

Lighthouse School®



Bullying Prevention
and Intervention Plan

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Table of Contents

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I. Overview and Broad Policies

Overview

Lighthouse School has provided services to special children and their families for over 30 years. Many changes have occurred over this time, both within Lighthouse School and in the world. What has remained absolutely constant, however, is the belief that students' emotional needs are at the center of our mission. Lighthouse School is a school and a treatment center. Academic achievement, although important, is not our highest priority. Long-term clinical growth generalized across life context is our highest priority. APEX is a unique biodevelopmental, or life developmental program that all staff are trained in and that forms the foundation of our services. Lighthouse School is a corporation dedicated to helping students overcome the dysfunctional patterns of social/emotional/behavioral functioning that brings them to us and to helping them to acquire the skills and insights that will allow them to be successful in life.

At its core, bullying represents pathological patterns of interpersonal interaction. The need for formal plans suggests a widespread belief that schools have not been attentive enough to these and other related issues regarding the emotional functioning and needs of their students. One can only hope that the tragic events that bring us to this point will ultimately lead to a social consensus that schools can play, and indeed should play, a powerful and positive role in the emotional well-being and growth of their students. We offer our bullying prevention plan as both a reflection of our historical belief in that principle and as an example of our current application of these principles.

Background

Lighthouse School serves 232 students from over 100 communities in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. Students who attend Lighthouse School range in age from 3 to 22 years. The population of students served at Lighthouse School includes, but are not limited to, PTSD/Trauma, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Autism/Asperger's Spectrum, Pervasive Developmental Delays, Mood Disorders, Disruptive Disorders, Learning and Communication Disorders, Psychosis/Thought Disorders, Mental Retardation/Global Delays, Medical Disorders, Attachments Disorders, other Diagnoses, (e.g. Personality Disorders, Eating/Elimination Disorders, Tics, etc.)

Behaviorally, students present a broad range of relatively complex diagnostic profiles. Many students come to Lighthouse School with a history of aggression directed towards both staff and peers. While many factors contribute to this pattern, a clear theme is the role that unresolved conflict plays in aggression. In recent years, there has been an increase in students with broad-based and complicated social deficits. These students are particularly at risk for being the target of unwanted and inappropriate social interaction. This situation is complicated by the tendency of some students to misperceive typical or expectable social actions as intrusive and stressful.

As a result of their complicated clinical profiles and learning histories, the students require very comprehensive clinical treatment and behavior management programming that typically involves specialized, school, clinical, behavioral, transportation, attendance assurance, home, and community programming. These programs are linked together by each student's Case Management Team with particular involvement from Educational Case Managers, Individual Therapists and Family Therapists with oversight by Supervisors, Managers, and Directors.

Lighthouse School philosophically provides treatment for students having dissimilar disabilities in order to provide all students with continuous insight by comparison. We believe this is beneficial to students in accepting and understanding

their own disabilities by comparing and contrasting their disabilities to the different disabilities of their peers. This is believed to be beneficial because coping effectively with a disability involves insight based upon objectivity. Objectivity is an important prerequisite for achieving total life success, which represents the cardinal goal for each student enrolled. Students are assigned to one of four clusters that are defined by such student characteristics as age, disabilities and level of functioning.

Lighthouse School is a therapeutic placement and therefore has as one of its highest priorities, the social and emotional well being and development of each enrolled student. To this end, the treatment technology employed is called APEX (Assimilated Personal Enrichment Experiences.) The major points of this treatment methodology include improving a student's ability to become more functionally adaptive in life. This Technology, which was developed exclusively at Lighthouse School is designed to promote a student's understanding of self/other relationships and their development across eight dimensions of human growth and development that include: the spiritual, affective, temporal, social, cognitive, sensory, physical and behavioral dimensions.

