

# Reporting Acts of Bias, Harassment, and Bullying

## LPS Priority Statement

The Longmeadow Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that fosters respect, character and integrity. We seek to eliminate all forms of bullying and cyber-bullying and all other harmful and disruptive behavior that may impede the learning process. This commitment is an integral part of our mission as a learning community.

The Longmeadow Public Schools recognizes that certain categories of students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including, but not limited to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Relevant Policies:

[LPS Bullying Policy](#)

[LPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan](#)

If you would like to report an act of bullying, please complete a [BULLYING INCIDENT FORM](#) and submit it to the building Principal.

Below is a list of the administrators who oversee each school's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan:

School	Safe School Climate Specialist	Email
Blueberry Hill Elementary School	Principal David Allen	<a href="mailto:dallen@longmeadow.k12.ma.us">dallen@longmeadow.k12.ma.us</a>
Center Elementary School	Principal Donna Hutton	<a href="mailto:dhutton@longmeadow.k12.ma.us">dhutton@longmeadow.k12.ma.us</a>
Wolf Swamp Elementary School	Principal Jared Materas	<a href="mailto:jmateras@longmeadow.k12.ma.us">jmateras@longmeadow.k12.ma.us</a>
Glenbrook Middle School	Principal Nikcole Allen	<a href="mailto:nallen@longmeadow.k12.ma.us">nallen@longmeadow.k12.ma.us</a>
Williams Middle School	Principal Nicole Forys	<a href="mailto:nforys@longmeadow.k12.ma.us">nforys@longmeadow.k12.ma.us</a>
Longmeadow High School	Principal Thomas Landers	<a href="mailto:tlanders@longmeadow.k12.ma.us">tlanders@longmeadow.k12.ma.us</a>

Principals respond promptly to concerns, investigate, and communicate findings with families in accordance with the LPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

## BULLYING DEFINITION

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional **harm** to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable **fear of harm** to himself or herself or damage to his or her property;
- creates a **hostile environment** at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially **disrupts the education process** or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include cyberbullying. “Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, 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, photo electronic or photo-optical system including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyberbullying shall also include: (a) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; or (b) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include 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 conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Massachusetts State Law: [M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O](#) (School Bullying Prohibited)

The Federation For Children with Special Needs: [Bullying: What Parents Need to Know](#)

DESE Problem Resolution System: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/>

# **Student FAQ on Bullying**

## **What should I do?**

- Seek out a trusted adult in the school to report what is happening. Your parents/caregivers, teachers, counselors, administrators, and coaches are all examples of adults who will listen to what you are experiencing and will offer assistance and guidance on how to proceed. You do not have to handle this alone, and Longmeadow faculty and staff are available to help you!
- You can complete a [Bullying Incident Reporting Form](#). Forms are available online and in school in the main office. The Principal and Assistant Principal at school will investigate all reports. It is important to note that you can report anonymously. Students who file a bullying report are protected against retaliation through the proper implementation of a safety and avoidance plan, and additional consequences are applied to perpetrators in the event of retaliation.

## **What can I do to help?**

**Source: "Empowering Bystanders in Bullying Prevention" by Stan Davis**

- Treat others with kindness, compassion, and respect regardless of differences.
- Think about what you say or do. Your words and actions impact others around you. Take a moment to consider how others would feel about your words and actions. This could prevent you from making a decision you will later regret.
- Be an upstander. If you see witness unkind behavior, consider the following helpful actions:
  - Help the target remove him or herself from the situation. Ask them to join you in an activity or walk away from the aggressor together.
  - Be inclusive. Invite the target to sit with you at lunch or join you at recess. Talk to them when you feel it is appropriate to do so and listen if they choose to share with you.
  - Tell an adult. This could be a teacher, a counselor, the principal, or a parent/caregiver.
  - Don't laugh or join in the hurtful behavior.

