

## The Learning House

### Bullying Prevention Policy

“Bullying” includes “cyber-bullying” and is defined by the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7) as “any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property;
- causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health;
- substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or
- substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the school.”

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. “Cyber-bullying” includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this section. “Cyber-bullying” also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this section.

Bullying is a serious offense. It is contrary to State law and is prohibited at The Learning House as outlined in subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion]. Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the students' involvement in the incident and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within the 24-hour period. “Restorative measures” means a continuum of school-based

alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school. (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Learning House's Bullying Policy is consistent with all other policies of The Learning House.

### **Procedure**

Bullying of any type should be reported immediately. Students, staff and parents may report bullying directly to the following people by calling the main number (847-459-8330), calling their cell numbers (see below) or emailing them:

Matt Fisher  
Program Director  
847-212-7282

[mattf@thelearninghouse.net](mailto:mattf@thelearninghouse.net)

Tom Brubaker  
Educational Director  
630-244-4704

[tomb@thelearninghouse.net](mailto:tomb@thelearninghouse.net)

Kevin Barmantje  
Director of Operations  
630-212-1893

[kevinb@thelearninghouse.net](mailto:kevinb@thelearninghouse.net)

Any student, staff member or adult can report bullying using the contact information above. However, if it is more expeditious or appropriate to report it to another member of the staff, that staff member should report it immediately to the persons listed above. Any reprisal or act of retaliation against a person for reporting bullying is prohibited and can be treated as bullying with accompanying consequences and remedial actions. Likewise, knowingly making a false accusation of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying is prohibited and any person(s) who does so will incur consequences and appropriate remediation for their actions.

Once bullying has been reported, all reasonable efforts will be made to complete the investigation within 10 school days of the receipt of the bullying report. (Anonymous reports of bullying follow the same procedure. However, consequences cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.) During an investigation, parents of all students involved in the incident will be promptly informed, including the role their child played in the incident and a discussion of the investigation findings and actions to be taken. Available school social work, counseling and psychological services, as well as other interventions and restorative measures, should also be shared with parents. Please note some matters in an investigation are confidential and may not be shared.

## **Interventions and Restorative Measures**

The Learning House employs a wide variety of interventions and restorative measures including a continuum of school-based alternatives, adapted to school, community and individual needs. They are designed to contribute to maintaining school safety and protecting the integrity of the learning environment. The goal is to teach students skills to be successful in school and society by building and restoring relationships. The likelihood of future disruptions are reduced by balancing accountability with the behavioral needs of students to keep them in school.

Interventions and restorative measures specific to The Learning House include, but are not limited to, the following individual and school-wide programs and activities:

- Curriculum topics on anti-bullying
- Staff and student training on bullying recognition and intervention
- Individual student counseling
- Peer mediation
- Anger management groups
- Class schedule adjustments
- Adjustments to lunch privileges
- Suspensions (in-school and out)

Regular evaluation and assessment of this bullying policy will include frequency of victimization, types of bullying utilized, observations of school safety (by students, staff and parents), identification of school areas where bullying occurs and bystander intervention or participation.

Note: Whenever a bullying incident occurs at The Learning House, since it involves a student with an IEP, a meeting should be scheduled to review any relationships to the student's disability, educational needs and services as related the IEP. Specific language from the U.S. Department of Education states: *Ultimately, unless it is clear from the school's investigation into the bullying conduct that there was no effect on the student with a disability's receipt of FAPE, the school should, as a best practice, promptly convene the IEP team to determine whether, and to what extent: (1) the student's educational needs have changed; (2) the bullying impacted the student's receipt of IDEA FAPE services; and (3) additional or different services, if any, are needed, and to ensure any needed changes are made promptly. By doing so, the school will be in the best position to ensure the student's ongoing receipt of FAPE.*

This document was approved by a range of stakeholders, including students, parents, referring district representatives and staff members of The Learning House. As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating this policy, The Learning House will collect data annually that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at the school; identification of areas of the school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The Learning House may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be made available on the internet website as an addendum to the policy and will additionally be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

This document can be found on our website ([thelearninghouse.net](http://thelearninghouse.net)) and within The Learning House Policy Manual. It is also provided to students and their parents at the time of intake and

is reviewed and redistributed annually during Parent-Teacher-Student conferences held in January. This policy is also provided to new employees at The Learning House along with all other TLH policies.