

**The Learning Center for the Deaf  
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan  
2016 - 2018**

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***The Learning Center for the Deaf***

***Our mission is to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students achieve their full potential in an educational environment where language and communication are keys to building competence, character, and community.***

## **Plan to Address Bullying Prevention and Intervention The Learning Center for the Deaf**

### **SECTION 1: Priority Statement**

Since its inception, The Learning Center for the Deaf (TLC) has striven to be a safe place for deaf and hard of hearing students to learn and grow and belong. TLC's commitment to be a comprehensive school for all deaf and hard of hearing children brings with it accompanying responsibility to provide a positive learning environment for this diversity of learners and to support the healthy development of each "whole child."

TLC is a bilingual school (American Sign Language and English) dedicated to engaging students within an accessible and effective educational environment where students know they are valued, where all members of the community understand their responsibility to promote a positive school climate, and where students can achieve the highest quality of education in preparation for post-secondary opportunities, free from distraction or harm.

TLC's two major divisions (Marie Philip School, PreK-12 and Walden School) offer multiple, flexible options for our students to learn and grow and be participants in a strong learning community. These two schools are united behind a singular vision to assure that all students achieve their full potential and that our students' linguistic, emotional, cognitive, and developmental needs continue to be richly supported.

In order to achieve these shared aspirations, The Learning Center for the Deaf is dedicated to fostering a respectful school culture, which is free from harassment, bullying and cyber-bullying of any kind. To this end, the school will take specific steps to create the safest environment possible for all students within the school community, and to provide students and faculty/staff with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment and/or inappropriate teasing.

Community members are expected to treat each other with respect, fully aware that acts of bullying, harassment, cyber-bullying, and intimidation are prohibited on school grounds, in school buildings, or in any school related activities. This shared commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all harmful and disruptive targeted behavior that can impede a student's learning process.

We understand that members of certain student groups and differentiating characteristics, such as students with disabilities, students from different ethnic or religious backgrounds, students who are gay, lesbian, or transgender, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, and/or homeless students, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics, may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The school will ensure that faculty and staff have the awareness and

tools to take specific steps to create a safe and supportive environment for those populations within the school who may be vulnerable to bullying.

The following *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* is a comprehensive approach to address and prevent issues of violence within our school. This Plan establishes a common approach to prevent, intervene, and respond to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation should they occur. The Directors of each program are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

## SECTION 2: **Definitions**

Aggressor: A student or school member who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, or retaliation.

Bullying: As defined in M.G.L. c.71, § 370, is:  
*The repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture, or ANY combination thereof, directed at a target that:*

- (1) Causes physical or emotional harm to the targeted individual(s) or to the target's property;*
- (2) Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;*
- (3) Creates a hostile environment at school for the target*
- (4) Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or*
- (5) Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.*

Cyber-bullying: Bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices, such as cell phones, computers, pagers, videophones, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to email, texting, instant messages, and Internet postings. Cyber-bullying is treated as multiple counts of bullying by the Law, since numerous other individuals, through the far-reaching effects of technology, can observe it repeatedly. (see M.G.L.c.71, § 370 for a detailed legal definition of Cyber-bullying.)

Hostile Environment: A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be affected by intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Incident Report: A standard form used to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or retaliation. The form provides a place to

document allegations, describe actions observed, and list witnesses, etc.

Retaliation: Any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student or community member who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses and/or has reliable information about bullying that has occurred.

Community

Members: Includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, residential staff, nurses, clinicians, food service personnel, coaches, advisors to after school activities, classroom assistants, parents, and Board members.

Target: A student (or students) who has been subjected to bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation.

**SECTION 3: Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation**

Conflict and dispute may occur frequently in schools but are not always harmful. Bullying and cyber-bullying differ from conflict. These behaviors are harmful one-way abuse behaviors. In situations where bullying occurs, there is repetition, power imbalance, and an intention to harm. Bullying is defined as a conscious, willful, deliberate and repeated hostile activity perpetrated by an aggressor who dominates, in various ways, towards the target.

Acts of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation are absolutely prohibited and will lead to discipline.

Acts of bullying are prohibited:

- (1) On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds
- (2) At a school-sponsored or school-related activity, event, function, whether on or off school grounds
- (3) On a bus or van or other vehicle owned by, used, or leased by TLC or on a school district vehicle transporting a student to or from TLC
- (4) Through technology or any electronic device that belongs to, is used or leased by TLC; or
- (5) Any acts of intimidation, threat, bullying, cyber-bullying at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related,
  - if the act creates a hostile environment at school for the target or witness(es)
  - if the act infringes on their rights of the target at school, or

- if the act materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously. It is important to note that no disciplinary action will be taken solely because of an anonymous report.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying or who provides information during an investigation is also prohibited.

