

## **Achievement Prep's Youth Bullying Policy**

### **Definitions (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(1))**

Achievement Prep defines bullying as any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

1. May 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 intrafamily 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 agency, educational institution, or grantee.

### **Prohibition against Bullying (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(2-3;9))**

Acts of bullying, including cyberbullying, whether by youth, volunteers or staff, are prohibited:

1. On Achievement Prep grounds and immediately adjacent property, at Achievement Prep-sponsored or related events on and off Achievement Prep grounds, on any vehicle used for Achievement Prep business, at any transit stop at which youth wait to be transported to Achievement Prep business, or through the use of any electronic devices owned by the Achievement Prep, leased by Achievement Prep or used for Achievement Prep business; and
2. At a location or function unrelated to Achievement Prep, through the use of any electronic devices, including those not owned or leased by Achievement Prep, if the acts of bullying or cyberbullying create a hostile environment at the agency for the victim or witnesses, infringe on their rights at Achievement Prep, or materially and substantially disrupt the orderly operation of Achievement Prep

Retaliation against a youth, volunteer or staff member who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

### **Code of Conduct DC Code (§ 2-1535.03(4))**



Achievement Prep expects youth to behave in a way that supports OHR's objective to provide a safe and welcoming environment for other youth, Achievement Prep staff, and community members. Youth who are part of the Achievement Prep community are expected to:

1. Treat all members of the Achievement Prep community with respect;
2. Respect the property of Achievement Prep, its staff, and other youth connected to Achievement Prep;
3. Respond appropriately to instructions from Achievement Prep staff.

### **Reporting Incidents of Bullying or Retaliation (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(6))**

Achievement Prep expects all staff members and volunteers to report incidents of bullying or retaliation they witness or are made aware of. Staff members should immediately report all such incidents to Karida Dorsey, who will create a written report of a bullying incident and include the incident in Achievement Prep reports of bullying incidents to the citywide coordinator.

Youth, parents, guardians, and community members are encouraged by Achievement Prep to report any incidents of bullying that they witness or become aware of. Reports of bullying may be made to [kdorsey@achievementprep.org](mailto:kdorsey@achievementprep.org), 908 Wahler Pl SE, Washington, DC 20032 or through an anonymous dropbox in the main office.

Reports of bullying by youth, parents, guardians and community members may be made anonymously, but disciplinary action cannot be taken by Achievement Prep solely on the basis of an anonymous report, though such a report may trigger an investigation that will provide actionable information. All oral reports received as part of this process will be transcribed into writing and included in Achievement Prep's bullying database.

Achievement Prep will ensure that there are reporting materials available in a wide variety of languages and that information about reporting is communicated to youth connected to Achievement Prep in an age-appropriate manner. Information on how to report incidents of bullying will also be included as appropriate in Achievement Prep mailings to youth and their families. Karida Dorsey is available to assist in reporting incidents of bullying and can be reached at (301) 562-1307.

Reports of bullying not received by Karida Dorsey will be transmitted to them and the receptionist within one day of their receipt or creation by the staff member who reported the initial incident.

### **Investigating Incidents of Bullying (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(7))**

Prior to the investigation of an incident, Ernest Shepard will take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim referenced in a reported bullying incident. These steps will be designed to restore a sense of safety to the victim and to protect them from further incidents if necessary. Examples of such steps taken include designating a staff member to serve as that alleged victim's "safe" person, altering the alleged bully/bullies' seating or schedule to reduce access to the alleged victim or creating a safety plan in consultation with the alleged victim. Once an investigation is concluded, further steps will be taken as needed to assure the continued safety of the victim from additional incidents of bullying or retaliation.

Once a report of bullying has been received by an agency, the following groups will be notified as needed by [agency designee responsible for responding to incidents of bullying], so long as, in the absence of legal imperative, the parent or guardian's written consent is obtained prior to notification.

*Wahler Place Elementary School*

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908 Wahler Place SE Washington, DC 20032 | 202.562.1307 office | 202.748.5970 fax

[achievementprep.org](http://achievementprep.org)



Parents and guardians: Achievement Prep will notify the parents or guardians of victims, bullies, and if appropriate, witnesses to an incident of bullying behavior about the nature of the incident and the procedures and steps in place for responding to it. Karida Dorsey will determine if parents or guardians should be informed prior to or after the investigation of an incident.

