UNIVERSAL ACADEMY

ANTI- BULLYING PROGRAM

District Definitions for Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying – means any repeated or pervasive written, verbal or electronic expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof, that is intended to, or does, cause distress upon one or more students in the school, on school grounds, in a digital or cyber environment, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, at school activities or sanctioned events. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, hazing, harassment, intimidation, physical or verbal threats of harm or menacing acts of a student in a traditional or physical environment as well as in a digital or cyber environment, which may, but need not be, based on the student's race, color, sex, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Cyber-Bullying – means any act of bullying, as defined herein, using social media networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, My Space, and YouTube), electronic mail, text messages, telephone calls, and chat rooms through the Internet, cellular phones, I-Pods, I-Pads, computers, or other communication devices. Examples of cyber-bullying include but are not limited to using any of the foregoing communication devices to: intentionally harm others through hostile text messages; post images intended to hurt or embarrass another person; post rumors or gossip about a person, bringing about hatred or humiliation in other's minds; or personally identify victims or publish materials defaming or humiliating them because of their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

Name-Calling – means the chronic, habitual, or recurring use of names or comments to or about a student regarding the student's actual or perceived physical or personal characteristics when the student has indicated by his or her conduct, that the names or comments are unwelcome, or when the names or comments are clearly unwelcome, inappropriate, or offensive by their nature.

Harassment Based on Protected Characteristics – means verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, national origin, gender, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation, and that:

  1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work and/or learning environment;

2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the student's ability to benefit from any educational program or service provided by the District; and
3. Is so offensive or pervasive as to adversely affect the educational performance of the student.

Sexual Harassment Of Students By Students – Sexual harassment can be:

1. Physical
2. Visual
3. It can happen to girls and boys, same or opposite gender

Hazing – includes, but is not limited to:

1. Engaging in any offensive or dangerous physical contact, restraint, abduction, or isolation of a student, or
2. Requiring or encouraging a student to perform any dangerous, painful, offensive, or demeaning physical or verbal act, including but not limited to the ingestion of any substance, exposure to the elements, deprivation of sleep or rest, or extensive isolation, or
3. Subjecting a student to any dangerous, painful, harmful, offensive, or demeaning conduct, or to conduct reasonably likely to create extreme mental distress, as a condition of membership in, or initiation into, any class, team, group, or organization sponsored by, or permitted to operate under, the auspices of, a school of the District, or for similar or related purposes, *provided*, that such conduct shall not be considered hazing when it is a recognized and integral part of the particular sport or activity.

What is Bullying?

Bullying Defined:

According to Universal Academy policy "Bullying" means engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical contact that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the District. Bullying also:

1. Physically harms a student or their property or places the student in reasonable fear of harm; or involves
2. Sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive action or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive environment.

The conduct is also considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim; and
2. Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

Faces of Bullying:

What does bullying look like? Well the types of bullying include verbal, emotional, physical, nonverbal, and cyberbullying.

Here are some scenarios:

- Taunting and name calling
- Repeated teasing
- Circulating derogatory notes
- Exclusion from various activities or social interactions
- Isolation
- Leering and/or using threatening signs
- Assuming someone's identity to send incriminating or negative messages
- Texting, using chatrooms, or any other electronic social media to threaten or humiliate
- Hitting, slapping, elbowing, shoving, pinching, kicking

Bullying Facts & Statistics

National Findings:

- Every 7 minutes a child is bullied; 85% of the time, there is not intervention of any kind.
- Each day, 160,000 students miss school due to bullying.
- Bullying is a leading factor in suicide among kids 11-16 years old.
- By the age 24, 60% of bullies have been charged with a crime
- 34% of all children report being bullied regularly at least several times a year.
- 86% of children aged 12-15 report at least some form of bullying has interfered with their studies moderately or severely.
- 1 of every 4 children is more than occasionally cyberbullied.
- Kids who are bullied have a significantly higher risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation that lasts into adulthood.

Myths about Bullying

- Bullying is the same as conflict: wrong, because bullying involves and imbalance of power and is often repeated over time.
- Most bullying is physical. Actually the most common forms of bullying are verbal and social bullying.
- Bullying isn't a serious issue - its just kids being kids. No, bullying is very serious. It many times has negative lasting effects like depression on the victim, accused and the bystander
- Children who bully are loners with few social skills: wrong, because some bullies are somewhat popular.

