



LMSD POLICY NOTIFICATION

Lower Merion School District Policy Prohibiting Discriminatory Harassment, Bullying, and Hazing

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I BELIEVE MY CHILD IS A VICTIM OF DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT, BULLYING, & HAZING-TYPE BEHAVIORS?

In Short: Please Report.

We recognize that while we strive to maintain a culture and climate free of such behaviors, there may be times when we fall short of this goal. Thus, it is important for you to report your concern to your building principal, assistant principal, and/or school counselor. Alternatively, you may report your concern directly to the Office of Equity and Compliance at 610-645-1928 or baskerla@lmsd.org, or the Superintendent at 610-645-1930, or by completing a reporting form at <https://www.lmsd.org/contact-us/reporting>.



FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT, PLEASE GO TO:
<https://www.lmsd.org/about-lmsd/title-ix>

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INTRODUCTION

- There are many ways in which the District endeavors to cultivate a climate of inclusivity through instructional practices and curriculum, counseling and conversation, and building relationships between and among students, families, and staff.
- Each of our schools offers an environment to learn about ourselves and others while growing to understand the value of diversity in our world.
- While these are not easy lessons, we believe deeply that they are important ones.
- A part of this work includes making explicit in our policies that certain behavior, such as harassment, bullying, and discrimination, will not be tolerated.

- This summary sheet is intended to focus on these prohibited behaviors and practices so that families are aware of these rules, reinforce with them with their children, and know what to do if they have questions or concerns.

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT POLICY REGARDING DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT, BULLYING & HAZING

- In order to maintain a learning environment which promotes self-worth and respect for the dignity and worth of others, it is the policy of the Lower Merion School District to prohibit sexual and other forms of harassment, based upon or relating to an individual's handicap/disability, race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity or national origin. For information about this and other types of prohibited behavior/treatment, please refer to the reverse side of this document.

- The purpose of the District's Student Rights and Responsibility policy and administrative regulation is to establish expectations that must be met in order for our schools to operate as safe and trusting communities for all students and families. The provisions relating to Discriminatory Harassment, Bullying and Hazing define the unwanted behavior; provide guidelines for prompt and appropriate responses to allegations, including investigations; and recommend prompt and appropriate remedies for any instances of harassment, bullying, or hazing. These steps are designed to promote and maintain a safe, positive and respectful learning environment.

- Within each school, students and families should feel comfortable reporting such concerns to a staff member, who will collect initial information about the concern. They will then refer the concern or complaint to the building administrator for further action. In addition to the building principal, our school counselors are available to assist students in talking about a concern they are having with peers or adults. They can counsel children, assist in investigating circumstances surrounding any incident and mediate disagreements.

- If a concern or complaint of discriminatory harassment, bullying or hazing involves a District employee, please direct that concern to the building principal, the Office of Equity and Compliance, or to the Office of the Superintendent so that immediate and appropriate action can be taken to address the situation.

TYPES OF PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

While the following list is not all-inclusive, a few key terms are defined below:

DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT means verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, age, disability, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or religion when such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment; and/or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational performance; and/or adversely affects a student's educational opportunities.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT is a specific form of discriminatory harassment which means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, gestures of a sexual nature, or display of materials which evoke responses not in keeping with the atmosphere intended for the classroom or the school environment.

BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following: (1) substantially interfering with a student's education; (2) creating a threatening environment; or (3) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

HAZING occurs any time a person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting or affiliating a student into or with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing a student's membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a student to endure any activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the student.

WHEN YOU REPORT AN INCIDENT OR SHARE INFORMATION REGARDING A CONCERN

When you report a concern, please anticipate that the administrator you contact will ask questions to gather information in order to determine a course of action. We would ask that you be prepared to share information regarding **who** is engaging in the concerning behavior, **who** is the target or victim of the concerning behavior, **where** and **when** did the incident(s) occur, and, giving as much detail as possible, **what** happened.

We understand that, at times, it is difficult to report a concern. It may be due to a worry of "getting someone in trouble" or a fear of retaliation. The District's policies specifically prohibit retaliation in connection with the asserting of a complaint or participating in an investigation. In addition, we take every effort to protect the confidentiality of an individual who has contacted us with a concern. We also want you to know that in situations arising between students, we work very hard to balance protecting the student who is the victim with efforts to ensure that the student engaging in the harmful behavior understands the impact of their conduct. For both students, there are a range of approaches that we use and there is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please visit the District's website (<http://www.lmsd.org/departments/board/policies/index.aspx>) where you can find the complete text of the District's policies and regulations, including the list of key policies noted below.

Policy/AR	Title	Policy/AR	Title
006	Civility	151	Student Athletics (Title IX Compliance)
101	Equity	235	Student Rights and Responsibilities (Discriminatory Harassment, Bullying and Hazing)
103	Equal Opportunity Program for School and Classroom Practices (for Employment <u>see</u> Policy/AR 301)	259	Transgender and Gender Diverse Students – Ensuring Equity and Nondiscrimination
114	Individualized Student Supports and Services	302	Standards of Conduct (Discriminatory Harassment; Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries with Students)
119	Controversial and Value Issues	831	Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries with Students
130	Guidelines Concerning Religion		