

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF LEMONT
AKA MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF SOUTHWEST COOK COUNTY
STUDENT BULLYING PROHIBITION POLICY

Adopted: 11/1/2019

Revised: 3/19/2020

Reviewed/Approved: 8/9/2021, 9/7/2023, 9/15/2025 by Board of Directors

I. Purpose

Montessori School of Lemont strives to provide safe, secure and respectful learning environments for all students in the school building, on school grounds, school buses and at school-sponsored activities. Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behavior, is conduct that interferes with a student's ability to learn and a teacher's ability to educate.

This policy protects students against bullying and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and it does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this school. However, nothing in Montessori School of Lemont's bullying prevention and response plan 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 U.S. Constitution](#) or under [Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution](#).

II. Definitions from Section 27-23.7 of the School Code ([105 ILCS 5/27-23.7](#))

Bullying includes *cyberbullying* and means 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 reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a 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.

Cyberbullying 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, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. *Cyberbullying* 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. *Cyberbullying* 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*.

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.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school, including without limitation school administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

III. Prevention and Response Plan

- A. Reporting- Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Executive Director, Director/tress, Assistant, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Staff must notify the Executive Director or designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the school officials or any staff member. All staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted. **See [Attachment A](#) for the reporting form.**
 - Executive Director, Therese Colby, Therese@lemontmontessori.org (815) 834-0607
- B. Investigation- The Executive Director or designee (hereinafter Executive Director/designee) is the person responsible for receiving reports of bullying at the building level. They will ensure this policy and its procedures are fairly and fully implemented and serve as the primary contact on policy and procedural matters implicating school. If the complaint involves the Head of School/designee, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Staff Advisor. When investigating a complaint, Executive Director/designee may take into account the following factors:
 1. The developmental ages and maturity levels of the parties involved.
 2. The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature of the behavior.
 3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior.
 4. The relationship between the parties involved.
 5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Investigation of a bullying incident shall be initiated within three school days of receipt of a report and be completed within 10 school days, unless the Head of School/designee grants in writing an additional five-day extension due to extenuating circumstances. See [Attachment B](#) for the investigation process.

- C. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Executive Director or designee shall promptly inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, other interventions, and restorative measures.
- D. The Executive Director/designee shall use interventions to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, and community-based services.
- E. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
- F. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred.

IV. Policy Posting and Evaluation

- A. The Executive Director/designee shall post this policy on the school's website, and include it in the student handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new employees when hired).
- B. The Executive Director/designee shall assist the Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness, and ensure that this policy is based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians.

This process shall include, without limitation:

- The frequency of victimization;
- Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
- Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
- The types of bullying utilized; and
- Bystander intervention or participation.

The Executive Director/designee shall ensure that this bullying policy aligns with other policies of the school board. The Executive Director/designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the school's website, or if a website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, Board members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students.

LEGAL REF.:

[405 ILCS 49/](#), Children's Mental Health Act.
[105 ILCS 5/10-20.14](#), [5/24-24](#), and [5/27-23.7](#).
[23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.240](#) and [§1.280](#).

Attachment A

Montessori School of Lemont Bullying Reporting Form

Name(s) of person(s) allegedly being bullied: _____

Name(s) of alleged bully/bullies: _____

Your name (optional): _____

I am (check all that apply):

☐ Student

☐ Parent/Guardian

☐ Community Member

☐ School Employee

☐ Other _____

Type of Event (check all that apply):

☐ Physical- Hitting, Kicking, Physical Aggression

☐ Verbal- Teasing, Name Calling, Put-Downs

☐ Emotional- Starting Rumors, Being Excluded

☐ Cyberbullying- Using an electronic medium to engage in bullying

Students were targeted for bullying in the following place(s) (check all that apply):

☐ Classroom

☐ Hallways

☐ Bathroom

☐ Basement

☐ Outdoor Play Area

☐ School Event (or related activity)

☐ Other _____

Please describe the event(s), including specific information such as times, dates, locations, etc.

Did you witness the event?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please list any other witnesses to the event:

A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial action.

Please complete this form and return it to the Executive Director or administration staff member.

Attachment B – Bullying Investigation Process

- I. The Head of School/designee shall perform the investigation.
 - A. Investigation of a bullying incident shall be initiated within three school days of receipt of a report and be completed within 10 school days, unless the Executive Director/designee grants in writing an additional five-day extension due to extenuating circumstances. The Executive Director/ designee shall document the extension in the investigation report and shall notify the parties involved. The Executive Director/designee will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of those who report bullying incidents and is responsible for keeping and protecting access to any written records of the investigation.
 - B. Prior to the investigation of an incident, the Executive Director/designee will take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the alleged actor(s), target(s), bystander(s) or reporter pending completion of an investigation. Once an investigation is concluded, further steps will be taken as needed to assure the continued safety of the complainant from additional incidents of bullying or retaliation.
 - C. The purpose of the investigation is to make a determination as to whether a reported incident constitutes a case of bullying. These determinations will be made in consideration of the totality of the facts and the circumstances surrounding the incident, such as the nature of the behavior, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incident occurred. The investigation shall include:
 1. Identifying the alleged actor(s), target(s) and bystander(s), as well as any adult who witnessed the incident or may have reliable information about it.
 2. Conducting an individual interview in a private setting with the alleged actor and target. The alleged actor and target should never be interviewed together or in public. Individual interviews shall also be conducted in private with student and adult bystanders. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the Executive Director/designee.
 3. Determining how often the conduct occurred, any past incident or continuing pattern of behavior, and whether the target's education, including but not limited to, a negative impact on academic performance, educational opportunities and participation in school activities was affected.
 4. Assessing the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety, and assigning school staff to create and implement a safety plan to prevent the recurrence of an incidence that will restore a sense of safety for the target and other students who have been impacted.
 5. If the Executive Director/designee determines the reported incident may involve criminal activity or the basis for criminal charges, information about the incident must be conveyed to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. As part of making this determination, the Executive Director/designee may wish to consult with either a law enforcement officer or legal counsel. Law enforcement shall only be contacted if all other available remedies have been exhausted.
 6. When appropriate, preparing a report identifying his/her recommendation for individual consequences.

7. Comprehensively documenting the details of the investigation.
 8. When the investigation is complete, the Executive Director/designee shall ensure the investigation report is on file with the incident report / bullying reporting form.
- D. The Executive Director/ designee shall address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
1. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
 2. 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.
 3. The Executive Director/ designee shall investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the District's jurisdiction and shall require that the District provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the community, such as counseling, support services, or other programs.