Lighthouse School provides psychological services to enrolled students based on identified needs as outlined in the IEP. The following components of programming address this issue:

- APEX Services & Programming
- Individual Psychotherapy
- Group Therapy
- Family Therapy
- Community Therapy
- Access to Vocational Services
- Family Support System – 24 hours, Pager Support System

Priority Statements

- Lighthouse School is committed to creating and maintaining an environment where all members of the school community feel safe and supportive in their efforts to grow towards their maximum potential.
- Lighthouse School strives to have every member of the school community, both staff and student:
 - Work constructively to expand their understanding of their needs and the needs of others
 - Resolve conflicts in a positive and mutually constructive manner
 - Respect and support the needs of others
 - Refrain from any action that is intended to or has the effect of infringing on the rights, experiences or needs of others. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Bullying
 - Cyber-bullying

We at Lighthouse School have established this Bullying Prevention and treatment Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Director of Clinical Services/Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

Definition of Key Terms

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, 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:

- 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 of 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.

Cyber-bullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is 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 a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

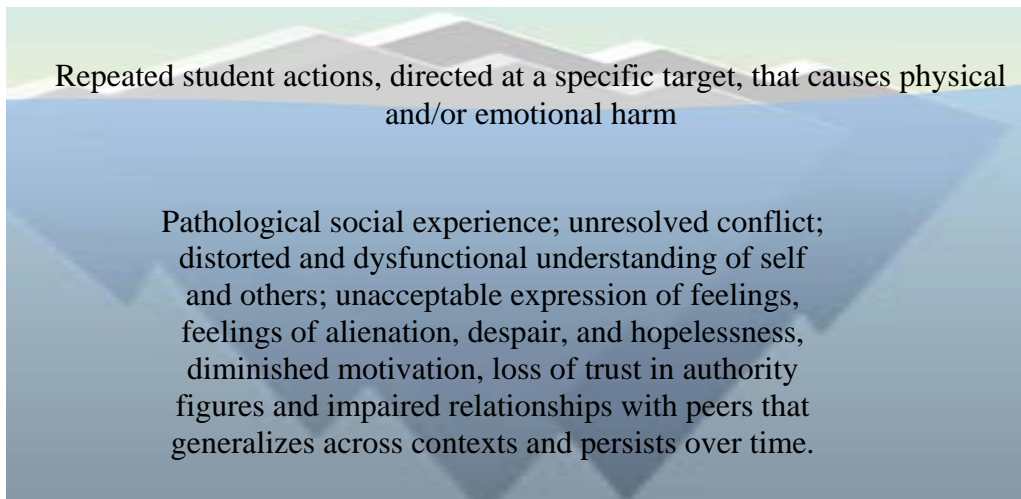
Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Bullying from the Perspective of APEX Biodevelopment

Much has been written about bullying and it is beyond the scope of the current plan to present an extended interpretation of bullying from the perspective of APEX. At the same time, however, it is important to briefly address this issue, as it is the foundation about which all interventions are based.

Consider bullying as an iceberg:



Roughly 7/8ths of an iceberg are underwater and thus unobservable. Like an iceberg, with bullying what is immediately apparent is the observable, inappropriate and intrusive actions of one student (or students) directed towards another. Clearly and unquestionably, these inappropriate actions must be addressed and stopped. From the perspective of APEX, however, the emphasis is expanded beyond that which is observable to a deep and considered examination of the covert, underlying features,

both causal and resulting, associated with bullying. APEX emphasizes that the vast majority of the problem of bullying and therefore the best target for long-term amelioration of the problem are the features that lie below the surface.

Children and young adults spend significant amounts of time in school. As a result school-based experiences have a powerful and lasting impact on development; that is, that school will contribute to the character of a person – the combination of features and traits that make up their individual nature and out of which they act. That character, in turn, is shaped by the sum of experiences, feelings, thoughts and perceptions (accurate or not) that have made up the persons life. It follows from this that the actions of bullying, as well as anything else that interferes with a positive, well functioning life, are not the whole problem but are expressions, or symptoms, of something deeper. It is not enough, then, to address only the symptoms as important as that is. It is also crucial to find ways to treat what underlies the symptoms if meaningful change is to occur. These concepts underlie everything we do here at Lighthouse School, including our Plan for prevention and intervention of bullying.