Nothing in this Plan requires the school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs, nor is it intended to prevent the school administration from taking disciplinary action against a student for an action that does not meet the definition of bullying as defined earlier but is, nonetheless, unsafe or inappropriate at school.

#### SECTION 4: **Leadership**

Leadership at all levels plays an essential role in sustaining a respectful community. All members of this community are expected to treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. This expectation is an integral part of TLC's commitment to promote a positive learning community and to eliminate harmful or disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

Each student, faculty and staff member is expected to take acts of bullying seriously.

The Administrative and Supervisory teams will be responsible for setting priorities, assessing needs and resources, and for staying up-to-date with current research on bullying prevention and effective responses to bullying. Their responsibilities also include the following:

- Ensure that faculty and staff receive training in these critical areas,
- Maintain an Internet safety policy,
- Determine appropriate curriculum and approaches to teach students about bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, and the prohibition against retaliation,
- Involve and inform parents/guardians and provide parent information materials in languages other than English, as needed,
- Receive and respond to reports on bullying,
- Maintain a process for tracking and recording incidents,

- Collect department and school-wide data on bullying to continually assess the problem and to measure improved outcomes,
- Review and update the Plan yearly, or more frequently,
  
- Review and amend student and staff handbooks annually, as needed,

At least once every four years beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, TLC will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary developed students survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying on our school. Additionally, TLC will report annually, bullying incident data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

#### **SECTION 5: Training and Professional Development for Faculty and Staff**

- 1) Faculty and staff will receive a copy of this written Plan upon hire and annually, thereafter. The Plan will also be available to faculty and staff in American Sign Language.
  
- 2) New Hires: All new employees will be required to participate in a foundational training on *Preventing Bullying and Implementing Intervention Strategies*. This training will focus on the importance of consistent responses to acts of bullying and a clear understanding that bullying is not conflict, but instead it is a one-way abuse behavior where there is repetition, power imbalance and an intention to harm.
  
- 3): Ongoing Professional Development: The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Every year, thereafter, during the first week of school before students arrive, all staff including educators, administrators, school nurses, clerical support personnel, maintenance team, coaches, and classroom assistants will receive refresher training on TLC's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, instruction on the laws and regulations that apply to bullying and retaliation, identifying bullying behavior, reporting procedures, IEP considerations, research regarding specific groups of students who may be at a higher risk for bullying, strategies to prevent bullying, and interventions that are effective.

Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school wide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- (a) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- (b) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- (c) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;

- (d) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- (e) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- (f) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by TLC for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making;
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students; and
- engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors

Once more during the year, all staff will participate in trainings on the safe use of the Internet, cyber-bullying and its effect, along with strategies for supporting those students whose disability affects social skill development (i.e., Autism or inefficient language abilities, etc.) and can lead to significant and harmful power differences between and among students. This training will be done in each department and will focus on age-appropriate concerns that apply to the students in that department.

Certified ASL/English interpreters will be available, as needed, for all faculty and staff trainings.

4) Embracing Diversity: The Learning Center for the Deaf has an active and established school-wide Bilingual and Bi-Multicultural Committee comprised of faculty and staff from all programs. This committee serves as a resource for professional development activities that can support our anti-bullying efforts. The following professional development trainings have been identified as important in establishing a common understanding of how to create and

sustain a school culture that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences:

- Cross-cultural communication and understanding
- Promoting and modeling the use of clear and respectful language
- Fostering an understanding and respect for diversity and difference
- Building relationships with families
- Engaging students in planning and decision-making
- Building classroom management skills
- Further deepening our understanding of Deaf culture

We have had an active school-wide Diversity Committee comprised of faculty and staff from all programs. As one of our needs assessment tasks, we plan to explore the re-implementation of this committee in continuing the strength of our vision of engaging students within an accessible and effective educational environment, with multicultural and diverse approaches and role models.

#### **SECTION 6: Education that Supports Bullying Prevention**

The Learning Center for the Deaf is committed to implementing a comprehensive approach to establishing a safe school environment. This includes direct teaching at all grade levels, along with:

- Setting clear and healthy boundaries for students and staff
- Teaching about diversity and differences
- Establishing classroom routines that provide structure
- Using positive behavioral supports
- Encouraging adults within the school to establish positive relationships with students and to set good examples for social interaction
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding healthy and respectful behaviors
- Creating an environment that encourages problem solving, collaboration, teamwork, and peaceful conflict resolution
- Using the Internet and electronic communication safely
- Supporting students' social and emotional development



- Encouraging students' interests and participation in non-academic areas and extracurricular activities that help them to build upon their strengths.

