STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR | Lower School

As members of the Laboratory Schools’ community, we believe that the standards governing our participation and behavior within the Laboratory Schools should be clearly stated, reasonable and aligned with our mission. We, the students, faculty, administration, staff and families, commit to:

- respect and show concern for one another and oneself
- respect and show concern for shared spaces and materials
- respect and show concern for the academic, social, and moral life of the schools

Relationship to the Lower School Community Agreement

As students mature and move from more supervision and structure in the lower grades to greater freedom in the middle and high schools, it is also recognized that greater responsibility accompanies such freedom. The Lower School Community Agreement, which follows these standards, specifies the behavioral expectations for the Lower School community and consequences for not achieving those expectations.

In the Lower School we agree to be kind, thoughtful and responsible members of the community.

Students who consistently follow established rules are happier children because they feel safe. In a school community, consistent expectations for behavior followed by students, parents, faculty and staff:

- create a sense of order and predictability
- create a climate of respect
- create an environment where children can take risks and learn from mistakes
- create an environment where children encourage the best in each other
- serve as guidelines for behavior to help children learn self-regulation

The goal of the Lower School Community Agreement is to create an atmosphere of learning in an environment that values safety, responsibility, and civility, while taking into consideration the developmental stages of our students. In addition, we hope to provide experiences for our students to learn how to be global citizens.

In the classroom, the Lower School Community Agreement is a tool for teachers to support positive behavior. By using these expectations, teachers can work with students to determine what these
expectations mean, not only in their classroom, but also in the larger community. This statement provides a shared language that reflects our goals for all individuals in our community. The Lower School Community Agreement supports parents partnering with teachers and administrators to create a clear understanding of what is expected at school, so parents and the school can work together to support children to make good choices. Kind, thoughtful, and responsible members of the community recognize that there are important expectations to follow and agree to adhere to the policies outlined in this handbook.

Consequences for Not Following the Lower School Community Agreement

“We want to give children opportunities to learn from their mistakes. It is through making mistakes; experiencing relevant, non-punitive consequences; and, when appropriate, processing the mistakes with a caring adult that students eventually internalize the rules. Our goal...is to stop the negative behavior as quickly and simply as possible so that we can return the child to learning.” (Responsive Classroom, Rules in School, 2015)

The consequences will be reasonable, related to the misconduct, and appropriate to the developmental level of the child. They may include one or more of the following:

- reflecting on actions and impact with an adult (teacher, counselor, dean of students, principal)
- repeating the process in the appropriate manner
- spending time in a separate place until ready to be part of the group again
- making amends to those who were hurt or offended
- restoring or making restitution for damaged or stolen property
- losing certain privileges
- notifying parents of the behavior
- dismissing the child from school for the day

In serious cases, the school may find it necessary to suspend or even expel a child.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Bullying

“Bullying” includes any severe conduct (verbal, physical or using technology) directed toward a student that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the purpose or effect of causing that student to reasonably fear they or their property will be harmed, having a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s physical or mental health, or interfering with that student’s ability to participate in school programs or activities. Bullying often involves a pattern of negative behavior over time and usually is intentional harm-doing.

Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment
“Harassment” as a form of unlawful discrimination means verbal conduct, physical conduct, or conduct using technology that is based on a protected class and that is so severe or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or educational program participation, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment (“hostile environment harassment”). Age is relevant in determining whether harassment occurred in the first instance, as well as in determining the appropriate response by the school. For example, age is relevant in determining whether a student welcomed the conduct and in determining whether the conduct was sexual in nature or severe, persistent, or pervasive.

Harassment Complaint Resolution
Each and every harassment complaint will be taken seriously and a preliminary investigation will be conducted. This process normally will include informal conversations with the individuals involved, as well as any other student or adult who may have information regarding the complaint. The goal of these conversations is to satisfactorily resolve the complaint informally. As practicable, families of all students directly involved in a report of harassment will be notified that such a complaint has been reported and of the general outcomes of the incident. Specific outcomes pertaining to students that are not their own will not be shared in order to protect the privacy of the other students involved.

Confidentiality
It is the responsibility of every community member (including parents/guardians) to honor one another’s privacy and recognize that confidentiality breaches undermine the school’s educational mission, erode the community’s trust, and may have the purpose or effect (unintended or intended) harming another’s emotional or social well-being (e.g., their reputation). The Laboratory School will make every reasonable effort to preserve every community member’s privacy within the parameters imposed by law. Please know, however, that Lab’s expectation that every community member will honor confidentiality should not interfere with any community member’s ability to report concerning behavior or seek support for themselves or others.

