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“One becomes a well-balanced adult  
Only if one has been fully a child.”

-Maria Montessori-

### **Bullying Prevention Policies:**

Maria Montessori believed that motivation and discipline come from within the child. The essence of the Montessori philosophy and method is self-motivation and self-discipline. Inevitable thoughtlessness and shortcomings in behavior will arise and teachers will deal with these situations accordingly. The child should be guided in choosing one form of behavior over another and in accepting the consequences of their behavior. Laren Staff will help students learn which behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable. As conflicts arise in the classroom the teachers will observe the children involved and their interactions. At the appropriate time the teacher will involve her/himself and engage in a discussion of the situation with the children involved – the problem at hand, feelings of both children, appropriate and acceptable language to use, and solutions to the problem. Our goal is for the children to learn to handle conflict situations themselves, as they will have to do for the remainder of life.

Laren Montessori School will not tolerate any form of bullying or cyber-bullying, nor will we tolerate retaliation against any person who reports bullying, or provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses bullying. Additionally, bullying is contrary to State Law. Nothing contained in this Section 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 United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

"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 students 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; or
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 without limitation 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 in this Section.

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 in Section [105 ILCS 5/27 – 23.77(b)].

**Policies and Procedures:**

The following policy and procedures regarding potential bullying be reported, as multiple reports from different sources may alert the administration to a pattern of which individual staff members would be unaware. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others: The school expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student or staff member to immediately report it to the Head of School. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the Head of School.

Also, consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. “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.
- (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Procedures for promptly investigating and addressing reports of bullying, including the following:

- Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
- The interventions that can be taken to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, and community-based services.

- Prohibiting reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and the consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.
- There will be consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.

The plan applies to students and all Laren Montessori employees, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, and the Board Members. Laren Montessori School provides the entire plan in the Laren Montessori Parent Handbook.

Behavior policies are established to help provide and maintain an attitude that encourages mutual respect among the students and toward all adults who are present in the building. It is very important for young children to learn and develop respect for others and their environment.

Teachers will make parents aware of discipline issues regarding their child. If a child becomes uncontrollable and is felt to be a danger to him/herself, classmates, or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and taken to the office at which time the parents will be called to pick up the child immediately.

When a student's behavior is out of line or misguided, we expect parents to support us in our attempt at correcting the behavior as the student progresses toward good character development. We expect the Laren Montessori School parents/guardians to have an attitude of responsibility.

Certain behaviors are of a more serious nature and for these, the student may be suspended or in extreme cases, where all other available means of help and correction have been exhausted, the student may be dismissed/removed from the program.

Each case will be handled individually according to the nature and seriousness of the violation. The School Administrator will determine the seriousness of the situation and if a suspension or removal from the program is appropriate. The Administrator will consult with the School Board as needed.

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Laren Montessori School's Bullying Policy is based on the engagement of all stakeholders – students, parents / legal guardians, staff, and the Board of Directors. It is in compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education guidelines for process and procedure (Last revised: 1/26/2023). In addition this policies and procedures will be re-evaluated every two years.