## Preventing Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment Policies and Procedures

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important Little Explorers Montessori School's goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender or sex (includes gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and pregnancy-related medical conditions), race or ethnicity, ethnic group identification, ancestry, nationality, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, age, immigration status, marital status, genetic information, order of protection status, political belief or affiliation (not union-related), military status, unfavorable discharge from military service, or 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, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, 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 an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School but causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require School staff to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Definitions 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7

Bullying includes *cyber-bullying* 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.
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 by not limited to 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.

*Cyber-bullying* 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. *Cyber-bullying* 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*.

*Cyber-bullying* 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* for purposes of this policy means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school district, including without limitation school and school district 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.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan.

1. School principal and staff shall work to develop safe, supportive school environments that prevent bullying and harassment through developing supportive school climate strategies, teaching students social emotional skills, and establishing predictable responses and effective disciplinary practices.

2. All School employees who witness incidents of bullying or harassment or who possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying, must: (a) intervene immediately in a manner that is appropriate to the context and ensures the safety of all people involved; (b) report the incident of bullying or harassment to the Principal/Head of School as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours; and (c) cooperate fully in any investigation of the incident and in implementing any safety plan established by the Principal/Head of School. Alleged bullying targeted at sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression should be reported immediately to the District's Title IX/Nondiscrimination Coordinator at 801 W. Normantown Road, Romeoville, IL 60446, 815-886-2700 or VVSD_Complaint-Manager@vvsd.org in accordance with Policy 7.20.

3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Principal/Head of School, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying, is encouraged to report it to the Principal/Head of School, or any staff member. Alleged bullying targeted at sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression should be reported immediately to the District's Title IX/Nondiscrimination Coordinator at 801 W. Normantown Road, Romeoville, IL 60446, 815-886-2700 or VVSD_Complaint-Manager@vvsd.org in accordance with Policy 7.20.

4. The Principal/Head of School shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
   a. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, promptly informing the parent(s)/guardian(s) of every student involved in an alleged incident of bullying or harassment and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services,

counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

b. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident. The investigation shall include, but is not limited to, (1) identifying all students engaged in the alleged bullying along with all witnesses; (2) interviewing all involved parties; (3) determining how often the conduct occurred, past conduct, or any continuing pattern of behavior; and (4) assessing individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety.
c. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
d. When the investigation is complete, documenting in writing whether the alleged incident meets any of the four elements of bullying listed above in the definition of bullying and determining whether the report of bullying is substantiated or not substantiated. If the investigation determines a student engaged in bullying behaviors and/or other inappropriate behaviors listed in the District's Policy 7.190, the Principal/Head of School shall impose the appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with District policy.
e. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation a copy of the final written report and offer them an opportunity to meet with the Principal/Head of School to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

5. The Principal/Head of School shall use interventions to address bullying, that may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

6. 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.

7. 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 actions.

8. The Principal/Head of School or designee shall post this policy on the School's website and include it in the Parent/Student handbook, and post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must also be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel by posting it on the School's website and in any employee, parent or student handbooks.

9. The Principal/Head of School shall assist the Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, but is not limited to:
   a. The frequency of victimization;
   b. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
   c. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
   d. The types of bullying utilized; and
   e. Bystander intervention or participation.

   The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that the School already collects for other purposes. The Principal/Head of School or designee must post the information

developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the School's website.

10. The Principal/Head of School or designee shall fully implement the Board policies, including without limitation, the following:
    a. 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*. A student may use this policy to complain about bullying.
    b. 6:60, *Curriculum Content*. Bullying prevention and character instruction is provided in all grades in accordance with State law.
    c. 6:65, *Student Social and Emotional Development*. Student social and emotional development is incorporated into the District's educational program as required by State law.
    d. 6:235, *Access to Electronic Networks*. This policy states that the use of the School's electronic networks is limited to: (1) support of education and/or research, or (2) a legitimate business use.
    e. 7:20, *Nondiscrimination, Harassment and Retaliation of Students and Title IX Policy*. This policy prohibits *any* person from harassing, intimidating, or bullying a student based on an identified actual or perceived characteristic.
    f. 7:185, *Teen Dating Violence Prohibited*. This policy prohibits teen dating violence on school property, at school sponsored activities, and in vehicles used for school-provided transportation.
    g. 7:190, *Student Behavior*. This policy prohibits, and provides consequences for, hazing, bullying, or other aggressive behaviors, or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
    h. 7:310, *Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material.* This policy prohibits students from and provides consequences for: (1) accessing and/or distributing at school any written, printed, or electronic material, including material from the Internet, that will cause substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities, and (2) creating and/or distributing written, printed, or electronic material, including photographic material and blogs, that causes substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.

Nothing in Policy 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.

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LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7.

CROSS REF.: 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 6:60 (Curriculum Content), 6:65 (Student Social and Emotional Development), 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks), 7:20 (Nondiscrimination, Harassment and Retaliation of Students and Title IX Policy.), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:190 (Student Behavior), 7:310 (Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material)

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