Bullying Prevention Policy

DC Scholars is committed to creating a learning environment that is emotionally and physically safe for all students and promotes students treating each other with respect and kindness. DC Scholars is committed to creating a safe learning environment where all students feel safe, welcomed, and respected. Our bullying prevention policy serves to protect the dignity and safety of the DC Scholars community and lays out our bullying prevention strategies and response plan.

Definitions

OSSE defines bullying as behavior characterized by aggression used within a relationship where the aggressor(s) has more real or perceived power than the target, and the aggression is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying can involve overt physical behavior or verbal, emotional, or social behaviors (e.g., excluding someone from social activities, making threats, withdrawing attention, destroying someone's reputation) and can range from blatant aggression to far more subtle and covert behaviors. Cyberbullying, or bullying through electronic technology (e.g., cell phones, computers, online/social media), can include offensive text messages or emails, rumors or embarrassing photos posted on social networking sites, or fake online profiles.

Bullying:
1. Can be based on a youth's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intra-family offense, place or residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and

2. Can reasonably be predicted to: a. Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property; b. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth's physical or mental health; c. Substantially interfere with the youth's academic performance or attendance; or d. Substantially interfere with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an OSSE, educational institution, or grantee

Bullying also occurs when a student or group of students organize a campaign against another student or when a student or group of students maliciously spread rumors about another student. In most circumstances, bullying does not include a mutual fight between two students who are angry with each other. Such fights are subject to the DC Scholars' Ladder of Response.

Bullying can also include cyberbullying – bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, text messages, and Internet postings. Cyberbullying can include electronic communication through the use of the Internet and mobile technology such as web pages, discussion groups such as instant messaging, SMS text, Instagram, or Facebook with the intent of intimidating, harassing, or harming another person.

Prevention
To prevent bullying, DC Scholars works to foster a positive and safe learning community through the promotion of positive, productive, respectful, and supportive learning environments. This approach includes training teachers and staff on the implementation of student social skills training; structured environments; and ways to promote and reinforce a positive classroom culture. Staff are also trained on how to prevent, intervene, and report instances of bullying.

Reporting
All incidents of bullying witnessed by or reported to staff are immediately reported through the culture team referral process. Students, families, and community members can also report bullying to the Manager of Student Culture, Dean, or School Director. Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

School Director	LeAngelo Emperator	lemperator@dcscholars.org	(202) 559-6138
Manager of Student Culture	Sheneil Christian	schristian@dcscholars.org	(202) 559-6138
Dean	K-2 Melissa Smith 3-5 Daniel Umana 6-8 Tony Gallemore	msmith@dcscholars.org dumana@dcscholars.org tgallemore@dcscholars.org	(202) 559-6138

Investigation
Incidents of bullying are investigated using our structured investigation process and aligned to our Ladder of Response, this includes investigating, documenting, issuing consequences, communicating with impacted parties including students and families, and following up with staff to support prevention and intervention of future incidents. Follow up will include steps to restore a sense of safety in the victim.
Administrators will make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated and is prohibited in the DC Scholars' community. Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying
is also prohibited.

Consequences of Bullying or Retaliation

DC Scholars' recognizes that for sanctions to be an effective component of a bullying prevention plan, they must be applied consistently, fairly, and equitably. DC Scholars will therefore work to apply these guidelines as closely as possible, while allowing for flexibility to adapt sanctions to individual contexts. Furthermore, to ensure equitability in applying sanctions, measures will be applied on a graduated basis determined by the nature of the offense, the disciplinary history of the youth involved, and the age and developmental status of the youth involved.

Sanctions will be applied within two days of the determination that an incident of bullying has occurred, unless an appeal of the incident by the bully has been received in that time. To ensure that single incidents of bullying do not become recurring problems, DC Scholars will always refer victims and bullies involved in an incident to services in addition to imposing sanctions on bullies. DC Scholars does not endorse the use of punitive strategies associated with "zero-tolerance" policies when applying sanctions to an incident of bullying.

Responses to incidents of bullying or retaliation are outlined in this handbook. Potential consequences of bullying or retaliation include, but are not limited to:
- Reprimand
- Deprivation of privileges
- Restorative Consequences
- Bans on participating in optional DC Scholars activities
- Ban or suspension from DC Scholars facilities
- Suspension or expulsion

For more information please see our family handbook or contact a member of our student culture team:

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