Honoring the confidentiality of disciplinary proceedings and their determinations is the responsibility of all persons participating in or privy to those proceedings (e.g., parents/guardians, teachers). Consistent confidentiality encourages community members to share information with the administration, which is necessary for achieving fair outcomes. Facts surrounding allegations are often deeply disputed, and concerns about reputation, peer pressure, and retaliation may deter community members from participating or even bringing forward complaints in the first instance. Please note that the expectation of confidentiality is not intended to interfere with any individual’s ability to seek support (from, e.g., a counselor, legal counsel, the police, or a parent/guardian) or their ability to obtain and present evidence or otherwise defend their interests. Further, there may be serious and personal legal consequences for those who breach confidentiality. Statements made outside of the Laboratory School’s investigation and disciplinary process could lead
to a legal claim by a person who believes that the statements are false, identify them to others, or have harmed their reputation. We encourage all persons involved in matters under this handbook, especially adults, to take into account the developmental stages of the students involved, as well as the fundamental educational mission of the Laboratory Schools, when communicating about the matter with third parties.

**All Schools Drug Prevention Policy and Procedures**

A fundamental role of the Laboratory Schools is to provide its student body with academic and social skills necessary to become healthy, productive citizens who will contribute positively to the school and community. Substance abuse is inconsistent with the needs of healthy, growing and developing individuals. We believe it is the responsibility of the Schools to take steps to promote, enhance and maintain a drug free environment.

**Computing Policy**

The Laboratory Schools has a Computing policy that all students must respect and follow. Lower School students are expected to be kind, thoughtful, responsible community members when online. The full Computing policy can be found on the Parent portal of the Schools’ website at www.ucls.uchicago.edu. Below are excerpts from the policy.

Computers and computing resources are important tools for furthering the Laboratory Schools’ educational mission. Using these resources is a privilege, not a right. This policy outlines the Schools' expectations for exercising this privilege responsibly and applies to adults and students alike.

In general, computer users are responsible for:

- reporting policy violations promptly to Laboratory School administrators
- cooperating with school staff members when policy violations are suspected or confirmed
- behaving courteously, ethically, and legally

Consequences follow when these responsibilities are not met. They may include suspension or termination of computer privileges, disciplinary steps prescribed in student handbooks or employee contracts, or legal action.

The University of Chicago owns and operates the Laboratory Schools’ data and voice network. In addition to the Schools’ Acceptable Use policy, network users are also expected to comply with the University’s Eligibility and Acceptable Use Policies.

**Care of Computing Resources**
Theft, vandalism, tampering, destruction, or disregard for the physical condition of computers and other equipment are not acceptable.

What this means:

- Students may not steal, destroy, deface, or otherwise cause harm to school computing resources.
- Students may not tamper or interfere with computer settings in any way that creates a nuisance for other computer users or technical support staff.
- Students are expected to report others’ abuse of computers to school administrators.

Expectations for the Use of Personal Electronic Devices

Students should not bring cellular or electronic devices such as computer games, laser pointers, personal computers, mobile phones, or other internet-enabled devices such as iPods, Smart Watches, etc. for use at school. We will not assume responsibility for the protection of these items that are not a necessary part of the learning environment of the School. If these items are used during the school day they will be confiscated for the day and turned in to the Lower School office for parents to retrieve. This does not include technology specifically approved by the School to support special learning needs. Arrangements should be made in advance with your child’s teacher and the Lower School Learning & Counseling department. Cell phones must be turned off, kept in backpacks, and not used during the school day. Children have easy access to school phones throughout the school day and after school as well. In addition, students are expected to comply with the Computer User agreement of the Laboratory Schools found on our website (www.ucls.uchicago.edu) that governs all computer use by students.

Additionally, while Summer Lab makes every effort to accommodate all children, the program will not accept children who are a danger to themselves or to others, or who are disruptive to the activities such that other participants’ enjoyment thereof is hindered. Persistent activity of this nature will be grounds for dismissal from the program. Parents and guardians are strongly urged to discuss with the Directors any special conditions or circumstances regarding their child prior to registration.