### **Curriculum and approaches**

TLC understands that anti-bullying instruction and concepts dealing with respect must be introduced early in a child's life and consistently addressed throughout a student's development toward adulthood. TLC already uses several evidence-based curricula and approaches to help promote a safe school environment and is currently researching others.

### **Preschool and Kindergarten**

The focus of the Early Childhood Center (ECC) is to foster language development which allows children to maximize development across other domains (e.g. cognitive, social/emotional, and self-help). Many youngsters come to our school at age 3 with little or no age-appropriate language skills. Clear language and highly visual, "hands-on" approaches helps to make these important concepts real to our youngest students.

The ECC has adopted anti-bias education in support of this focus, and in conjunction with our child-centered, project-based emergent curriculum in 2016. Below is an overview of the core goals of Anti-Bias Education:

#### **THE FOUR CORE GOALS OF ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION**

(From: Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards, 2010. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children & Ourselves*. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. p.xiv.)

- Anti-Bias Education Goal 1: Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
- Anti-Bias Education Goal 2: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
- Anti-Bias Education Goal 3: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
- Anti-Bias Education Goal 4: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discrimination.

Each of these four goals interacts with, supports, and amplifies each of the other goals. They are appropriate for children of all ages and backgrounds. By embedding these four goals into

the daily fabric of the ECC, we promote respect and inclusion, and have a developmentally appropriate means, congruent with our focus, to approach unfairness if and when it arises.

## Elementary

As indicated in the Preschool and Kindergarten section, the Anti-Bias Education curriculum is also implemented at the Elementary level, in 2016. *Anti-Bias Education (ABE)* is a values-based curriculum that promotes understanding, respecting and embracing differences. In this approach, all individuals and families are recognized and the environment is rich with learning materials that represent various cultures and traditions. Within an inclusive, respectful school society, children develop self-awareness, a positive group identity, and comfort with human diversity. Members of the community develop an increased confidence in problem solving skills and learn to identify and act against bias, allowing students to reach their fullest potential as competent and caring citizens.

Additional curriculum and resources are used:

*The Responsive Classroom*- *The Responsive Classroom (TRC)* is an approach to elementary teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. It is used throughout the elementary departments along with individual social skills training and weekly small groups that focus on pro-social behavior. This approach provides regular opportunities for student group meetings where issues that arise are discussed and positive behaviors are modeled. TRC utilizes parent handouts that offer insight and recommendations to parents in supporting positive social behavior.

Seven principles, as described in *TRC's* literature, informed by the work of educational theorists and the experiences of practicing classroom teachers, guide *The Responsive Classroom* approach:

- The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
- How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
- The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
- To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
- Knowing the children we teach-individually, culturally, and developmentally- is as important as knowing the content we teach.
- Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
- How the adults at school work together is as important as their

individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

*Steps to Respect - Steps to Respect (STR)* was adopted at The Learning Center for the Deaf in 2004. It is an evidence-based program that addresses issues of bullying directly through lesson units, videos, posters, and activities and is used in grades 1 - 6. The *Steps To Respect* curriculum teaches elementary and middle school students to recognize, refuse, and report bullying, how to be assertive, and strategies to build friendships. *STR* also has a parent component with materials that are sent home as children progress through the various units throughout the year. Faculty and staff from various departments of the school have participated in *Steps to Respect* trainings, and together upon its initial implementation, they developed common reporting language and procedures.

*The Michigan Model for Health Revised Curriculum* is used in our elementary grades at TLC. The *Michigan Model for Health* is a comprehensive and sequential health education curriculum that aims to provide school-aged children the knowledge and skills needed to practice and maintain healthy behaviors and lifestyles. It provides age-appropriate lessons addressing the most serious health challenges facing school-aged children, including social and emotional health; nutrition and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; personal health and wellness; safety; and HIV. Each grade level includes activities and lessons that teach students skills for dealing with bullying situations. The *Michigan Model for Health* facilitates learning through a variety of interactive teaching and learning techniques. Skill development through demonstration and guided practice is emphasized resulting in the development of positive lifestyle behaviors for students and families.

## **SECONDARY SCHOOL**

### **Middle School Students (Grades 6-8)**

Students participate in Health class throughout the middle school years. In this class, opportunities to discuss various issues of social respect and responsibility are included within the curriculum. In the Middle school years, *Second Step*, an anti-bullying curriculum developed by the same company that publishes *Steps to Respect* is taught during health class, since Fall 2011.

