

**Lewis Center for Educational Research**

**BP 5131.2 STUDENTS  
HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING**

**Adopted: February 10, 2020**

**Revised: December 16, 2024**

The Lewis Center for Educational Research (“LCER”) Board of Directors (“Board”) recognizes the harmful effects of disruptive behaviors on student learning, student engagement, school attendance and desires to provide a safe school environment that protects students from physical and emotional harm. As such, LCER prohibits any acts of harassment, intimidation, discrimination and bullying altogether.

As used in this policy, harassment, intimidation, discrimination and bullying are described as the intentional conduct, including verbal physical, written communication or cyber-bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, based on the actual or perceived characteristics of mental or physical disability, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions, and parental status), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, nationality (including national origin, country of origin, and citizenship), race or ethnicity (including ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, ethnic background, and traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, and twists), religion (including agnosticism and atheism), religious affiliation, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, age or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or based on any other characteristic protected under applicable state or federal law or local ordinance. Hereafter, such actions are referred to as “misconduct prohibited by this Policy.”

To the extent possible, LCER will make reasonable efforts to prevent students from being discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, and/or bullied, and will take action to investigate, respond, address and report on such behaviors in a timely manner. LCER school staff who witness acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so.

This policy applies to incidents occurring on the school campus, at school-sponsored events and activities regardless of the location, through school-owned technology, and through other electronic means, whether perpetrated by a student, employee, parent/guardian, volunteer, independent contractor or other person with whom LCER does business, and all acts of LCER’s Board of Directors (“Board”) in enacting policies and procedures that govern LCER.

LCER complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and local ordinances in its investigation of and response to reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

**Definitions:**

**Harassment** means conduct based upon one or more of the protected characteristics listed above that is severe or pervasive, which unreasonably disrupts an individual’s educational or work environment or that creates a hostile educational or work environment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes, comments or slurs.

- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work or school based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.
- Deferential or preferential treatment based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

**Bullying** is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act. Bullying includes one or more acts committed by a student or group of students that may constitute hate violence, or creates an intimidating, threatening and/or hostile educational environment, directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing a reasonable student or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property
- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health
- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with his or her academic performance
- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by LCER

**Cyberbullying** is an electronic act that includes the transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, videos or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

**Electronic act** means the creation or transmission on or off the school site, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including but not limited to, any of the following:

- A message, text, sound, video, or image.
- A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
  - Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in the definition of "bullying," above.
  - Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.
  - Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.
- An act of "Cyber sexual bullying" including, but not limited to:
  - The dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by

means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in definition of “bullying,” above. A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

- “Cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
- Notwithstanding the definitions of “bullying” and “electronic act” above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

### **Bulling and Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures:**

Strategies for addressing bullying in LCER schools shall be developed with involvement of key stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, and staff, and may be incorporated into the comprehensive safety plan, the local control and accountability plan, and other applicable LCER and school plans.

As appropriate, the President/CEO or designee may collaborate with law enforcement, courts, social services, mental health services, other agencies, and community organizations in the development and implementation of joint strategies to promote safety in schools and the community and to provide services for alleged victims and perpetrators of bullying.

### **Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures**

LCER advises students:

- To never share passwords, personal data, or private photos online.
- To think about what they are doing carefully before posting and by emphasizing that comments cannot be retracted once they are posted.
- That personal information revealed on social media can be shared with anyone including parents, teachers, administrators, and potential employers. Students should never reveal information that would make them uncomfortable if the world had access to it.
- To consider how it would feel receiving such comments before making comments about others online.

LCER informs its employees, students, and parents/guardians of LCER’s policies regarding the use of technology in and out of the classroom. LCER encourages parents/guardians to discuss these policies with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with such policies.

### **Education**

LCER employees cannot always be present when bullying incidents occur, so educating students about bullying is a key prevention technique to limit bullying from happening. LCER advises students that hateful and/or demeaning behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable in our society and at LCER and encourages students to practice compassion and respect each other.

LCER educates students to accept all student peers regardless of protected characteristics (including but not limited to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identification, physical or cognitive disabilities, race, ethnicity, religion, and immigration status) and about the negative impact of bullying other students based on protected characteristics.

LCER's bullying prevention education also discusses the differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and includes sample situations to help students learn and practice appropriate behavior and to develop techniques and strategies to respond in a non-aggressive way to bullying-type behaviors. Students will also develop confidence and learn how to advocate for themselves and others, and when to go to an adult for help.

LCER informs LCER employees, students, and parents/guardians of this Policy and encourages parents/guardians to discuss this Policy with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with this Policy.

### **Professional Development**

LCER annually makes available the online training module developed by the California Department of Education pursuant Education Code section 32283.5(a) to its certificated employees and all other LCER employees who have regular interaction with students.

