

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## OBJECTIVES

The student code of conduct meets the obligations of the Massachusetts General Laws and regulations that requires each school to adopt a set of rules and regulations designed to maintain order and mutual respect and maximize the potential use of the students and the school. Greater Lowell Technical High School's primary concern is that students who wish to learn can do so in an environment conducive to learning and that both prescriptive and disciplinary means be employed to deter those who would disrupt such an environment. Greater Lowell Technical High School reserves the right to impose discipline for any conduct which is unlawful or illegal, which is inappropriate in the school setting, which poses any threat of danger or harm to another, or which is disruptive to the educational environment. Greater Lowell Technical High School also reserves the right to impose a level of discipline which is appropriate to the conduct involved based on all of the facts and circumstances.

These policies and their provisions shall be applicable during regularly scheduled school hours on school grounds, as well as such other times and places, including, but not limited to: school sponsored events; field trips; and athletic and club activities where appropriate school personnel have jurisdiction over students. This includes any activities in which Greater Lowell Technical High School students participate as individuals or as groups that have in any way been facilitated by school personnel or where students may be identified as representing Greater Lowell Technical High School. Jurisdiction also includes students on, at or around school buses and school bus stops. In some instances, a student may be disciplined for out of school conduct. All of the provisions of the code of conduct apply in any and all applicable situations, even if those situations are not explicitly cited in a section of the code.

## BULLYING/HARASSMENT

### Philosophy

Greater Lowell Technical High School will not tolerate bullying/cyberbullying, harassment/sexual harassment, hazing and teen dating violence of any kind. Substantiated bullying/cyberbullying, harassment/sexual harassment, hazing and teen dating violence incidents may result in a warning, detention(s), and/or suspension(s).

### Definitions

#### Bullying

The repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property;
- ii. places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or

- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including intimidating an individual into taking action against his/her will, oral or written threats, teasing, put-downs, name-calling, stalking, threatening looks, gestures, actions, cruel rumors, false accusations and social isolation, based on a students' identification with any protected classes.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become victims of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, limited English proficiency, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take 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. For more details, please view Greater Lowell Technical High School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan on our school website at [www.gltech.org](http://www.gltech.org).

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in any part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communication, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include 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. Cyberbullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages or text messages, creating websites that ridicule, humiliate or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is defined as a course of conduct which annoys, threatens, intimidates, alarms, or puts a person in fear of their safety. Harassment is unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited behavior that demeans, threatens or offends the victim and results in a hostile environment for the victim.

### **Hostile Environment**

A hostile environment 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 the student's education.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

## **School Staff**

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

## **Victim**

Victim is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

## **Prohibiting the Practice of Bullying**

Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 of the General Laws provides as follows:

### **Section 5(b)**

Bullying shall be prohibited: (i) on school grounds, 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 (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

## **Reporting Bullying/Harassment or Retaliation**

Reports of bullying/harassment or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written.

The Greater Lowell Technical High School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, limited English proficiency, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, criminal record, disability, veteran status, genetic information, pregnancy or a condition related to said pregnancy, and homelessness in the administration of its educational and employment policies, programs, practices or activities, as defined and required by state and federal law. In addition, Greater Lowell Technical High School is committed to providing a work and learning environment free from sexual harassment and prohibits retaliation against any individual for making a complaint of conduct prohibited under this Notice, or for assisting or assisting in the investigation of such a complaint.

## 1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the Assistant Superintendent/ Principal or designee, or to the Superintendent-Director or designee when the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or the Assistant Principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the School Committee or designee when the Superintendent-Director is the alleged aggressor, on the electronic *Conflict Resolution Report Form*, when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying/harassment or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

## 2. Reporting by Students, Parents/Guardians, and Others

Greater Lowell Technical High School expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Assistant Superintendent- Principal or designee or Superintendent-Director or designee when the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or the Assistant Principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the School Committee or designee when the Superintendent-Director is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made oral or written. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. *The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form* can be found on the GLTHS website, in the School Business Office, the School Counseling Department, the Main Office and in Appendix A of this handbook. 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 appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying/harassment with a staff member, or with the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee, or Superintendent-Director or designee when the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or the Assistant Principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the School Committee or designee when the Superintendent-Director is the alleged aggressor.

## **Responding to Reports of Bullying/Harassment or Retaliation**

### 1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying/harassment or retaliation, the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee or designee, with assistance of appropriate support staff will take prompt steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged victim and/or to protect the alleged victim from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the victim 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 victim; and altering the aggressor’s class schedule and access to the victim. The Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/ School Committee or designee, will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee or designee, will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying/harassment

or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying/ harassment or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying/harassment or retaliation. The student will have the opportunity to meet with a Counselor in collaboration with the Assistant Principal or Dean of Students to determine the need and type of safety plan that will best meet his/her needs. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying and /or retaliation will be maintained to the extent possible given the school's obligation to investigate the matter.

## **2. Obligations to Notify Others**

### **a. Notice to parents or guardians**

Upon determining that bullying/harassment or retaliation has occurred, The Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee or designee, will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the victim(s) and the student aggressor(s) or aggressor(s) of the report and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the contacts to parent or guardians will occur prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00. The Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee/ Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee or designee, shall also inform the parent or guardian of the victim about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System and the process for accessing that system.

### **b. Notice to another school or district**

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal or his/her 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.

### **c. Notice to law enforcement**

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee or designee, has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Assistant Superintendent/Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee or designee, will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

## **3. Disciplinary Measures**

**a.** If the Assistant Superintendent-Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee or designee, decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Assistant Superintendent-Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee 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,

disciplinary policies and the school's code of conduct, up to and including long-term exclusion from school.

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 Assistant Superintendent-Principal or designee/Superintendent-Director or designee/School Committee or designee, determines that a student or staff knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student or staff may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the school's code of conduct/student handbook, including long-term exclusion from school for students and up to and including termination for employees.

**NOTE:** For more details, please view Greater Lowell Technical High School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan on our school website at [www.glttech.org](http://www.glttech.org).

## **BOMB SCARE**

Any student who communicates a false bomb scare will be subject to disciplinary action and will be referred to the proper authorities.

## **BUS CONDUCT**

While riding school buses, you are expected to be well behaved, courteous and concerned for the safety of you, as well as for others. School buses are an extension of the school and you are under the jurisdiction of the school while riding. The bus driver is the school official in charge and is responsible for your safe passage. The driver needs no distractions and your cooperation is necessary for him/her to effectively do this job.

This means that you must:

1. Arrive at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival of the bus.
2. Avoid rough-housing while waiting.
3. Not push or shove while getting on the bus.
4. Take your seat promptly on boarding the bus and remain seated.
5. Keep arms and head inside the bus.
6. Keep aisle clear of athletic equipment.
7. Not wear athletic shoes with cleats or spikes.
8. Not litter or deface the bus.
9. Not smoke, rough-house, or throw things.
10. Not use or tamper with emergency doors except in case of an emergency.
11. Not handle bus safety equipment except in case of an emergency.
12. When leaving the bus, cross the road at least 10 feet ahead so the driver can see you.
13. Look both ways for approaching vehicles when going towards or leaving the bus.
14. Stay away from the side of the bus as it stops or pulls away.
15. Call the School Business Administrator, if a bus route change is needed at 978-441-4900.