*Get Real*, is another comprehensive curriculum taught in the middle school age classrooms, which addresses many aspects of physical, emotional and personal health. Specific units address diversity and differences.

Middle school counselors are in place and meet often with students for small group discussions about social behavior, bullying, and differences in society, Deaf/hearing cross-cultural topics, and conflict resolution.

## High School Students (Grades 9-12)

All high school students are enrolled in Health class for one full year. This class provides a broad overview addressing many issues of personal health, mental health, and self-awareness. Bullying and cyber-bullying are addressed through Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) High School's cyber-bullying curriculum.

The high school also sponsors a student Gay/Lesbian/ Straight/Alliance (GLSA) group that meets to plan and host discussions and activities related to specific areas of diversity.

Several assemblies are offered each year on issues of diversity and difference, Deaf culture, and cross-cultural communication.

Counseling staff members work individually with students or with small groups to address issues of conflict, diversity, bullying, and harassment.

MARC's high school curriculum, and cyber-bullying curriculum and the *Second Step* are utilized at the high school level.

Curriculum models investigated must meet the following criteria:

- Must include a parent component
- Must be age-appropriate and not be overly reliant upon reading material, only. Videos, "hands-on" activities and visuals would be more effective with our students.
- Must directly address bullying and cyber-bullying prevention
- Must have been evaluated through research and have outcomes data, which demonstrates a positive impact
- If possible, it would be desirable to have evidence that it has been used effectively with deaf and hard of hearing persons.

## SECTION 7: Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

Despite all preventive, educational, and pro-active measures, there exists the very real concern that bullying, harassment, and or retaliation may still occur. The following section provides guidance to faculty, parents, students and staff as to how TLC expects its community to proceed when this harmful behavior occurs.

### **Bullying, harassment and retaliation will not be tolerated at TLC.**

Each school faculty or staff member is required to report immediately to the Supervisor or Administrator any instance of bullying or retaliation that he/she becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents, guardians, or others who are not staff members, may be made anonymously. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by

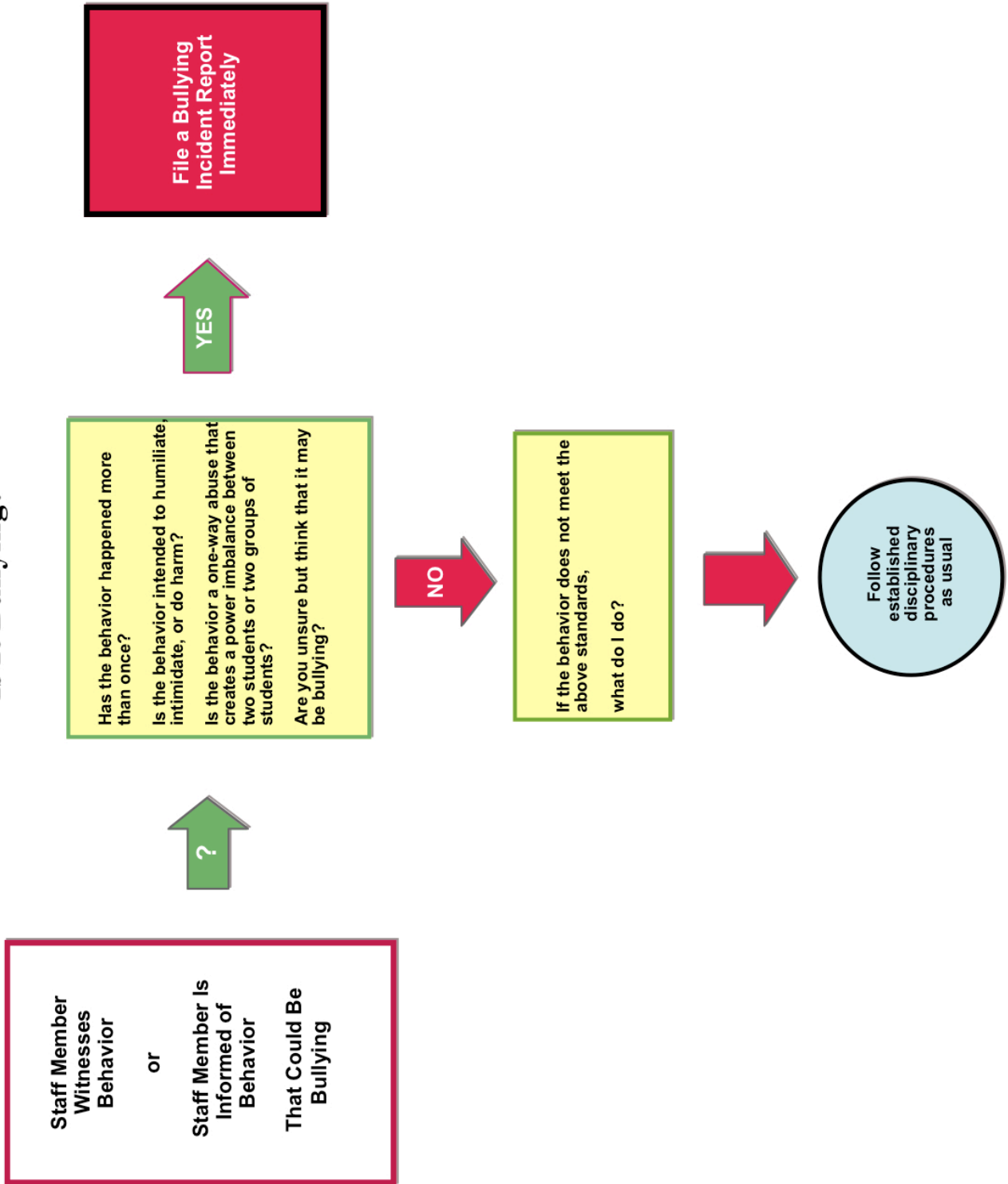
staff, students, parents, guardians, or others, and may be signed, oral, or written. Oral reports or reports made using sign language must then be recorded in writing.