Unlike many schools, Lighthouse School is also a Treatment Center. The treatment model we employ, APEX Biodevelopmental Technology, is primarily aimed at all these dimensions of functioning, not just one. Because of this, the underlying issues that are expressed in the symptoms of bullying behavior, such as aggression, dysfunctional social skills, inadequate self-concept and internal conflicts arising from unresolved past experiences, are daily goals of treatment. This holds true as well for the underlying symptoms of susceptibility to being targeted by bullying behaviors. Our purpose, then, is to address these underlying issues that give rise to negative and/or ineffective symptoms while at the same time maintaining effective boundaries within which students can experience safety and growth.

Lighthouse School's Resources Responsible for all Aspects of Programming Related to Bullying

The following people will be the primary staff responsible for implementation, administration, and application of Lighthouse School's bullying plan:

Stephen F. Ferland, M. Ed.	Chief Administrative Officer
Scott Bartis, Ph. D.	Director of Clinical Services/Principal
Dorothy Pepin, B. S.	Director of Program Services
John Tarmey, B. S.	Director of Cluster Services
James Dalton, M. Ed.	Coordinator for Clinical Services
Frederick Kilmartin, M. Ed.	Supervisor for APEX Behavior Application Services

Mr. Kilmartin and Mr. Dalton will be the staff who address the reports or concerns from parents, guardians, and other concerned individuals. Calls to other people regarding potential bullying or related concerns will be redirected to these two individuals. They can be contacted at Lighthouse School at 978-251-4050.

II. Training Overview

Lighthouse School places a high value on staff training. Time is devoted each week to addressing a variety of training subjects. The highest value is placed on training staff to clinically address the needs of the students from the perspective of APEX Biodevelopmental technology. Topics included in these trainings include but are not limited to:

- positive interventions to promote functional change

- the development, maintenance, and expansion of relationships based on trust, mutuality and emotional accountability
- affective awareness, acceptance, and understanding
- conflict resolution skills
- insight and objectivity
- the importance of compliance with norms and expectations based on social consensus
- student disabilities, syndromes and symptoms
- crisis management techniques
- de-escalation techniques

Training for Supervisors and Managers

Leadership is a critical component to the success of any organizational initiative. At Lighthouse School, leadership has always been an organizational value. Management is an administrative skill with authority that comes with the title; leadership is an interpersonal skill that is earned. At Lighthouse School we have a dedicated team of Supervisors and Managers who first and foremost are leaders. Supervisors and managers participate in advanced training in all aspects of bullying including legal and regulatory issues so as to be able to provide the highest quality of leadership on bullying to all staff. This training also includes participation in trainings and discussions with other agencies and groups such as maaps, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Annual Staff Training for all Staff on Bullying

All staff will participate in a training session on bullying. This session will occur during the Staff Training Days at the start of the academic year. Staff hired after this or who miss the training will participate in another training of similar content and length.

Ongoing Professional Development Seminars for all Staff on Bullying Training Seminars

In understanding, recognizing, responding to and treating issues associated with bullying are incorporated into the annual training/staff development seminar system utilized at Lighthouse School. In addition, throughout the year key concepts associated with bullying are reviewed as part of the weekly Whole Team Conferences.

Small Group Training: The cluster-based system of Lighthouse School is utilized to target staff working with those student populations that are more likely to experience issues with bullying and/or to respond to actual instances of bullying.

Role-based Training is utilized for those staff whose role makes them particularly likely to confront bullying. These roles include but are not limited to: Bioeducational Facilitators, Teachers, Clinical Services, APEX Behavioral Applications Division members, and Family Therapists (in order to enable them to educate parents and guardians).

