

# LEHIGH LEARNING ACADEMY

## BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING PREVENTION AND SUPPORT

The Lehigh Learning Academy is committed to providing a safe, positive learning climate for students. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Lehigh Learning Academy to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and cyberbullying in any form are not tolerated. LLA staff remain committed to preventing this type of harmful activity during the school day and at school-related activities.

### **Definitions**

Pennsylvania anti-bullying laws include the following definitions of bullying and cyberbullying:

Bullying shall mean an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts:

1. directed at another student or students;
2. which occurs in a school setting;
3. that is severe, persistent, or pervasive; and
4. that has the effect of doing any of the following.
  - i. substantially interfering with a student's education;
  - ii. creating a threatening environment; or
  - iii. substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Cyberbullying shall mean bullying through the use of electronic technology or communication, including data, computer software, or online platforms regardless of their origin, using a device, system, network, Internet service, email, social media or other digital means, including artificial intelligence-generated or modified media, when the conduct meets the criteria of the definition of "bullying".

School Setting shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school.

1. Pennsylvania anti-bullying laws state that "a school entity shall not be prohibited from defining bullying and cyberbullying in such a way as to encompass acts that occur outside of a school setting if those acts meet the requirements of the definition of "bullying".

## **Delegation of Responsibility**

Each staff member shall be responsible for maintaining an educational environment free of bullying and cyberbullying.

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

Any staff member who receives a bullying or cyberbullying complaint shall gather information or seek administrative assistance to determine if bullying or cyberbullying has occurred. If the behavior is found to meet the definition of bullying or cyberbullying, the staff member must complete the appropriate written documentation and report the incident to the School Director.

The School Director, or his/her designee will inform the parents/legal guardians of the victim and the parents/legal guardians of the accused.

## **Complaint Procedure**

Strong partnerships and communication between students, parents/legal guardians and school staff are crucial in identifying and addressing instances of bullying, preventing future incidents, and providing support for students impacted by bullying behavior. Should a student or parent/legal guardian be aware of any act of bullying or cyberbullying committed by another student, he or she should immediately report the incident. Students are encouraged to report a complaint bullying or cyberbullying, orally or in writing to any staff member. If a parent initiates a complaint, the appropriate staff member will follow-up with the student.

The staff member will either gather information about the complaint or seek administrative assistance to determine if the alleged bullying or cyberbullying conduct occurred.

After the information has been gathered, the School Director shall be notified of the complaint. The School Director will determine the need for further investigation or the appropriate intervention, which may result in administrative discipline to ensure that the conduct ceases. If the behavior is found to meet the definition of bullying or cyberbullying, the School Director must complete the appropriate documentation.

## **Disciplinary Consequences**

A violation of this Policy shall subject the offending student to appropriate disciplinary action, consistent with the school discipline policy, which may include being placed Out-of-Program, suspension, expulsion, and/or notification to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

**Retaliation**

The Lehigh Learning Academy prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports a relevant act of bullying. The School Director will determine the consequences and remedial actions. Any violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to law enforcement.

**False Reports**

The School Director will determine the consequences and remedial actions for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Any violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to law enforcement.

**Publication**

A copy of this Policy shall be disseminated to all school staff and available in every classroom, displayed in the Main Office/entrance, and posted on the school's website. This policy shall be reviewed with students within 90 days after adoption and annually thereafter, reviewed by the school every three years, and submitted annually to PDE.