The school will have several resources available to the school community to report bullying or retaliation including, but not limited to, an **Incident Report Form**, and the regular school mailing address where any administrator can be reached. Blank copies of the Incident Report Form will be available in the main office of each program, through school counselors, in the nursing offices, and included in each student/parent handbook provided annually. These handbooks will be provided in other prevalent languages used by families at TLC other than English.

At the start of each school year, new handbooks are distributed to students and parents/guardians. TLC will include in each handbook, at every level, a description of the reporting procedures and resources available, including the name and contact information of the supervisor or administrator. A copy of the Incident Report Form will be included in the handbook. This information will also be provided annually to staff and placed on the school web site.

Reports of bullying or retaliation maybe made anonymously, NO disciplinary action will be taken against a student or staff on the basis of an anonymous report.

# Is It Bullying?



### Reporting by Faculty and Staff

**Faculty and staff members will report immediately to a supervisor if he/she witnesses or becomes aware of bullying, harassment, or retaliation involving a student.** This requirement to report does not limit the authority of the staff to respond to behavioral or disciplinary actions consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

### Reporting by Students, Parents, Guardians, and Others

The school expects students, parent/guardians, or others who witness or become aware of bullying, harassment, or retaliation involving a student to report it to a supervisor or administrator. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor based solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Parents/guardians and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report.

Students who believe that they are the targets of bullying, observe bullying behavior, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that bullying is taking place, are expected to report incidents either verbally or using the TLC Incident Report Form. Students will be provided safe, private, and age-appropriate assistance to report and discuss the incident with a staff member or supervisor. If a verbal report is made, the supervisor or administrator will assist the student in completing the form.

Employees, parents, or students should raise genuine concerns as soon as possible and make reports at any time without fear of reprisal.

Students who knowingly make a false accusation of bullying or harassment shall be subject to possible disciplinary action.

## **SECTION 8: Investigative Procedures**

The following are standard guidelines for responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. All complaints will be taken seriously. These guidelines will be adapted as necessary to respond as appropriately as possible to the complaint.

The supervisor or administrator will investigate promptly any and all reports of bullying, harassment, or retaliation. In so doing, consideration will be given to the information available, including the nature of the allegation and the ages of the students involved. All students are afforded the same protections regardless of their legal status.

The supervisor or administrator will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of importance to the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

*Pre-Investigation:* Before fully initiating the investigation, the supervisor or administrator will, among other things, determine if there is a need to take immediate steps to support and/or protect the alleged target from further potential incidents of concern. In taking such action, the rights of both the alleged target and the alleged aggressor must be taken into account. Possible adjustments to the school environment or increased supervision will be considered, if needed, to enhance the target's feeling of safety. All steps taken in the investigative procedure shall be recorded.