Individual Staff Training: Lighthouse School has in place a sophisticated training system whereby any staff may request training on any treatment topic. The Supervisor for APEX Services is responsible for arranging appropriate training for that staff. A member of the Clinical Services Division typically conducts these trainings. These trainings are documented and become part of a training database.

Training Content Specifically Targeted to Address Bullying includes but is not limited to:

- All aspects of this plan

- Interpretation of bullying from the perspective of APEX Biodevelopmental Technology
- Developmentally appropriate treatment options to proactively reduce or eliminate bullying
- Developmentally appropriate treatment options for students who feel that they may be experiencing bullying
- Developmentally appropriate treatment options for students who have been bullied.
- Developmentally appropriate treatment options for students who engage in bullying.
- Conflict resolution skills and approaches
- Students at heightened risk for being the targets of bullying
- Students at heightened risk for engaging in bullying
- The many forms that bullying may take including cyber-bullying
- Skills, scripts and approaches to increase the appropriate expression of affect
- The importance of interpersonal understanding, perspective taking and empathy
- The needs underlying bullying experiences

III. Treatment

APEX Biodevelopmental Technology: Treatment Philosophy/Clinical Curriculum

Lighthouse School's treatment philosophy is based on the notion that Biodevelopment, or life development, represents the highest priority for treatment. This is because biodevelopmental deficits so strongly affect a person's future chances of achieving functional adaptation. Functional adaptation is the set of practical mastery skills that reflect a person's capacity to successfully negotiate the diverse challenges of life.

Lighthouse School has developed a biodevelopmental technology called APEX in order to enhance to the highest degree possible, each student's biodevelopmental proficiency. APEX stands for Assimilated Personal Enrichment Experiences. APEX includes comprehensive services provided at school, at home and in the community for each attending student. Providing integrated services across life settings helps to ensure consistency and efficacy and to maximize student-based growth.

One of the foundational beliefs of APEX is that it is insufficient and inadequate to simply consider and to treat overt behavior or action. In order for generalized and durable growth to occur it is critical to understand and address the more covert features or factors underlying overt symptomology. Chief among these underlying features are needs, feelings and unresolved conflicts.

All staff receive extensive and ongoing training in APEX principles and applications. The success of students participating in APEX, Lighthouse School's track record of transitioning students to less structured educational settings, the percentage of students continuing on to post-secondary education and its reputation in both the special education community and the region as a whole stand as powerful evidence of the effectiveness of APEX in treating complicated clinical issues such as bullying.

APEX is practiced every moment of a student's experience while at Lighthouse School. It is woven into all ongoing educational lessons and activities. Expectations, approaches, consequences are clear and consistently implemented throughout all contexts.

APEX Biodevelopmental Technology and Bullying

One of the significant benefits of APEX is its functional utility. That is, because, as noted above the focus is not on overt action, but on underlying causal factors, APEX is relatively easily applied to any number of dysfunctional, inappropriate, and/or intrusive actions exhibited by students. Thus, it is fairly straightforward process to treat bullying from the perspective of APEX.

Some of the major aspects of the APEX curriculum include:

- Insight
- Conflict Resolution
- Disability Awareness and Acceptance
- Regulation
- Relationships
- Self Understanding
- Interpersonal Understanding and Acceptance
- Compliance
- Motivation
- Expression of Needs and Feelings
- Empathy
- Interpersonal Interaction
- Functional Adaptation

Student-Based Instruction and Education: Younger and Lower Functioning Students

Individual Psychotherapy focused on the dynamics of bullying and conflict resolution tailored to the individual who bullies, as well as those who are targets of bullying tailored to this specific younger age group. This is scheduled for time in the IEP, where appropriate for students. All students at Lighthouse School have an IEP.

Group Psychotherapy focused on the education of students about bullying and all its forms (psychoeducation). In addition, we will include elements of Psychodynamic Group Process to explore and treat the students who by virtue of the diagnosis and behaviors they exhibit. This again will be targeted toward younger age group and in particular classroom and recess dynamics. This is also scheduled for time within the context of the IEP. All students at Lighthouse School have an IEP.