Schools: Achievement Prep will notify the schools of all victims and bullies in an incident of bullying to ensure that youth are not victimized across agencies and that comprehensive service and protection can be provided to bullies and victims.

Law enforcement agencies: If Achievement Prep determines that the reported incident may involve criminal activity or the basis for criminal charges, information about the incident must be conveyed to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. As part of making this determination Karida Dorsey may wish to consult with either a law enforcement officer or legal counsel. Law enforcement shall only be contacted if all other available remedies have been exhausted.

Achievement Prep will notify these groups of incidents of bullying only to the extent allowed by law. Notification will be undertaken solely to ensure that services are provided to victims and bullies and to protect victims from further or sustained victimization. Achievement Prep will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of those who report bullying incidents.

Karida Dorsey is responsible for investigating reports of bullying and can be reached at [kdorsey@achievementprep.org](mailto:kdorsey@achievementprep.org). An investigation of an incident will be initiated no more than one day after Karida Dorsey receives a report of bullying and will conclude no later than 30 days after the receipt of such a report. As part of the investigation Karida Dorsey will interview any involved or relevant parties including alleged victims, bullies, witnesses, staff, parents or guardians.

Karida Dorsey will provide confidentiality as far as possible to relevant parties as part of the investigation, and inform all relevant parties that retaliation for reporting acts of bullying is prohibited. Written records of the investigation process should be maintained and may be included in the prevention database to generate a more accurate picture of bullying behaviors at Achievement Prep. Where necessary, provisions will be made to include the advice of legal counsel.

In investigating an incident of bullying, Karida Dorsey will seek to ensure that the reported incident is one of victimization, a sign of bullying, rather than of conflict. Thus when investigating a reported incident Karida Dorsey will attempt to determine, through interviewing the victim, what mechanisms the victim had and has access to for halting the incident that occurred, and preventing future such instances. If the victim reports a few or no mechanisms for ending the incident or constructively dealing with future instances, that information will serve as compelling, though not conclusive evidence that the reported incident was an incident of bullying.

Karida Dorsey is charged with making determinations as to whether a reported incident constitutes a case of bullying. These determinations will be made in consideration of the totality of the facts and the circumstances surrounding the incident. If Karida Dorsey determines that an incident of bullying has occurred, they should take the response steps enumerated in OHR's tertiary prevention plan to prevent the recurrence of an incident and restore the safety of a victim.

If Karida Dorsey determines that additional support is needed to conduct a thorough and equitable investigation they will contact the citywide prevention coordinator.



### **Sanctions (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(5))**

Achievement Prep recognizes that for sanctions to be an effective component of a bullying prevention plan, they must be applied consistently, fairly, and equitably. To this end, Achievement Prep shall ensure that staff follow 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. Responses to incidents of bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- Reprimand
- Deprivation of Achievement Prep privileges
- Bans on participating in optional Achievement Prep activities
- Deprivation of Achievement Prep services
- Ban or suspension from Achievement Prep facilities

Sanctions will be applied within one day 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 as described in the Appeals section of this policy. To ensure that single incidents of bullying do not become recurring problems, Achievement Prep will always refer victims and bullies involved in an incident to services in addition to imposing sanctions on bullies.

Achievement Prep does not endorse the use of punitive strategies associated with “zero-tolerance” policies when applying sanctions to an incident of bullying.

Achievement Prep shall communicate to youth in contact with OHR, the consequences that youth can expect for participating in bullying behavior.

### **Appeals (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(8); § 2-1535.04)**

Parties dissatisfied by the outcome of a bullying investigation may appeal to the determination of Karida Dorsey to a higher authority in the agency. This appeal should be submitted no later than 30 days after the initial determination. Upon receipt of an appeal, the designated higher authority in the agency must conduct a secondary investigation within 30 days of the receipt of an appeal. This 30 days may be extended up to an additional 15 days if the designated higher authority in the agency sets forth in writing the reasons why more time is needed to conduct an investigation. Additionally, upon the receipt of an appeal, the designated higher authority in the agency must inform the party making the submission of their ability to seek additional redress under the DC Human Rights Act.