*Investigatory Process:* Investigations will be conducted as quickly as possible and follow all applicable laws and regulations. During the investigation, students, staff, witnesses, parents/guardians, and others will be interviewed, as necessary. Confidentiality will be maintained to protect the reporter, witnesses and/or interviewees regarding a bullying situation. The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gathering information from the complainant including:

- What specifically happened?
- Who committed the alleged act?
- Was the hurtful action repetitive?
- Did the action create or foster a power imbalance between 2 youngsters or groups of students?
- Who was present or who may have relevant information?
- Is there any evidence to consider?
- When did the event(s) occur?
- Where did the event(s) occur?

It is helpful to have the facts in writing. If age appropriate, the complainant will be asked to sign and date the written complaint. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to sign, the investigator will record the allegations, read them, or use ASL to restate them aloud to confirm accuracy and sign/date the document her/himself.

### **Interviews**

Once the allegations are established, the investigator will gather all evidence. This will likely include interviews with the alleged aggressor, witnesses, parents and/or staff. Interviews may be conducted by the supervisor or administrator, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. ASL interpreters will be used when necessary.



Since bullying is considered a violent act, the target and aggressor will never be interviewed together or required to interact through mediation during an investigation.

All investigations will be consistent with current school policies and procedures. To the extent possible, given the responsibility to investigate and address the matter, the investigator will maintain the confidentiality of the complainant and the witnesses.

The supervisor or administrator, upon determination of a viable report, will promptly contact the parents/guardians of the student who has been an alleged target and the parents of the alleged aggressor. The administrator may only disclose information to a parent about his/her own child. Each student's LEA will also be contacted.

#### **SECTION 9: Determinations and Further Reporting Procedures**

School personnel must weigh all of the facts and circumstances objectively to determine if the alleged events occurred and if a charge of bullying or retaliation is substantiated. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the supervisor or administrator will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The following includes procedures for restoring the target's safety and assessing the needs of the target.

The supervisor or administrator will:

- 1) determine what remedial or adaptive action is required, if any, and
- 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary actions are necessary.

As with the investigation, the response will be individually tailored to the circumstances, taking into account the nature of the behavior and the ages of the students involved. The range of disciplinary actions for students who have committed acts of bullying or retaliation will be in accordance with the school's disciplinary policies as detailed in Student Handbooks.

Disciplinary action will take into account the need to balance accountability with the student's age and the need to teach appropriate behavior. There exists a range of age-appropriate disciplinary actions that may be used, as identified in each department's handbook and in accordance with administrative disciplinary policies and applicable state and federal laws.

Depending upon the circumstances, the supervisor or administrator may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development. Opportunities for individual skill building or working in collaboration with school counselors, teachers, and parents to help reinforce the development of positive social skills may be appropriate responses for individual students and is encouraged. This type of

referral process will be offered to the target, the aggressor and the families of each these individuals.

#### Reporting to Parents or Guardians

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken toward another student unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations. School personnel may, however, share information about the process that was followed leading to a determination of whether bullying did occur, what general measures are being taken to protect the target from further acts of bullying or retaliation, and what is being done to ensure that the target is reassured.

When it has been determined that bullying has occurred, a separate notice will be sent to the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor outlining the actions that will be taken to prevent further incidents. Pursuant to regulations, immediate notification, to law enforcement will occur when criminal charges may be filed against the aggressor.

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process of accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination, as explained in Section 11.

#### Reporting to Administrators of Another School or School District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school, public/charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the supervisor or administrator first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident, so that each school may take prompt and appropriate action.

#### Reporting to Law Enforcement

TLC has a strong and long-standing relationship with local law enforcement personnel. They are familiar with our campus and several have taken sign language classes with our instructors. TLC considers these relationships essential to the well being of our students. The administrator will notify the local Police Department if he/she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be warranted and will cooperate fully in any subsequent police investigations.

If an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 years who is no longer enrolled at the school, the administrator will contact the local law enforcement agency promptly, if he/she has reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

#### Reporting to the Executive Director of The Learning Center for the Deaf

A regular summary report of investigations will be provided to the Executive Director to be shared with the Board of Directors, when appropriate.

### **SECTION 10: Collaboration with Parents**

#### **Parent Education and Resources**

The Learning Center for the Deaf believes that parents and families are a child's primary teachers and that the students benefit most when school and home work collaboratively as partners. The Learning Center for the Deaf will offer education programs and curriculum resources to parents and guardians that focus on how families can support ways to prevent bullying and cyber-bullying (and general on-line safety) and provide intervention strategies that can be implemented at home. Programs and resources may be offered in collaboration with the existing parent groups and by departments. TLC will provide resources for parents on the school web site, including specific information about online safety and the potential threats of cyber-bullying.

