment. Through the learning, practicing and implementation of seven healthy habits, students learn how to become a community of learners where they support, not bully, each other. As part of this program, parents learn about *The Leader in Me* at Board Meetings, Parent Advisory Council meetings and Parent Coffees, and are given the seven healthy habits to use at home (translated).

D. Ongoing Professional Development

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication and respect for differences.

Professional development builds the skills of staff members to prevent, identify and respond to

bullying. As required by M.G.L.c.71,§37O, the content of LFDCS 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 among a target and witness(es) to the bullying;
- iv. research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students and/or staff members who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- v. information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- vi. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development addresses ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This includes a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development. Additional areas identified by LFDCS for professional development 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;
- engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting and bullying behaviors.

E. Access to Resources and Services

LFDCS promotes a positive school climate by ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of the target, their family and others are addressed. In order to enhance LFDCS's capacity to prevent, intervene early and respond effectively to bullying, below are strategies and services which reflect understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provides approaches to addressing the needs of targets.

LFDCS plans and strategies include classroom lessons on wellness, citizenship and leadership, and as needed, the school refers students for appropriate services who are targets and family members of those students as reflected in this Plan.

LFDCS uses significant grant resources to implement a school-wide *The Leader in Me* program to engage students, staff and families in wellness in order to avoid incidents of bullying and harassment.

This includes a review of current staffing and professional development programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services. *The Leader in Me* program includes three *The Leader in Me* steering committee leaders and three *The Leader in Me* committee members selected from each of the three buildings. These members help to shape the mapping of resources and develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. Connected to *The Leader in Me* efforts are new curricula, the engagement of staff, establishing of safety planning and the engagement of external agencies, such as *BlueSkies Wellness*, to provide services including Community Service Agencies (CSAs) for Medicaid eligible students.

Summer in-service safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation helps all school staff to understand and offer social skills programs to prevent bullying by offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. In the case of students with disabilities and as required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines if a 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 considers what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

Through LFDCS's tier 3 process students involved with bullying are referred for outside services such as *BlueSkies Wellness*, which provides direct services at LFDCS.

F. Academic and Non-Academic Activities

LFDCS provides age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the curricula through *The Leader in Me* program and through our Physical Education and Science curricula. Academic and non-academic curricula is evidence-based as part of instruction for classroom approaches, whole school initiatives and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

Resources from the Department's website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/bullying/> include social and emotional learning guidelines. Specific bullying prevention approaches to develop skills include:

- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, 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.

The Leader in Me wellness initiative teaches students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and assists all school staff to:

- set clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- create safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- use appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- use positive behavioral supports;
- encourage adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- model, teach, and reward pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- use positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- use the Internet safely; and
- support students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

G. Collaboration with Families

Resources for families and communication at events are essential aspects of effective collaboration. LFDCS informs parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula including: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support LFDCS; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyberbullying. As part of its long history of parent engagement, LFDCS uses collaboration with parents leading to appropriate responses to bullying based on age, climate, socio-economic factors and linguistic and cultural make-up of students and parents. *The Leader in Me* and other bullying prevention efforts include strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of LFDCS to prevent and respond to bullying. These programs are offered in collaboration with School Site Council meetings, Special Education Parent Advisory Council meetings and Parent coffees.

H. Notification Requirements

Each year LFDCS will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students and staff members about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety (also available on our website at www.lfdcs.org). LFDCS will send parents written notice each year about the Plan and LFDCS's Internet Safety Policy included in the Parent/Student Handbook. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians are available in the language(s) most prevalent among parent(s), guardian(s) and staff members and posted on its website.

Consistent with state and federal laws and the policies of LFDCS, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school or any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language or prior academic achievement. Nothing in the Plan prevents the LFDCS 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 LFDCS to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L.A. 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.

The LFDCS Employee Manual provides annual written notice with sign off on aggressive behavior, bullying and retaliation which are strictly prohibited.

I. Problem Resolution System

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws to include (g) (v): The Plan shall inform parents or guardians of the target about the Department's problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. This information will be made available in both hard copy and electronic formats:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Superintendent's office.

J. Relationship to Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of LFDCS, 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, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, development or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. 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 LFDCS to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L.c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

K. Safety

The Principal or designee will create a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation of a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

L. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and 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 or in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the Principal or designee, or to the Superintendent or designee when the Principal or Head of School is the alleged aggressor, or to the President of the School Board or designee when the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. LFDCS will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Report .

LFDCS will: 1) include a copy of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Report in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available at the Receptionist’s desk, the school nurse’s office, and other locations determined by the Principal or designee; and 3) posted on the school’s website. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Report will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of student(s) and parent(s) or guardian(s).

Reporting by School Staff: An LFDCS staff member will report immediately to the Principal or designee, or to the Superintendent or designee when the Principal or the Head of School is the alleged aggressor, or to the President of the School Board or designee when the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report as provided does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff: LFDCS has policies and procedures to address how it responds and resolves bullying of a student by a school staff member. These address safety planning, notification to parent or guardians and others, investigation and response areas that are addressed when a student is alleged to have been bullied by another student. As needed, LFDCS seeks legal counsel to develop and administer these policies and procedures. Of key importance are the steps of investigation, the need for the aggressor,

target and witnesses to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. All data related to bullying, aggression and harassment are tracked in the LFDCS student management system and reported swiftly via SIF to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Reporting by Students, Parents/Guardians and Others: LFDCS expects students, parents/guardians and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student or staff member to report it to the school Principal or designee or Superintendent or designee when the Principal or Head of School is the alleged aggressor.

