The Laurel School

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

1.   Introduction
The Laurel School Education Center Inc. complies with Massachusetts State law MGL c.71, s.37O regarding Bullying Prevention and Intervention. The Laurel School Education Center, Inc. provides an environment where students are known, needed and cared for as they discover themselves through serving others. In order to create this environment, students at the Laurel School participate in many activities that will establish mentoring and leadership skills

2.   Policy and Legal Definitions Against Bullying, Cyber-bullying and Retaliation
The Laurel School maintains an environment that is respectful and safe for students, families, staff, faculty, and administration.
a.   Policy – The Laurel School maintains an environment that is respectful and safe for students, families, staff, faculty, and administration. Bullying, Cyber bullying, and/or Retaliation will not be tolerated at the Laurel School.
b.   Definitions:
Bullying: 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 victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.
Cyber-bullying: Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall 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. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) 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 clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying 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 clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

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

Retaliation: Actions against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

3.   Prevention of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying
The Laurel School provides opportunities for the students, staff and administration to learn about the prevention of bullying and cyber-bullying. The Laurel School promotes a respectful and caring environment. Our curriculum incorporates these values through leadership, collaboration and mentoring.

Faculty, Staff and Administration have opportunities to discuss policy and procedure regarding student/adult behavior during professional development and faculty meetings. Faculty also discusses techniques with students to prevent and intervene throughout our school year through the use of problem solving and working with children using positive strategies when encountering issues.

Through the use of programs such as "Mentors" teachers work with mixed-aged groups of students and work within a structure using the theme of "Leadership". Within this theme, topics are discussed with teachers and activities are carried out by students. Topics that the students will explore are: Kindness, Respect for

Each Other, Interacting Positively, and Teamwork/Helping Each Other. Teachers collaboratively plan to facilitate these activities that occur once a week for ½ hour.

4.   Reports of Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Retaliation
        Information regarding reports of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation will be located in the Laurel Family and Employee Handbooks. This is a way for teachers, administrators, staff, families, and the Laurel community to be aware of any and all policies regarding bullying cyber-bullying and retaliation, handling each case with consistency.

Any information regarding witnessing or involvement of incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation by faculty, staff, administrators or parents/guardians will be reported directly to the Head of School.

Any information regarding witnessing or involvement of incidents
of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation by students should be reported to a trusted source such as a teacher, Director of Faculty and Students Services, Director of Operations or the Head of School.

Incidents may not remain confidential if it constitutes an investigation by authorities.

5. Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Retaliation
a.) Preliminary Considerations – Immediate steps are taken by the Head of School   to assess the report made by a student to a faculty or staff member.
        b.) Obligation to notify Parents – Parents are notified by the Head of School after an initial assessment is made and as many facts of incident are collected.
c.) Investigation – The Head of School will make an initial assessment of a report of bullying, cyber-bullying and/or retaliation as stated by
a student to a faculty, community, or staff member. All facts will be gathered by the Head of School and Director of Faculty and Student Services (and teachers as necessary) to determine facts of complaint. The Leadership Team made up of the Head of School, Director of Faculty and Student Services and the Director of Operations and Admissions will convene to discuss if further action needs to be Taken after review of all of facts of the incident. Together the Leadership Team will determine if any disciplinary action will be taken. All parties will meet with Head of School to review decisions made by the leadership team and further Discussion will take place regarding student behavior and discipline if necessary. The Director of Faculty and Student Services will document all proceedings and retain documentation in student files.
        d.) Resolution, Notification and Follow-Up

6. Conclusion
This policy is meant to prevent bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation in our school. The Laurel School takes preventative measures through programming to provide a safe, caring and respectful environment for our students, families, staff, faculty and community.