Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Priority Statement

It is the goal of the University Academy to provide a learning environment free from bullying. Such an environment of civility and good manners is most conducive to learning and high academic achievement. The school will support this through prevention, intervention, response, age-appropriate student instruction, staff development and parent or guardian involvement. The school's code of values, character education program, behavior management procedures and the current prevention plan constitute a comprehensive approach to the establishment and maintenance of such an environment.

Definition of Bullying

In accordance with Texas Education Code § 37.0832 (David's Law) and M.G.L.c.71, 370, bullying is defined as a single significant act or pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct. Such behavior is considered bullying if it has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property. Additionally, bullying includes conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student. Any behavior that materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school or infringes on the rights of the victim at school, is considered bullying. This definition includes cyberbullying in all its forms.

Definition of Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying encompasses any bullying conducted through the use of technology or electronic communication. This includes but is not limited to communication through electronic mail, internet platforms, instant messaging, social media platforms, text messages, and online gaming platforms. Cyber-bullying can take many forms, including creating web pages or blogs that assume another's identity, impersonating another person through electronic means, or distributing or posting electronic content that creates hostile conditions. The posting of images or videos of another student without their consent, as well as sending abusive or threatening electronic communications, falls under this

category. Any electronic medium that may be accessed by students can become a vehicle for cyberbullying and is therefore covered under this policy.

Anti-Bullying Committee

The University Academy maintains an Anti-Bullying Committee as a cornerstone of its prevention efforts. This committee, which meets each semester, consists of administrators, teachers, counseling staff, parents, and age-appropriate student representatives. The committee's primary responsibility is to evaluate and enhance the school's approach to bullying prevention and positive campus culture. During their regular meetings, committee members review current prevention strategies, analyze incident data, and identify trends that may require additional attention. They play a crucial role in evaluating the effectiveness of current programs and recommends updates to the prevention plan as needed.

Scope

The bullying intervention and prevention policies extend to all activities and locations under the supervision of the University Academy. This comprehensive coverage includes not only traditional school grounds and adjacent properties but also encompasses school-sponsored events, transportation services, and any technology owned or used by the school. The policy's reach extends to any location or circumstance that could create a hostile environment at school, ensuring that students are protected both within and beyond the immediate school environment.

Reporting and Response Procedures

Our school has established a multi-faceted approach to reporting and responding to bullying incidents. All staff members are required to report any bullying incidents to campus administration or their designee immediately upon witnessing or receiving information about an incident. Reports can be submitted through various channels, including in-person reports, anonymously or non-anonymously through the STOPit app, or written communication to campus administrators. In compliance with David's Law, our school adheres to strict notification requirements, including informing parents or guardians of alleged victims within three business days and notifying parents of alleged bullies within a reasonable timeframe. All reports are promptly investigated, with detailed written records maintained throughout the process. The campus administrator will create a written record of the investigation, including statements from witnesses, evidence reviewed, and actions taken.

Investigation and Intervention

When a bullying report is received, the campus administrator or designee initiates a comprehensive investigation process within one school day. This includes documenting all

aspects of the investigation, implementing immediate safety measures for targets, and developing intervention plans for both targets and aggressors. The investigation process prioritizes the safety and well-being of all involved students while maintaining confidentiality to the extent possible. The administrator will interview relevant parties separately, gather evidence, and document all findings. Based on the investigation's findings, appropriate disciplinary actions are determined and implemented, ranging from counseling interventions to more serious consequences when warranted. Throughout this process, situations are actively monitored for potential retaliation, and support services are provided as needed. The administrator will conduct follow-up meetings with involved parties at regular intervals to ensure the effectiveness of interventions and maintain a safe environment.

Annual Staff Training and Professional Development

Professional development at University Academy includes comprehensive training on recognizing bullying behaviors, implementing effective prevention strategies, and understanding intervention protocols. This training occurs before the start of each school year with periodic updates throughout the year. Staff members receive instruction on reporting requirements, cyber safety, and cultural competency. Training also covers positive behavior support strategies and legal requirements under David's Law. Additional focus is placed on recognizing warning signs of bullying, understanding the unique challenges of cyberbullying, and implementing effective classroom management strategies that promote positive behavior. This professional development is designed to equip staff with the tools and knowledge necessary to create and maintain a safe, supportive learning environment.

Additional Support Services

The school provides a comprehensive network of support services for students involved in bullying incidents. Individual counseling is available for both targets and aggressors. Group counseling sessions are offered when appropriate to address common themes and build positive peer relationships. The counseling team maintains partnerships with external support services and can provide referrals when additional resources are needed. For students receiving special education services, the ARD committee will review and modify behavioral intervention plans as needed.

Prohibited Behaviors and Consequences

The school maintains a clear policy regarding prohibited behaviors and their consequences. Bullying in any form, including cyberbullying, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition extends to retaliation against those who report bullying, false accusations of bullying, and bystander participation in bullying incidents. When violations occur, consequences are determined based on the severity of the incident, the student's disciplinary history, and the impact on the school community. These consequences follow

a progressive discipline model, beginning with interventions such as counseling and loss of privileges, and escalating to more serious consequences including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion in severe cases. Law enforcement referral is required in cases involving criminal conduct. All disciplinary actions are documented and communicated to parents or guardians.

Plan Review and Updates

This plan undergoes a comprehensive annual review by the Anti-Bullying Committee and University Academy administration. The review process includes analysis of incident data, evaluation of intervention effectiveness, and assessment of current prevention strategies. Updates are made to reflect new laws, best practices, and lessons learned from the previous year's implementations. The updated plan is posted on the school website and distributed to all stakeholders at the beginning of each school year. To ensure accessibility, the plan is translated into languages commonly spoken in our school community. The committee also produces an annual report summarizing bullying incidents, intervention effectiveness, and recommendations for improvement.

Definitions

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

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

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