#### **Notification Requirements**

The school will inform parents and guardians about the curricula being used that address anti-bullying, the dynamics of bullying as well as general on-line safety and cyber bullying. TLC will also make available the excellent information for parents that are provided in the various curricula already in use. Written notice will be sent home each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention Plan, along with the school's Acceptable Use policy for the Internet. These will be provided languages other than English, as needed. The complete Plan will be posted on the school's web site.

All school handbooks will include relevant sections of this Plan.

### **SECTION 11: Problem Resolution System**

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 370 of chapter 71 of the General Laws to include (g)(v): The plan shall inform parents or guardians of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for

seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. This information will be made available in both hard copy and electronic form.

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of The Learning Center for the Deaf may do so with their district and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available in the Director of Marie Philip School's office.

## **SECTION 12: Access to Resources**

The Learning Center for the Deaf recognizes that the underlying needs of targets, aggressors, and families must be addressed in a truly respectful environment. The school is also aware of the limited resources available to those who are deaf or hard of hearing and who would benefit from counseling, social work, or mental health services in the larger community.

At least once every four years beginning with 2015-2016 school year, The Learning Center for the Deaf will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary developed student survey to assess the school climate and along with the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying. These surveys results will be used to assess the effectiveness of bullying prevention curricula and instruction that is required under the bullying prevention and intervention statute. Additionally, TLC will report bullying incident data annually to the Department.

### **School Resources**

Beyond education in our classrooms, TLC has a school counseling staff that is skilled and prepared to work with students and families to prevent, intervene early, and to respond effectively to bullying. This team is linguistically and culturally competent in working with youth who are deaf and hard of hearing, and they have developed strong relationships with the community resources that are available to help, including Walden Community Services (formerly known as 'Wraparound') geared specifically for those families with a deaf or hard-of-hearing member who need additional support. TLC also employs the skilled services of two Behavior Analysts to help design the broadest range of appropriate responses possible within our school setting. This may include functional behavioral assessment, individually designed behavior plans, and/or consultation to classroom staff.

### **Special Education Requirements**

The faculty at TLC will consider and address the needs of those students who, by nature of a disability or weak social skills development, may be especially vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics

(I.e. race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, gender identity mental, physical or developmental disability) or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Addressing these needs will be accomplished primarily through the student's IEP process, in collaboration with the child's educational team. Skill-building, social skills awareness and instruction, language and vocabulary building, self-advocacy skills, and a plan to reduce problem behaviors could all be considered as appropriate support.

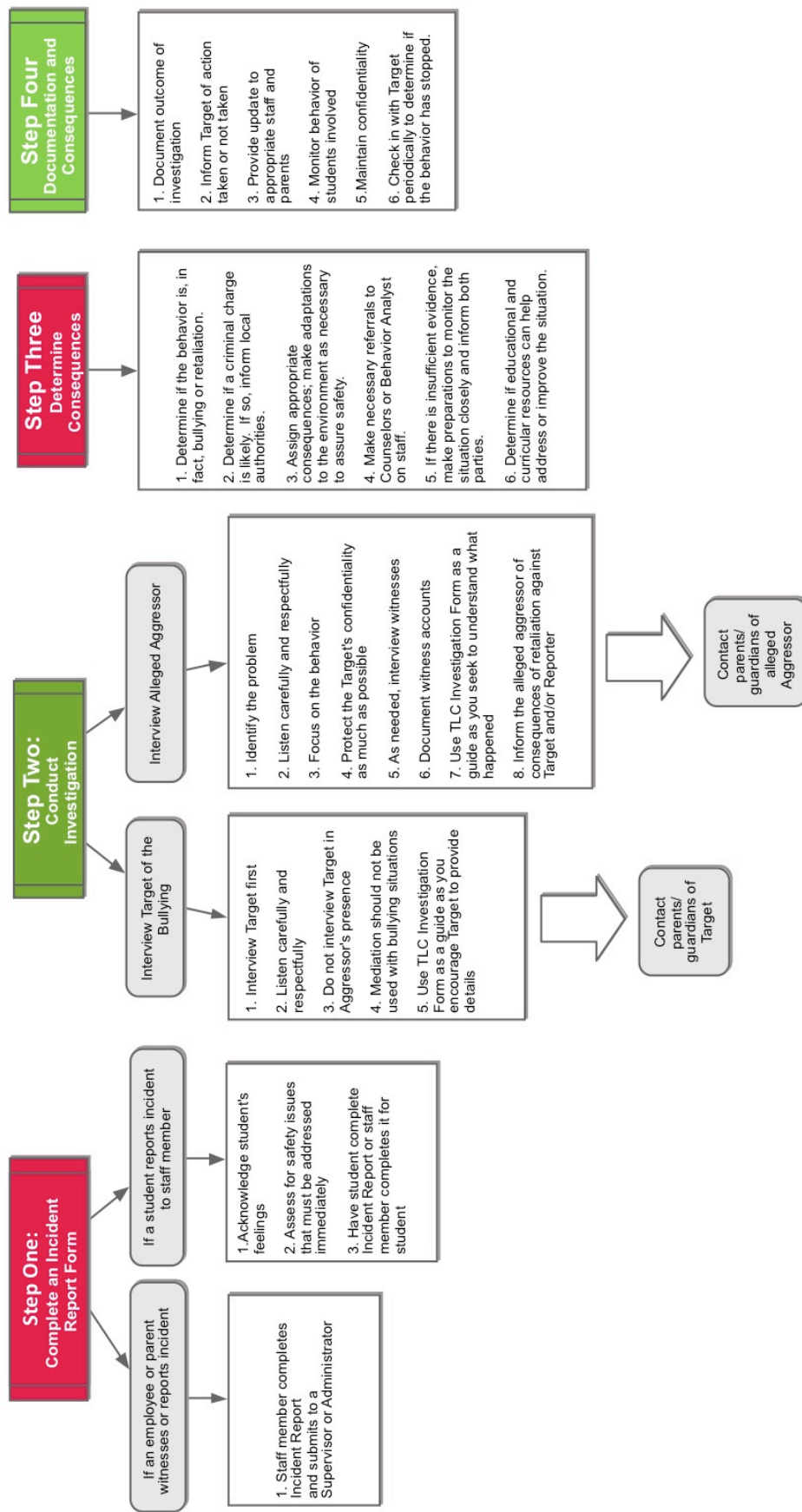
### **SECTION 13: Relationships to Other Laws**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to this approved special education school or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of this school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Nothing in the Plan prevents the school from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