Any individual may make an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation; however, no disciplinary action may be taken against a student or staff member solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student or staff member who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action. 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. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the Principal or designee, or the Superintendent or designee when the Principal or assistant Principal or the President of the School board when the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor.

Reporting to Parents/Guardians: Upon determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian of the target and or the student aggressor of this finding and of the school's procedures for responding to it. If the alleged target and alleged aggressor attend different schools, the Principal receiving the report shall inform the Principal of the other student's school or school staff's school, who shall notify the student's parents or staff member of the report and procedures. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Reporting to Local Law Enforcement: At any point after the receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, or during or after an investigation, if the school Principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that the incident may involve criminal charges which may be pursued against the aggressor, the school Principal or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally-established agreement with the local law enforcement agency. In addition, if an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the Superintendent of the Lawrence Family Development Charter School or designee will notify local law enforcement if they believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

In making this determination, the Principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the Principal or designee deems appropriate.

Reporting to Administrator of Another School District or School: If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students or staff members from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the Principal or designee 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.

M. Investigation

The school Principal or designee shall investigate promptly a report of bullying or retaliation, giving consideration to all circumstances at hand, including the nature of the allegations, the staff member and the ages of the students involved. The following are general guidelines for responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. The guidelines will be adapted as necessary to respond appropriately to the complaint.

Pre-Investigation: Even before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, school personnel will consider whether there is a need to take immediate steps to support the alleged target and/or protect the alleged target from further potential incidents of concern. In taking any such action, however, the rights of both the alleged target and alleged aggressor must be considered.

Written statement of the complaint: The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gathering information from the complainant, including such matters as: what specifically happened, who committed the alleged acts, who was present or may have information about the events, when the events occurred (date, time of day) and where the events occurred. It is helpful to have these facts in writing. The Principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

If age appropriate, the complainant may be asked to put the complaint in writing and to sign and date it. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to write a complaint, the investigator will record the allegations, read them to the complainant to confirm accuracy and ask the complainant to sign the document. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to sign, the investigator may sign and date the document her/himself.

Interviews: Once the allegations of the complainant are established, the investigator will gather other evidence, which often involves interviews of the alleged aggressor and/or other witnesses. If appropriate, the investigator should remind the alleged aggressor and witnesses that retaliation against persons whom they believe might have reported the incidents or cooperated with the investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

N. Determination

The Principal or designee 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 target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The Principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

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 student 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 Principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target 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 Principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target'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.

The Principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

O. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the Principal or designee determines that a student or staff member knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student or staff member may be subject to disciplinary action.

P. Responses to Bullying

If bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the school will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. As with the investigation, the response will be individually tailored to all of the circumstances, including the nature of the conduct and the age of the students involved and/or the staff member.

In addition to taking disciplinary action, the following are examples of steps that may be taken to prevent the recurrence of bullying or retaliation:

- hold parent conferences;
- transfer a staff member or a student's classroom or school;
- limit or deny staff or student access to a part, or area, of a school;
- enhance adult supervision on school premises;
- provide relevant educational activities for staff members or individual students or groups of students. Nurses and others in the school setting who have been trained to work with students or staff members on interpersonal issues may be helpful in providing such programs.
- provide a personalized Action Plan and directives for future conduct, including providing the target with a process for reporting any concerns about future conduct immediately. It is critical to involve the student and/or staff member in creating an action plan that involves a reporting process that works for that particular student and/or staff member.
- arrange for communication between the parties, if appropriate, to assist them in resolving issues which have arisen between them (such an approach will be used cautiously since communication can sometimes exacerbate, rather than alleviate, the target's concerns and since the conduct often involves an imbalance of power.)
- provide counseling (or other appropriate services) or referral to such services for the target and/or the aggressor and/or for appropriate family members of said students and/or staff member.
- develop safety plans, provide social skills programs and refer to outside services as needed.
- provide discipline procedures for students with disabilities as governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

Q. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the Principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

R. Skill-building Approaches

Upon the Principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (d) (v). Skill-building approaches that the Principal or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and non-academic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for evaluation.

S. Closing the Complaint and Possible Follow-Up

If a complaint is substantiated, the Principal or designee will promptly provide notice to the parent/guardian of the target and/or target and the aggressor. Notice will indicate what action is being taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation. Specific information about disciplinary action taken generally will not be released to the target's parents or guardians unless it involves a "stay away" or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

If appropriate, within a reasonable time period following closure of the complaint, the Principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been any recurrence of the prohibited conduct. LFDCS will retain a report of the complaint, containing the name of the complainant, the date of the complaint, investigator, school, a brief statement of the nature of the complaint, the outcome of the investigation and the action taken. If the parent(s) are not satisfied with the investigation, after meeting with the Principal or designee, they may then meet with the Superintendent and if still not satisfied, meet with the President of the LFDCS Board of Trustees.