

LSSD HATE SPEECH AND BIAS INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY

The Lake Stevens School District is committed to creating a culture of dignity and inclusion for all students, staff, families, and community visitors to our buildings and events. We believe that our schools are places where engagement and belonging are essential for students and adults to learn and grow.

Hate Speech is any form of expression that has the impact of vilifying, humiliating, dehumanizing or insulting a person or group based on age, sex, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, color, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, homelessness, immigration or citizenship status, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, neurodivergence, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

Hate Speech includes, but is not limited to:

- Statements, gestures, or other actions that vilify, humiliate, dehumanize, or insult based on a person's/people's belonging in a protected class.
- Clothing, images, symbols, written words, or social media posts that vilify, humiliate, dehumanize, or insult based on a person's belonging in a protected class.

LSSD does not tolerate hate speech or bias incidents because they:

- Disrupt the learning environment and inhibit students' ability to engage and learn.
- Disrupt engagement and belonging for students and staff.
- Conflict with our commitment to equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all.
- Negatively impact our ability to maintain a culture of safety and security.

Hate speech and bias incidents have a lasting and harmful impact on our learning environments, community and students. The purpose of this board policy is twofold: (1) to articulate the district's policy and response to hate

speech when it occurs and (2) to articulate the designated procedures already in place to prevent hate speech through education and explicit training for students, staff and our community.

To that end, LSSD makes the following commitments:

- 1) Students and staff will be trained to identify and appropriately respond to and report hate speech and bias incidents.
- 2) Persons who report hate speech or bias incidents will be protected against retaliation.
- 3) Appropriate staff will be trained in restorative practices, and will implement and/or lead restorative practices when appropriate to a situation.

The district administration's role is to provide collaborative support, education, and coordination of effective, timely and human-focused responses to hate speech and bias incidents for students, staff, families and community members. The hate speech and bias incident procedure and policy does not replace or supersede existing policies that also address harassment, intimidation, bullying, nondiscrimination, student conduct and student discipline (Policy 1020 Equity, 4005 Affirmative Action, 4007 Equity in Education, 5090 Student Nondiscrimination, 5100 Student Rights and Responsibilities, 5500 Sexual Harassment, 5510 Student Freedom of Expression, 5580 Harassment, 5590 Gender Inclusive Schools).

DEFINITIONS

Hate Speech is any form of expression that has the impact of vilifying, humiliating, dehumanizing or insulting a person or group based on age, sex, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, color, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, homelessness, immigration or citizenship status, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, neurodivergence, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

A **Bias Incident** is any hostile expression that may be motivated by another age, sex, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, color, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, homelessness, immigration or citizenship status, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, neurodivergence, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

A bias incident can be verbal, physical or visual. That language and behavior often contributes to or creates an unsafe or unwelcoming environment.

Retaliation is when an aggressor, or third party on behalf of the aggressor harasses, intimidates or bullies an individual who has or who the aggressor believes has reported hate speech or a bias incident.

Impact is having a strong, negative effect or influence on a situation or person.

Identity: The various characteristics we use to categorize and define ourselves and others, and the various characteristics that are projected on us by others, including age, sex, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, color, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, homelessness, immigration or citizenship status, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, neurodivergence, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

Bias: A preference either for or against an individual or group that affects fair judgment.

Discrimination: Unfair treatment of members of various groups based on OSPI's definition of protected class: age, sex, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, color, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, homelessness, immigration or citizenship status, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, neurodivergence, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

PREVENTION

Prevention of hate speech and behavior, in partnership with culturally responsive teaching and learning, increases a sense of belonging for all and positively impacts school and district culture. To increase prevention, the district will provide:

- 1) Annual hate speech and behavior accountability education for all.

Ongoing training will be provided throughout the year to district students, staff, and administration.

- 2) Student and family access to the *Hate Speech and Bias Incident Policy and Procedure* at any time online.
- 3) District staff and administrators will receive yearly training on the Interrupting Hate Speech Protocol to ensure consistent responses, messaging, and communication with students and caregivers.
- 4) Training and resources for community-based organizations who partner in our schools, including access to the student handbook, along with information about the bias incident and hate speech policy.
- 5) Annual support for teachers and staff to screen new and current curricula and supplemental materials for bias, and make collaborative decisions about the use of that curricula or materials.

PROCEDURES

Students, staff, and/or community members may notify the district of hate speech or a bias incident by reporting the incident to any staff member or administrator, or by using the Safety Tip Line, the district's reporting system.

When acts of hate and/or discrimination are reported, LSSD staff will: 1)

Ensure the physical and psychological safety of those impacted by the act/incident.

2) Respond promptly using the Interrupting Hate Speech protocol. 3)

Report the incident in our student records and management, as trained. 4)

Investigate the incident and respond with disciplinary measures as appropriate.

5) Create an action plan that supports all affected individuals.

6) Provide clear and timely communication to caregivers of the aggressor and aggrieved.

7) Engage students and/or adults in restorative practices as appropriate.

When a report is received, support and action may require collaborative efforts among building and district administrators, and if appropriate, student services. School district officials may consult with law enforcement, as well. The district will carefully consider the rights and the safety of each student involved in the incident. Based on individual scenarios, restorative practices and/or disciplinary actions will be considered and implemented. Restorative practices and disciplinary actions can be assigned simultaneously, and may include but are not limited to:

- Active research and engagement with stories about the effects of hate speech on the part of the student(s) involved.

- A written apology to the targeted student(s) that demonstrates empathy and an awareness of the impacts of hate speech. The written apology will be vetted by administrators and will only be delivered upon approval.
- An educational course or workshop.

Legal References:

RCW 9A.36.080 — Hate crime offense/Malicious Harassment

RCW 28A.642 K-12 Education – Prohibition of Discrimination

RCW 49.60 Discrimination – Human Rights Commission