

Sample Anti-Bullying Policy

The following pages outline steps to write a center-specific anti-bullying policy. When developing a policy for your center, staff and students should be included in the process. Ensure that all components are clear and communicated with all staff and students. These policies should be outlined in your student handbook and center website.

Step 1. Assessment and Data Collection. Before you go full steam ahead with a bullying-prevention program and related policies, you must first assess the problem. The following tools can be utilized to determine the scope of bullying on your center:

- Student Satisfaction Survey
- Focus groups of staff and students
- Center Safety Self Assessment
- Significant Incident Reports for bullying, hazing, and assault

Example

In order to assess bullying on _____ Job Corps center, center administration conducted two student focus groups, one staff focus group, and evaluated the number of Significant Incident Reports that included bullying, hazing, and/or assault. Through the focus groups, it was found that many students felt unsafe on center and staff has noticed that some students are targets of bullying. Over the last 6 months, there were 12 significant incidents that involved bullying, hazing, and/or assault.

Step 2. State your center's position on bullying. This sentence or short paragraph should answer the following questions:

- Why is there a need for an anti bullying policy?
- Who does the policy protect?
- Are there any applicable state laws?

Example

The _____ Job Corps Center is committed to creating a safe and respectful environment for all students, staff, and visitors. Bullying, harassment, or intimidation will not be permitted at anytime on center or during center sponsored activities. In accordance with state anti-bullying law _____, the center's policy will include _____.

Step 3. Define bullying. There are many definitions of bullying available. This toolkit defines bullying as:

- (1) Aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength (Davis, 2007);
- (2) Intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behavior, such as name calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more persons against another (Dunn, 2003);

(3) Aggressive or intimidating behavior that is not provoked by the target or targets (Dunn, 2003).

This definition may be used as is or changed for your center. If your center decides to change this definition, do not confuse bullying with harassment or hazing. Harassment usually describes an act that is based on someone's religion, gender, race, country of origin, or sexual orientation. Hazing is often used to initiate someone into a group. Bullying is not necessary based on an individual characteristic and is not used as a bonding activity. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength and is meant to exclude someone.

After deciding on the technical definition, you may want to provide examples of bullying.

Example

Bullying can take many forms, including rumors, jokes, slurs, pranks, gestures, purposefully excluding people from a group, threats, attacks, demeaning or threatening text messages, instant messages, or e-mails, or other written, oral, or physical actions.

Step 4. Outline the responsibilities and rights of students and staff. If students and staff are not made aware of what is expected of them, they will fail. Outline clear and concise expectations.

Example

At _____ Job Corps center, students and staff are expected to treat others with respect and courtesy. The following points outline specific rights and responsibilities for staff and students.

- *All students have the right to live and learn in a safe and supportive environment.*
- *It is expected that a student will not knowingly exclude other students or cause other students physical or emotional harm.*
- *Staff members are expected to address incidents that involve bullying and harassment immediately.*
- *Staff members are expected to set a positive example for students.*
- *All students are expected to show support for a student who is a target of bullying or harassment. Students are expected to offer assistance to that student and report incidents to staff.*

Step 5. Decide on rewards for inclusive behavior and sanctions for bullying.

Consequences for bullying should be predictable, immediate, should escalate for repeated offenders, and should be uniform for all students.

Note: It is not recommended to develop a zero tolerance or "three strikes" policy regarding bullying. This can create a negative climate and can make students and staff apprehensive to report incidents.

Example

Students are expected to include other students in activities. When a staff member recognizes a student exhibiting inclusive behavior, the student may receive the following rewards:

- *Verbal praise*
- *Treats (e.g., outings or pizza parties)*

Bullying and harassment are serious offenses in Job Corps. Students who bully or harass another student will be subject to the following consequence:

- *First offense- Verbal warning*
- *Second offense- Written warning and student must complete or repeat the CSS modules for the following standards-Personal Growth and Development, Interpersonal Skills, and Multi-Cultural Awareness,*
- *Third offense- Restriction for 1 week. Student will not be permitted to leave the center.*
- *Fourth and subsequent offenses- Review before the CSO Board*

Staff members are expected to enforce sanctions uniformly and immediately. If a staff member does not respond to an incident, the following steps will be taken by center administration:

- *First offense- Staff member will be required to retake the bullying-prevention training program, located on SafetyNet.*
- *Second offense- Verbal warning*
- *Third offense- Written warning*
- *Fourth and subsequent offenses – Review with supervisor and HR Manager*

Please note that depending upon the circumstances and severity of the incident, a student or staff member who bullies or harasses may be terminated or have involvement with local authorities.

Step 6. Address logistics. The following questions are meant to serve as a starting point. They are not all inclusive.

- *How will students and staff report bullying? Will there be a contact person? What if students want to remain anonymous? Will there be a ‘bully box’ where they can drop a comment?*
- *Who will be responsible for determining if a student has bullied or harassed another student?*
- *Who is responsible for completing the Significant Incident Report to report a bullying incident?*
- *Will there be a strategy to protect targets of bullying? Who will work with students who are targeted to ensure they learn to strategies to prevent future episodes of bullying?*

Example

Students who witness bullying or who are targeted by bullying should report the incident to the center standards officer (CSO). If the student is not comfortable reporting this incident and would like to remain anonymous, he or she may write a note that describes the incident and place it in the CSO's mailbox. The Center Director (CD) has an open-door policy. Any student or staff member who would like to talk about bullying or harassment should make an appointment to with the CD's administrative assistant.

The CSO and the CD will be responsible for deciding whether a student has been bullied or harassed. Resident advisors, instructors, and other staff members will be consulted if they have witnessed an incident. The CSO is responsible for implementing sanctions. The CD or designee is responsible for completing a Significant Incident Report.

Students who are targets of a bully or bullies will first talk with their counselor. The counselor will determine if the student requires a referral to the center mental health consultant (CMHC). The CMHC will determine the next steps, e.g., assertiveness training.

References

The following policies and initiatives were used to develop suggested practices for developing an anti bullying policy:

Bully Police USA. An example of an anti bullying policy. Available at:
http://www.bullypolice.org/bullying_policy.html

Davis S. Stop Bullying Now. Available at: <http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/>

Dunn, K. (2003). *Bullying prevention*. Indiana Department of Education. Available at:
http://www.doe.state.in.us/sservices/pdf/bully_manual.pdf

Helfebower T, Kenagy K. Anti-bullying policy and program development rubric. Aug 2005. Available at:
<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/Safety/documents/Program%20Design%20and%20Development%20-%20Rubric%20-%20letter%20size.pdf>

Limber SP, Small MA. State laws and policies to address bullying in schools. *School Psychology Review*. 2003; 32:445-455.

Michigan State Board of Education. Model anti-bullying policy. Sept 2006. Available at:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SBE_Model_AntiBullying_Policy_Revised_9.8_172355_7.pdf

Nebraska School Safety Center. Anti-bullying and positive student behavior. Available at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/safety/anti-bullyingpolicy.htm>