ACTION STEPS ONCE A REPORT OF BULLYING OR RETALIATION IS RECEIVED AT TLC



# The Learning Center for the Deaf

## Bullying Prevention and Intervention Report Form

### 1. Name of Reporter \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report)

Check if you are:  a target of the behavior       the reporter (not the target)

Check whether you are a:  student       staff member  parent       administrator       Other \_\_\_\_\_

How do you prefer we contact you? \_\_\_\_\_

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### 2. Information about the Incident:

• Name of Target(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Elem/Secondary/WS  
(Person who is the subject of the behavior)

• Name of Aggressor \_\_\_\_\_ Elem/Secondary/WS  
(Person who is engaged in the behavior)

When did the incident(s) occur? Time? \_\_\_\_\_

Before School     Morning     Lunch     After School     Evening     Other

Location of Incident(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Hallway     Restroom     Classroom     Cafeteria/Gym     Outdoors     Residence     Other

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### 3. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or who have information about it)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student     Staff     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student     Staff     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student     Staff     Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

### 4. Describe the details of the incident (Be specific and continue on back of form to fully explain what each person did or said.)

Complete Both Sides Of Form

**The Learning Center for the Deaf**  
**Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Report Form** (page 2)

**Signature of Reporter or Person filling out this Form** **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Form Given To:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY**

**Investigation Assigned to:**

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

**Title** \_\_\_\_\_



**The Learning Center for the Deaf      Investigation Report Form**

1. Investigator(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Interviews** (Must be conducted separately)

**Interviewed Aggressor** Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewed Target** Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewed Witness #1** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewed Witness #2** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewed Witness #3** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. **Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor?**  YES  NO

• If yes, have incidents previously involved a target or a target group?  YES  NO

• Are there any previous findings of Bullying or Retaliation?  YES  NO

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**4. SUMMARY of INVESTIGATION** (Please attach additional pages or diagrams as needed)

**CONCLUSIONS**

**1. Findings of Bullying or Retaliation?**

YES  NO  
\_\_ Bullying Incident documented as \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_ Retaliation Discipline referral made to whom? \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. CONTACTS MADE**

Target's Parent/Guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
 Aggressor's Parent/ Guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
 District Liaison Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
 Law Enforcement Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

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**3. ACTION TAKEN**

Loss of Privileges  Detention  Suspension  Community Service  Other  
 Education/Research  Letter of Apology  Referral \_\_\_\_\_

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**4. Describe Safety Planning**

Follow-up with Target scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_

Initial Report/Date reported: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up with Aggressor scheduled for: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed and Forwarded to Principal : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Report forwarded to the Director of Education on : \_\_\_\_\_