APEX Treatment as addressed earlier, is an ongoing, complete day, pervasive treatment methodology that is used in ALL settings (classroom, small group instruction, recess, lunch and time in learning). These groups of students have, in general, a lowered sense of self and more limited capacity for reflection and insight. With these students what starts as a positive motivation to engage socially with peers is experienced by the other student as unwanted, inappropriate and intrusive. Behaviors such as The emphasis here is on teasing and inciting are commonplace. Interventions emphasize positive reinforcement in general and rewarding prosocial behavior in particular. APEX Interventions for students in this group are commensurate with age and cognitive functioning level.

Student-Based Instruction and Education: Older and Higher Functioning Students

Individual Psychotherapy focused on the dynamics of bullying and conflict resolution tailored to the individual who bullies, as well as those who are targets of bullying.

Group Psychotherapy focused on the education of students about bullying and all it's forms (psychoeducation). In addition, we will include elements of Psychodynamic

Group Process to explore and treat the students who by virtue of the diagnosis and behaviors they exhibit

APEX Treatment with this group of students is more focused on underlying needs and factors. With more typical levels of functioning, come, unfortunately an increased likelihood of organized, strategic intentional actions that cause harm to others. Bullying within this group is often about unresolved conflict, and social hierarchies. APEX Interventions for students in this group are commensurate with age and cognitive functioning level.

School-wide Interventions

Philosophy Amplification Project (PAP): We have an ongoing project that enhances and augments our ongoing use of APEX. This project uses multi-modal 'stations' throughout the physical environment of our school in unique ways to not just promote prosocial behavior but to move individual clinical treatment forward for the student. The strength of this experiential project is in how it is used by our staff members in conjunction with APEX in student/staff interactions.

School-wide Anti-Bullying Intervention: Several options are currently being explored that include: a targeted No Bullying Week, School-Wide Assembly, and presentations by outside groups.

Specialized Student Intervention Programs: Students at Risk for Bullying

Identification: Through our close staff communication and our parent involvement (outlined earlier in the plan) we are able to identify those students both at risk for aggressing and being targeted. We also communicate regularly with school systems, transportation companies and social service agencies that are involved with our students.

Treatment-Specialized Programs: Specialized programs for clinical treatment are a regular part of our programming at Lighthouse School. These are done to enhance what is already offered to meet the goals of the IEP. When a student is identified as "at risk" The Supervisor for APEX Services works with involved staff to develop a specialized plan in conjunction with the appropriate clinician within this division.

Treatment-Family Therapy: Collaboration and communication with families is an essential component of the services provided at Lighthouse School. All families are assigned a Family Therapist with whom they meet monthly. Issues associated with bullying prevention and intervention in general, and the issues that arise in specific instances are addressed with the family of involved students. The Supervisor for Family Services works with the identified Family Therapist to educate families about APEX concepts and techniques in general and their specific application regarding bullying. Other topics include: helping each family generalize the APEX-based clinical intervention being used at school, helping families to understand the dynamics of bullying and to teach awareness of online safety issues and how to watch for signs of cyber-bullying. Parents are taught how to take appropriate action when warning signs are present.

Individual IEPs: We are currently exploring the extent to which the IEPs of individual students will be modified as a result of their being identified "at risk and/or who have specialized programs for addressing issues or features that may make them at increased risk for being an aggressor and/or a target.

IV. Reporting and Intervention

Global Reporting Guidelines

Reports of actions that may be bullying or retaliation may be made by staff,

students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Reports may be made anonymously. The Supervisor for Behavioral Applications Services, or designee is the supervisor responsible for documenting and recording all reports of bullying. At this point in time, a standard reporting form will not be used.

Resources for Reporting

At the beginning of each school year, Lighthouse School will provide all members of the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. This information will be included in the annual revisions of the Lighthouse School Family Handbook. This documentation will include contact information for the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee, who will serve as the main point of receiving and collecting reports of potential bullying.

