

BULLYING

General

In order to promote a safe learning environment for all learners, Summit Academy strictly prohibits all forms of bullying and cyberbullying. The school also prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying among or against learners.

Definitions

Bullying: In accordance with state law, bullying is defined as intimidation, unwanted aggressive behavior or harassment that is repetitive or is substantially likely to be repeated and causes a reasonable learner to fear for their physical safety or property; that substantially interferes with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of any learner without exception; or that substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Bullying includes, but is not limited to physical actions, including violence, gestures, theft, or property damage; oral, written, or electronic communication, including name-calling, put-downs, extortion or threats; or threats of reprisal or retaliation for reporting such acts.

Cyberbullying: A form of bullying committed by transmission of a communication including, but not limited to, a message, text, sound, or image by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager. The school has jurisdiction over cyberbullying that uses the school's technology resources or that originates on school property, at a school activity or on district transportation. Even when cyberbullying does not involve school property, activities or technology resources, the district will impose interventions and discipline for those who engage in cyberbullying if there is a sufficient nexus to the educational environment, the behavior materially and substantially disrupts the educational environment, the communication involves a threat as defined by law, or the school is otherwise allowed by law to address the behavior.

School Day: A day on the school calendar when learners are required to attend school.

Designated Officials

The Directors of Summit Academy are hereby designated as the individual to receive and investigate reports of bullying.

The Director of Summit Academy will serve as the school-wide anti-bullying coordinator. The anti-bullying coordinator will receive all completed investigative reports from all buildings and analyze the reports to identify any information that would inform the school's anti-discrimination and anti-bullying education and training programs. In addition, the anti-bullying coordinator will assist in making any relevant reports as required by state and federal law.

Reporting Bullying

School employees, substitutes or volunteers are expected to intervene to prevent learner bullying, appropriately discipline the perpetrator, assist the victim, and report the incident to the building Directors or designee for further investigation and action. Any school employee, substitute or volunteer who witnesses or has firsthand knowledge of bullying of a learner must report the incident to the building Directors or designee as soon as possible, but no later than two school days after the incident.

Learners who have been subjected to bullying, or who have witnessed or have knowledge of bullying, are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to a school employee. Any school employee receiving such a report shall promptly transmit the report to the building Directors or designee.

If the bullying incident involves learners from more than one school, the report should be made to the Directors or designee of the building in which the incident took place or, if more appropriate, to the Directors or designee of the building attended by most of the participants in the incident.

Investigation

Within two school days of receiving a report of bullying, the Directors or designee will initiate an investigation of the incident. Reports that involve learners from multiple buildings will be investigated cooperatively by the principals of each building involved, or those principals may request that the district's compliance officer designated in policy AC conduct the investigation. If at any time during the investigation the Directors determine that the bullying involves illegal discrimination, harassment or retaliation as described in policy AC, the Directors will report the incident to the compliance officer designated in that policy, who will assist in the investigation. If the alleged bullying involves a special education learner or a learner with disabilities, the Directors will also notify the special education director.

The investigation shall be completed within ten school days of the date the report of bullying was received unless good cause exists to extend the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the Directors will decide whether bullying or harassment occurred and, if so, whether additional discipline is warranted in accordance with the school's learner discipline code. The Directors will generate a written report of the investigation and findings and send a copy of the completed report to the school's anti-bullying coordinator. The Directors or designee will document the report in the files of the victim and the alleged or actual perpetrator of bullying. All reports will be kept confidential in accordance with state and federal law.

The Directors or other appropriate school staff will work with victims and their families to access resources and services to help them deal with any negative effects that resulted from the incident.

Interventions

Bullying behavior in schools can cause harm to students' social and emotional well-being and be a significant barrier to learning. Bullying can be defined as a "physical, verbal or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm the victim" (Farrington and Ttofi, 2010). There is a perceived psychological or physical imbalance of power and often, incidents between the same students occur repeatedly. Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like on the playground or the bus. It can also happen traveling to or from school, in the youth's neighborhood, or on the internet.

Some effective school practices to prevent bullying include:

- reduce conditions that contribute to bullying at school (e.g., unsupervised areas)
- pursue schoolwide approaches that establish a positive school culture and climate
- build on the foundation of schoolwide approaches in implementing classroom programs
- intervene to turn bullies around by directly addressing motivational and developmental concerns related to individuals who bully and those who support bullying; and
- respond to any problems experienced by those who are bullied and those who witness bullying.

Even in situations where the school does not have jurisdiction to discipline a learner for bullying, such as when the acts take place off campus and there is an insufficient nexus to the school, the Directors or designee will take appropriate actions to assist learner victims. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, contacting the parents/guardians of the victim and the alleged perpetrators, communicating that this behavior is not allowed on school ground or at district activities, notifying the appropriate school staff to assist the victim and taking additional action when appropriate, such as notifying law enforcement or social media companies of inappropriate online activity.

Policy Publication

Summit Academy shall annually notify learners, parents/guardians, school employees, substitutes and volunteers about this policy and the district's prohibition against bullying. A copy of this policy shall be included in learner handbooks and posted on the school's website.