The President/CEO or designee shall provide training to teachers and other school staff to raise their awareness about the legal obligation of LCER and its employees to prevent discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying of LCER students. Such training shall be designed to provide staff with the skills to:

- Discuss the diversity of the student body and school community, including their varying immigration experiences
- Discuss bullying prevention strategies with students, and teach students to recognize the behavior and characteristics of bullying perpetrators and victims
- Identify the signs of bullying or harassing behavior
- Take immediate corrective action when bullying is observed
- Report incidents to the appropriate authorities, including law enforcement in instances of criminal behavior

Based on an assessment of bullying incidents at school, the President/CEO or designee may increase supervision and security in areas where bullying most often occurs, such as classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, restrooms, and cafeterias.

LCER informs certificated employees about the common signs that a student is a target of bullying including:

- Physical cuts or injuries
- Lost or broken personal items
- Fear of going to school/practice/games
- Loss of interest in school, activities, or friends
- Trouble sleeping or eating
- Anxious/sick/nervous behavior or distracted appearance
- Self-destructiveness or displays of odd behavior
- Decreased self-esteem

LCER also informs certificated employees about the groups of students determined by LCER and available research to be at elevated risk for bullying and provides its certificated employees with information on existing school and community resources related to the support of these groups. These groups include but are not limited to:

- Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth (“LGBTQ”) and those youth perceived as LGBTQ; and
- Students with physical or learning disabilities.

LCER encourages its employees to demonstrate effective problem-solving, anger management, and self-confidence skills for LCER’s students.

## **Complaint Procedures:**

### **Scope of Complaint Procedures**

LCER will comply with its Uniform Complaint Procedures (“UCP”) policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging unlawful harassment, discrimination, intimidation or bullying against a protected group or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one or more of the protected characteristics set forth in the UCP that:

- Are written and signed;
- Filed by an individual who alleges that they have personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, or by one who believes any specific class of individuals has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying based on a protected characteristic, or by a duly authorized representative who alleges that an individual student has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
- Submitted to the LCER UCP Compliance Officer not later than six (6) months from the date the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred, or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.

LCER will comply with its Title IX Policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in its education program or activity, as applicable.

The following procedures shall be utilized for complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy that do not fall within the scope of LCER’s Title IX Policy or comply with the writing, timeline, or other formal filing requirements of the UCP. A copy of LCER’s Title IX Policy and UCP is available in the main office and LCER website.

### **Submitting a Report or Complaint**

All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, to intervene when safe to do so, call for assistance, and report such incidents. The Board requires staff to follow the procedures in this Policy for reporting alleged acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

Reports and complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy shall be submitted to the UCP Coordinator (or the President/CEO if the complaint is against the UCP Coordinator) as soon as possible after the incidents giving rise to the report or complaint.

Complaints regarding such misconduct may also be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders may also be available to complainants.

While submission of a written report is not required, and LCER will investigate and respond to all oral and written reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, the reporting party is encouraged to

submit a written report. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

Students are expected to report all incidents of misconduct prohibited by this Policy and other verbal or physical abuses. Any student who feels they are a target of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, the Principal, a staff person or a family member so that the student can get assistance in resolving the issue in a manner that is consistent with this Policy.

LCER acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. All reports and complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process to the greatest extent possible. This includes keeping the identity of the reporter and/or complainant confidential, as appropriate, except to the extent necessary to comply with applicable law, carry out the investigation and/or to resolve the issue, as determined by LCER on a case-by-case basis.

LCER prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who files a report or complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation or proceeding related to misconduct prohibited by this Policy. Such participation or lack of participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades, or work assignments of the individual. Individuals alleging retaliation in violation of this Policy may file a grievance using the procedures set forth in this Policy.

### **Investigation and Response**

Upon LCER's receipt of a report or complaint of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, a Compliance Officer or designee will promptly initiate an investigation. In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than twenty-five (25) school days.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Compliance Officer or designee will, to the extent possible with respect to confidentiality laws, provide the complainant with information about the investigation and resolution of the incident/situation. However, the Compliance Officer or designee will not reveal confidential information related to other students or employees.

If the complaint is against a Compliance Officer, the President/CEO or designee will conduct a fact-finding investigation and provide the complainant with information about the investigation and resolution of the incident/situation.

### **Consequences**

Students who engage in misconduct prohibited by this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from LCER.

### **Right of Appeal**

Should a complainant find LCER's resolution unsatisfactory, for complaints within the scope of this Policy, the complainant may, within five (5) business days of notice of LCER's decision or resolution, submit a written appeal to the President/CEO, who will serve as the decisionmaker for the appeal or designate a decisionmaker for the appeal. The decisionmaker for the appeal will notify the complainant of the final decision.

**HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, DISCRIMINATION & BULLYING  
COMPLAINT FORM**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: \_\_\_\_\_

List any witnesses that were present: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident(s) occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e., specific statements and conduct; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby authorize LCER to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

**To be completed by LCER:**

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow up Meeting with Complainant held on: \_\_\_\_\_