As a treatment center, Lighthouse School serves a population of students that sometimes engage in behaviors that affect other people in negative ways. Some students' disabilities and profiles are such that they engage behaviors consistent with the definition of bullying, both as aggressors and as targets. The focus of treatment, therefore, focuses heavily on individuals learning about the needs of themselves and others, the importance of treating others with consideration, and the process of conflict resolution. These goals are so imbedded into the fiber of Lighthouses School's treatment structure, that the language used to describe negative incidents is more likely to be considered in these terms, rather than in the terms described by the Anti-Bullying Law. Members of the treatment team are highly trained to identify and resolve incidents of threats, aggression, intimidation, and hostility in the school environment.

Events that rise to the level of bullying, as identified by any member of the school community, will be managed in compliance with Massachusetts General Law.

Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with Lighthouse School policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Formal policies and procedures are in place to ensure that any information concerning safety is quickly, efficiently and accurately communicated to the Directors Team. All staff are trained in this policy. The specific policy regarding the communication of information about bullying is simply one subset of this more global policy. This global policy clearly states that should any staff member become aware of any event, action, or situation that MIGHT be significant, they should immediately contact a member of the Supervisory or Management Team. Examples of actions, events or situations include: bullying, comments and/or gestures about suicide or self-injury, threats of violence directed towards another person, possession of drugs, weapons or other contraband, and any other action that may put people at risk. When a member of the Supervisory Team becomes aware of a significant student incident they work directly with the Coordinator for Clinical Services who in turn is responsible for communicating with the Director of Clinical Services/Principal and other members of the Management Team to respond and resolve the situation.

Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

Lighthouse School expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of actions that may be bullying or retaliation involving a

student to report it to the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee. 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 Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee.

Lighthouse School assigns a family therapist to each student's family. It is most likely that any reports received from parents will be reported to the assigned family therapist. The therapist will communicate all concerns from parents regarding bullying to the Supervisor for Behavioral Applications Services. Consistent with Lighthouse School treatment, therapists are authorized to investigate and resolve the incidents reported. This includes consequences for students found to be engaging in aggressive behaviors and a resolution of the conflict between students. In all instances, families will be notified of the results of the school's actions. The goal is to complete all incidents to provide maximum satisfaction of safety and resolution to the student's family.

Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, placing the aggressor in a Crisis Room until such time as they are able to contract with staff to cease all aggressive behaviors toward the target, conflict resolution meetings, meetings with parents, or a re-convening of the students TEAM. Involvement of community resources, including the Chelmsford Police Department, is another potential response. The Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. Safety is the number one priority at Lighthouse School, and all members of the school community will be protected and kept from harm at all times.

Notification of Others

Parental Notification of Lighthouse School's plan: The initial phase of notification of our plan to parents will be two-fold. We will post our proposed plan on the school website at www.lighthouseschool.org and will have our Outreach Services Division present our plan proposal to families during their monthly Family Visit. These Family Visits are in part designed to educate parents/guardians about many clinical issues. They will include education on: 1) How parents can help us in the clinical treatment of their child at home in incidents involving bullying (both aggressor and victim alike) 2) Educate families on the dynamics of bullying 3) To educate and raise awareness of electronic media safety (i.e. internet, text, phone etc.) and understanding cyberbullying and associated laws. During this time we will seek feedback from families regarding the plan and implement appropriate suggestions from that process.

Annual Notification to Parents of Lighthouse School's plan: Annually, every family will receive a document outlining the student-related section of the Bullying

Prevention and Intervention Plan (written in the appropriate language for the family) as well as Internet and Electronic Media Safety awareness issues. As also stated above, but continuing on an ongoing basis each year and as needed during each month of the school year (including summer), our Outreach Family Therapy Division will review the yearly document related to our Bullying Plan. These Family Visits are in part designed to educate parents about many clinical issues. They will continue to include education on: 1) How parents can help us in the clinical treatment of their child at home in incidents involving bullying (both aggressor and victim alike) 2) Educate families on the dynamics of bullying 3) To educate and raise awareness of electronic media safety (i.e. internet, text, phone etc.) and understanding cyberbullying and associated laws.