Bullying Prevention

The following steps will help prevent bullying at school and throughout the community.
1. **Warning Signs That a Child Is a Target of Bullying:**

- Unexplainable injuries
- Frequent headaches (feeling sick) or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits
- Difficulty sleeping
- Declining grades and school avoidance
- Sudden loss of friends
- Feelings of helplessness/lowered self esteem
- Suicide ideation

2. **Warning signs that a child is a bully:**

- Increase in physical/verbal fights
- Increase in aggressive behavior
- Unexplained extra money or belongings
- Blames others for problems
- Reluctance to accept responsibility
- Increased discipline referrals

Prevent Bullying: Build a Culture of Respect

One of the best preventive tools to bullying is to create an environment of respect and empathy. There are several strategies to building a sense of community:

- Model respect and affirm all students
- Implement a system for welcoming new students
- Hold class meetings to effectively deal with bullying and other issues
- Create a Note-to-the-Teacher Box or a locked Bullying Locker
- Build empathy and community through activities
- Coordinate service learning projects
- Reward cooperation and good character
- Initiate class projects to build community

Prevent Bullying: Lessons & Messages

Counselors present Anti-bullying and Anti-victimization lessons to all students every year to help them understand the issue of bullying and develop skills to create a safe learning environment. All staff can reinforce these messages and themes throughout the year:

- Role-play appropriate social interaction
- Encourage Breaking the Code of Silence where students learn the importance of reporting bullying and other threats to safety
- Emphasize tolerance and respect for differences
- Help students learn about various cultures
- Conduct an anonymous survey to determine the bullying issues on the campus

Prevent Bullying: Empower Bystanders

The bystander represents the powerful mass of students who are neither the bully nor the target. Bystanders can play a significant role in preventing bullying:

- Use positive peer pressure to create a culture that frowns on bullying
- Understand that bullying and disrespect is not the social norm
- Build a united front against bullying behaviors by not encouraging them or remaining silent
- Utilize Breaking the Code of Silence and understanding the difference between reporting and tattling
- Support and befriend the target
- Be an Eagle Eye and report bullying

Intervention & Reporting

Reporting Bullying

Universal Academy staff should report bullying incidents to Administration. Administrators will have 10 days to investigate bullying reports. During school hour's reports can be made to any staff member or Administrator.

Bullying Intervention

- Increase supervision in bullying "hotspots."
- Communicate clear rules, expectations, and consequences to students and parents.
- Take immediate action when bullying is observed.
- Ensure that bullying reports from parents or students are handled appropriately.
- Make sure that bystanders who support bullying will incur consequences.
- Ensure protection for targets perhaps through a buddy system.
- Notify parents of the target and the bully.
- Lend support to the target in private.
- Intervene consistently and appropriately.
- Meet with the bully and the target separately.
- Ensure that all staff members understand signs of bullying, effective prevention and intervention strategies, and reporting procedures.
- Refer students for counseling.

Ineffective Interventions
These interventions have proven to be ineffective and result in negative outcomes.

- Zero tolerance policies exclude too many students from school. These consequences don't provide an opportunity to redirect or model respectful behavior.
- Conflict resolution or peer mediation only works with students in conflict with equal power and equal blame.
- Bullying counseling groups comprised of all bullies tend to reinforce the bullying behaviors.
- Short-term solutions alone will not prevent bullying. There has to be a school-wide, strategic initiative to effectively prevent bullying.

Cyber Bullying and Prevention

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology including cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying is different from in person bullying:

- Students have a harder time getting away from the abuse.
- Cyberbullying can happen 24/7.
- It can be distributed rapidly and anonymously to a wider audience.
- Once a bullying message has been posted it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to delete.
- Students can be anonymous when cyberbullying making it extremely difficult if not impossible to trace them.

Cyberbullying, online social cruelty, has several dimensions:

- Sexting is a form of cyberbullying.
- Cyberbullying can involve sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
- It can also involve impersonating someone else to make that person look bad.
- It can also involve posting sensitive or private information about someone else.
- Girls are about twice more likely to be victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying than boys.
- Instant messaging is the most common means of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying Prevention

- Establish rules about technology use and what websites to visit.
- Advise students to be smart about what they post. Sharing anything that might hurt or embarrass someone is not appropriate.
- Encourage students to keep passwords safe.
- Be aware of what students are doing online.
- Encourage parents to monitor texts and social media activity.
- Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Don't respond to or forward cyberbullying messages. Report to online service providers.
- Report threats of violence and pornography to law enforcement.
- Report to school administrators.