## What can I expect after I file a report?

- **We respond promptly** - Once an administrator receives a report, parents/caregivers of the target and the aggressor will be contacted as soon as possible to discuss further and better understand concerns. Interviews will be conducted with the students involved in the alleged behavior. Depending on the nature of the concerns, the administrator will discuss the next steps, including whether further investigation is needed.
- **We put safety first** - The school will take immediate steps to ensure the child's physical and/or emotional safety, even if the complaint is still being investigated. To ensure safety measures are put in place, appropriate school staff will be alerted. Should the nature of the issue demand external law enforcement, the proper authorities would be contacted.
- **We investigate**- If further investigation is needed, the school will determine the process that will be followed based on the nature of the concerns.
- **We consider intent vs. impact** - Although sometimes, especially with young children, when a student says or does something without intent to hurt or harm, we respond to the impact of those words or actions when determining an appropriate course of action, consequence, or corrective measure. In determining appropriate interventions, the district takes into account the totality of the circumstances, including the ages of the students involved, the nature of the misconduct, whether the behavior is intentional, and/or whether a student has any limitations that might impact their ability to understand the impact of their actions.
- **We provide closure** - Once a concern has been appropriately investigated and the school understands what occurred, it will determine how best to respond and/or intervene. This may include corrective measures and/or other consequences, such as formal discipline, depending on the situation. Disciplinary decisions are always guided by school policy as well as state law. We also involve law enforcement, if warranted. After the process, however, families will be contacted and made aware of any actions that will impact their child. Administrators are not permitted to disclose any information about other children, including specific disciplinary consequences, should they be imposed on any other child(ren).
- **We provide learning** - We regard these incidents as essential learning moments. We, therefore, will often assign re-teaching or restorative conversations as a follow-up where appropriate, possibly with a school counselor, classroom teacher, and/or additional support staff members.
- **We follow through** - In accordance with school policies, if there is a finding that bullying or harassment occurred, part of the school's follow-up will include developing a safety plan. A school administrator will typically follow up with a student and/or their family to check how the safety plan works.
- **We emphasize prevention** - The district continually reviews strategies for strengthening the school's climate and culture, including providing professional development for the faculty and staff to uphold and maintain the standards of respect and caring we have established.

- **We offer additional support** - If at any point you have any questions or concerns regarding our policies or procedures related to concerns of bullying, bias, harassment or discrimination, you may always reach out to Nilda Irizarry, The Director of Student and Family Support ([nirizarry@longmeadow.k12.ma.us](mailto:nirizarry@longmeadow.k12.ma.us)) or the Superintendent Marty O'Shea ([moshea@longmeadow.k12.ma.us](mailto:moshea@longmeadow.k12.ma.us)). Families have the option to involve law enforcement when appropriate. The School Resource Officer is LPD Officer Kevin Healey ([khealey@longmeadow.k12.ma.us](mailto:khealey@longmeadow.k12.ma.us)).

## See Something, Say Something

Any member of our community with information may contact LPD or LPS or leave a message on the Longmeadow Police Department's anonymous tip line at 413-565-4199. Staff, students or any community member may also submit an anonymous report through the District's online [See Something Say Something Anonymous Reporting System \(SSARS\)](#). SSARS is entirely anonymous and user-friendly.

## Resources for A Safe School Climate

**\*The links below are to websites and resources not maintained or curated by Longmeadow Public Schools.**

### Massachusetts State Laws, Regulations, and Guidance on Gender Identity & Gender Expression

\*The links below are to websites and resources not maintained or curated by Longmeadow Public Schools.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Legislation	<a href="#">Chapter 76, section 5</a> (with regard to Anti-Discrimination Law)
DESE: Fostering a Safe Learning Environment for All Students	<a href="#">Guidance after the rise of Anti-Semitism &amp; Islamophobia</a>
DESE: Education Laws & Regulations	<a href="#">603 CMR 26.00</a> , section <a href="#">26.05</a> (with regard to Access to Equal Education Opportunities and Curricula)
DESE: Principles for Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments	<a href="#">Principles for Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Students</a>
DESE: Guidance	<a href="#">Guidance for Massachusetts Public Schools Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity</a>

DESE: Student and Family Support	<a href="#">Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students</a>
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## Additional websites:

- PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center: [www.pacer.org/bullying](http://www.pacer.org/bullying); Template Letters to notify School about Incidents: [www.pacer.org/publications/bullypdf/BP-19.pdf](http://www.pacer.org/publications/bullypdf/BP-19.pdf) ; Bullying Statistics: <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/stats.asp> What if Your Child is the One Showing Bullying Behavior? <https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c109.pdf>
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Bullying Prevention and Intervention Resources: [www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/)
- DESE Bullying Prevention and Intervention Advisory for Special Education: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11\\_2ta.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11_2ta.html)
- Cyberbullying Research Center: <https://www.cyberbullying.us/index.php>
- Anti-Defamation League: <https://www.adl.org/about/education>
- Learning for Justice: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/>
- Stop Bullying: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- SafeKids.com: [www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)