Communication about Student-Based Instruction: Lighthouse School spends a great deal of time at intake to give a solid foundation for parents and student alike to understand the clinical nature of our work with children. One of the central tenants of our treatment philosophy is ongoing and close parental/guardian involvement in their treatment. As outlined above, we try to meet with families on a monthly basis. In the spirit of this philosophically based practice, we have and will continue to go into detail about our student based instruction and clinical treatment for ALL children with their parents. Emergency Family Meetings are a part of our commitment to ongoing Family work and will occur surrounding cases that meet the bullying statute. Furthermore, we will often have Emergency Family Meetings well before an occurrence of bullying behavior crosses the line of the law. A concrete outcome of Family Meetings as outlined above will be additions or changes to a students clinical treatment. Every student has an IEP that coordinates and clarifies both teaching and clinical goals for each student. This document is amended if needed throughout the school year and will of course be amended in cases that involve bullying or harassment (for both aggressor and target alike) where the clinical goals that already exist are not adequate to address the problem.

Notification of Possible Bullying Incident to Parents: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the students' family therapist, in conjunction with the Supervisor for APEX Behavioral Application Services, will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Supervisor for APEX Behavioral Application Services or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulation 603 CMR 49.00.

Communication with School Systems

Lighthouse School is proud of the communication and collaboration that we have with school systems. We remain deeply committed to working collaboratively on all substantive issues to arrive at the best and most efficacious outcome for all. Communication with representatives of the school systems of Lighthouse School students regarding any and all aspects of this plan will be the responsibility of the Director of Program Services in collaboration with the Coordinator for Program Services and the Supervisor for Team Meeting Services. Actions involving the school system will be done in a manner consistent with existing Lighthouse School policy and practice.

Notice to Another School or District

Circumstances may arise where either the alleged target or aggressor attend another school. This is most likely to result from incidents that occur on the vehicle transporting students to and from Lighthouse School. Should such an event occur the Bullying team at Lighthouse School will investigate the incident as described elsewhere in the plan while at the same time determining the other programs, school districts or agencies that should be contacted. All communications will be in accordance with state

and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Bullying Team has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Coordinator for Clinical Services will notify the local law enforcement agency.

Lighthouse School has a formal relationship with the Chelmsford Police Department. We have negotiated a memorandum of understanding for our regular communication with the Chelmsford Police Department and we have a School Liaison Police Officer assigned to our school. We will work closely with these resources as our bullying plan develops.

Investigation

The Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee, whoever is conducting the investigation, will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee, other staff members as determined by the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee, and in consultation with other staff, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

The Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services will work closely with the Coordinator for Clinical Services throughout all aspects of the reporting and investigation process. Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with Lighthouse School policies and procedures for investigations. Legal counsel may be accessed as deemed appropriate.

Determinations

The Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services will collaborate with the Coordinator for Clinical Services to make an initial determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. These determinations will be reviewed by the Director's team for a final decision. All actions taken hereafter will be done with the awareness and consent of this team.

If it is determined that sufficient evidence exists to warrant a finding that bullying or retaliation occurred the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee 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 Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services, the Coordinator for Clinical Services or their designees may choose to consult

with the students' teacher(s) and/or Therapists, 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.

The Coordinator for Clinical Services or designee will determine who best will 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 will comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, specific information about the issue may not be divulged. This information includes the name of the target/aggressor. Details about the specific nature of the disciplinary action taken will likewise not be divulged unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

Responses to Bullying

Taking Disciplinary Action If the Bullying Prevention Team decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with Lighthouse School's discipline procedures.

If the Bullying Prevention Team determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others: The Bullying Prevention Team will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the Bullying Prevention Team may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Supervisor for Behavioral Application Services or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.