

# Laraway Community Consolidated School District 70C

## Bullying Policy

### Preamble

A safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that no one within our school community will be subject to any bullying, and to secure a safe, orderly, respectful, and nurturing environment that promotes teaching and learning.

### Bullying Defined

The School Code of Illinois 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b) defines bullying 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 may 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 the school.”

Furthermore, bullying is any type of conduct that may reflect a coercive imbalance of power and is severe, pervasive and often purposeful and repeated.

For the purposes of this policy, bullying conduct may include, but not be limited to:

- (1) physical acts, such as inappropriate, unwanted, uninvited, or injurious physical contact with another, stalking, sexual assault, and destruction or damage to property of another;
- (2) written or electronic (including cyber-bullying) communication of any type that incorporates language or depictions that would constitute bullying, using any medium (including, but limited to cell phones, computers, websites, electronic networks, instant messages, text messages, and emails);
- (3) verbal threats made to another, blackmail, or demands for protection money;
- (4) non-verbal threats or intimidation such as aggressive or menacing gestures;
- (5) direct or indirect, relationally aggressive behavior such as social isolation, rumor spreading, or damaging someone’s reputation;
- (6) any of the above conduct which occurs off grounds when such conduct creates,

or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school setting and/or at school sponsored activities and events.

- (7) blocking access to school property or facilities;
- (8) stealing or hiding, or otherwise defacing books, backpacks or other personal possessions; or
- (9) repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking putdowns, or demeaning human related to a person's race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in the disruption of school activities or that results in a hostile educational environment for the student.

Conduct that would not ordinarily be considered bullying for the purposes of this policy includes:

- (1) mere teasing;
- (2) "talking trash;"
- (3) trading of insults; or
- (4) the expression of ideas or beliefs (expressions protected by the First Amendment), so long as such expression is not lewd, profane, or intended to intimidate or harass another.

#### Bullying is Prohibited

Bullying is not acceptable and is strictly prohibited. Bullying is conduct that is covered by this policy, is conduct that occurs on school property or at school sponsored activities or events, while students are being transported or walking to or from school or school sponsored activities or events, while students are waiting at school bus stops, or when the conduct otherwise would substantially impede the educational environment, regardless of where the conduct occurs.

Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. A student's bullying conduct may also be addressed through any other behavioral interventions.

Any student who is a bystander to any bullying conduct and fails to take any action to discourage such conduct may also be subject to appropriate discipline. (For the purpose of this policy, a bystander to bullying is a witness to bullying conduct and may be considered to be aiding or abetting the bully.)

No student shall be retaliated against for reporting bullying conduct. Any student who is determined to intentionally have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

## Report and Investigation

Anyone who witnesses any conduct that could constitute bullying shall report it to a school staff member as soon as possible. Such a report shall then be forwarded to the Principal or his/her designee as soon as possible, who then shall conduct or cause to be conducted a thorough investigation of the alleged incident. Every reasonable attempt will be made to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the date Discipline and/or other intervention appropriate to the outcome of the investigation shall be imposed consistent with the Laraway CCSD 70C discipline procedures.

When appropriate, the local police and State's Attorney shall be notified immediately of incidents involving bodily harm, property damage or any other conduct which is reasonably believed by the school administration to be a violation of criminal laws. The investigation of any such bullying shall proceed in cooperation with the police and other applicable law enforcement authorities. Laraway CCSD 70C retains its right to investigate and impose any discipline for violation of this policy, whether or not criminal charges are pursued.

It is the responsibility of the Principal or his/her designee to investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school district's jurisdiction, and shall require the school district to provide the victim with information regarding services that are available, such as counseling, support services and other programs.

The email address and telephone number of the schools will be made readily available for the staff or other persons responsible for making such reports, so that they may do so anonymously.

The Principal or his/her designee will promptly inform the parents and guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying, invite their participation in the findings of the investigation and as appropriate, share information about social work services, counseling, school psychological services, community-based services and other interventions and restorative measures.

## Responding to Bullying

It is the responsibility of the school staff to use violations of the school rules as opportunities to help students improve their social and emotional skills, accept personal responsibility for their learning environment and understand consequences for poor choices and behaviors. In determining the appropriate response to or discipline of students who engage in bullying behavior, the school administration should consider the following:

- (1) the ages and maturity of the students involved;
- (2) the type, frequency, severity and patterns of behaviors;

- (3) the context in which the incidents occurred; and
- (4) any other relevant circumstances.

At least annually, but more often if justified, the Principal or his/her designee will evaluate the effectiveness of the bullying policy, and consider such factors as:

- (1) the frequency of victimization;
- (2) student, staff and family observations of safety at school;
- (3) identification of areas of a school where bullying is more apt to occur; and
- (4) the types of bullying most practiced by students.

The outcome of the above evaluation process shall be posted on the district website.

### Notification and Training

Students and parent/legal guardians will be notified of this policy annually through the Parent/Student Handbook, and as posted on the Laraway CCSD 70C website.

The entire school community shall understand the importance of the most current and up-to-date information on issues related to bullying and agrees to utilize the best efforts in participating in training and sharing information on this important topic. Any training in the schools will include training for all staff members including teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, coaches, support staff, sponsors of student groups, and any volunteer who is engaged in interacting with students on a regular basis.

### Citations

Public Act 98-0349  
Public Act 98-0669  
Public Act 98-0801

Reviewed – April 2015