

LCPS Protocol for Responding to Racial Slurs and Hate Speech in Schools

LCPS is committed to providing a safe, empathetic, respectful and supportive learning environment in order to empower every student to make meaningful contributions to the world. When students and staff use or experience racial insults, slurs, and/or other hate speech, we lack the positive culture and climate that supports students' growth.

LCPS calls for all students, staff, families, and other members of our community to engage in the disruption and dismantling of white supremacy, systemic racism, and hateful language and actions based on race, religion, country of origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or ability. LCPS rejects racist and other hateful behavior and language, recognizing that it encourages discrimination, hatred, oppression, and violence.

Every individual is valued in Loudoun County Public Schools. When overheard or reported, staff members are to immediately address racial slurs, hate speech or a related incident in accordance with the Code of Conduct Student Discipline Guidelines or LCPS policy.

Immediate Actions: If an issue of racial slurs, hate speech or a related incident occurs, the principal/assistant principal will:

1. notify, on the day of the incident/report, the parent/guardian of the students directly and indirectly affected.
2. investigate the incident and notify the appropriate Principal Supervisor and Office of School Administration. Notify the Human Resources and Talent Development Department (HRTD) if the incident involves an employee. HRTD will investigate incidents involving an employee and address the reported behavior in accordance with Policy 7560 Professional Conduct and other applicable policies.
3. inform the parent/guardian, within five (5) school days or sooner, of the status of the investigation into the reported concern.
4. denounce the act within the school campus and broader school community. The principal/assistant principal will take the opportunity to remind the student and parent community of the expectation around the concern. The principal/assistant principal will work with their direct supervisor, a representative of the Office of School Administration, and/or the Equity Supervisor and Public Information Office in considering the following when confirming it is in the best interest to inform the broader community:
 - a. The scope of the incident
 - b. Social-emotional wellbeing of the student(s) harmed
 - c. Confidentiality for those involved
5. provide social-emotional support for the student(s) harmed and known witness(es) by involving the Unified Mental Health Team (UMHT).
6. identify the current and future impact of the harm done and leverage support of the UMHT member(s) for the use of restorative circles or restorative conferences, as appropriate.

7. follow discipline protocols and the Reflective Considerations Prior to Disciplinary Action guidance. The school principal/assistant principal will ensure racial slurs/derogatory language graffiti is removed immediately, if any.
8. determine an administrative response using discipline protocols for dispositions and educational outcomes (Student Code of Conduct). In addition to receiving a disciplinary sanction, the student who caused harm will complete a reflective lesson related to the incident. The administrative response will only be shared with the parent/guardian of the student(s) receiving the sanction.
9. notify the parent/guardian of the students directly involved once the investigation is completed.

Post Incident Actions: After an issue of racial slurs, hate speech or a related incident, the school principal/assistant principal will:

1. identify community or central office support that may offer ongoing school improvement, and
2. debrief with the school-based leadership team (which includes the Equity Lead) and the Equity Supervisor to determine training considerations for faculty, staff, and/or students.
3. follow up with the affected student(s) directly or through the UMHT.

The Unified Mental Health (UMHT) Team Members are available at all elementary, middle, and high schools.

The UMHT includes the School Counselor, School Social Worker, School Psychologist, and Student Assistance Specialist at the secondary level.

The Unified Mental Health Team member(s) can offer support by any of the following:

- Meet with the student harmed to learn about the concern from the student's perspective and identify an appropriate response/intervention and follow up with the student
- Provide ongoing support to all students involved and/or impacted until the particular level of care is no longer deemed necessary (student harmed, student who placed harm, witnesses, or others)
- Meet with (individually or group) with other student(s) involved to repair the relationship to determine support
- Initiate a Restorative Circle and/or Conference, mediation, conflict resolution if appropriate
- Follow up with the parents of all students involved and/or impacted to offer support and/or resources
- Follow up with the faculty/staff member involved to offer support and/or resources needed for the impacted environment (classroom, grade level, bus, etc.)
- Identify and facilitate if there is a need to connect the student harmed to other positive peers (lunch buddy, peer advocate/ally)
- Report to the school principal/assistant principal any concerns that the student(s) may raise which requires an administrative response
- Identify concerns that may be a school-wide issue needing to be addressed through training for faculty, staff, UMHT, and possibly community