



Bully Prevention and Intervention Policy

SY 2016-2017



Achievement Prep Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Objectives and Purpose

The mission of Achievement Prep (AP) is to prepare students to excel as high-achieving scholars and leaders in high-school, college and beyond. Given this, a key responsibility of AP is to provide a school environment that is respectful and positive and free from all forms of bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our efforts to promote a positive school culture that promotes learning and not only discourages, but works to eliminate, all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We understand that members of certain student groups, including but limited to scholars with disabilities, scholars who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, or homeless scholars may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The school will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all scholars with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond appropriately to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

To facilitate this commitment, AP has established this comprehensive Bully prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”). This Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the school is committed to working with scholars, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. We have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The Dean of Solutions is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

Definitions

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

1. May be based on a scholar’s actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, 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 scholar’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 scholars in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property;
 - b. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the scholar’s physical or mental health;
 - c. Substantially interfere with the scholar’s academic performance or attendance; or
 - d. Substantially interfere with the scholar’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Prohibition against Bullying

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

1. On AP grounds and immediately adjacent property, at AP -sponsored or related events on and off AP grounds, on any vehicle used for AP business, at any transit stop at which scholars wait to be transported to AP business, or through the use of any electronic devices owned by the AP, leased by the AP or used for AP business; and
2. At a location or function unrelated to AP, through the use of any electronic devices, including those not owned or leased by AP, if the acts of bullying or cyberbullying create a hostile environment at the school



for the victim or witnesses, infringe on their rights at AP, or materially and substantially disrupt the orderly operation of AP.

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

Prevention Strategies

Create Positive School Culture

AP will establish a culture of respect and safety. As part of this commitment, AP will incorporate bullying prevention messages and efforts into all aspects of its operations that serve/support scholars.

Staff must be committed to the creation and maintenance of a positive and respectful environment. Accordingly, AP seeks to maintain this environment via collaborative efforts between the behavioral support team and the Dean's office, design and implementation of effective mediation programming, implementation of a school-wide behavioral incentive system, as well as establishing a bully prevention and intervention team responsible for enduring a safe and positive school culture.

Community Education

Safe, positive environments are best supported by an active partnership between AP and the community. This begins with parents and guardians. Accordingly, AP will provide the parents and guardians of the scholars with quarterly bulletins, presentations and/or workshops conducted by AP behavioral support staff to educate them on:

1. How parents and guardians can use activities at home to build on the bullying prevention lessons taught at AP;
2. The dynamics of bullying and its impact on scholars;
3. Information about internet safety and cyberbullying;
4. AP's legal and administrative responses to bullying;
5. Information on parent and guardian relevant sections of AP's prevention policy.

Such information will also be made available by AP to the community, and in particular to AP scholars. These educational opportunities will be made available at six-month intervals. In addition, AP will facilitate bullying specific activities during the month of October in observance of National Bullying Prevention Month.

Code of Conduct

AP has a complete code of conduct that details the behavioral expectations, consequences and policies. This code includes, but is not limited to, incidents related to bullying. Please refer to this guide for more information regarding specific expectations and consequences for bullying. You may contact the Deans' office to obtain a copy of the Code of Conduct at any time.

Training and Professional Development

AP will provide to all personnel whose duties consistently bring them into contact with scholars by design or incident, training on AP's prevention policies, as well as the procedures for responding to and reporting an incident of bullying. Staff will also learn to engage with each other and scholars reflectively to build a school-wide culture of respect. These trainings will be facilitated by the behavioral support staff biannually.

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(Fall & Spring) to ensure that school culture is consistent with the mission of the AP and bully prevention policies outlined in this Plan.

Curriculum

AP will implement a comprehensive teacher referral based bullying prevention curriculum. This six to eight week curriculum will be presented quarterly to scholars proven to be at risk (aggressor and or victim) for bullying. This curriculum will teach scholars:

1. Self-regulation (controlling impulses; focusing, sustaining and shifting attention; listening to and remembering information; empathy training);
2. Perspective-taking (appreciating similarities and differences; recognizing and identifying feelings of others; understanding that feelings can change and are complex);
3. Emotion management (recognizing and identifying one's own feelings; learning strategies for calming down strong emotions; managing stress/anxiety);
4. Problem-solving (learning a process for solving problems; goal setting);
5. Communication skills (being assertive; being respectful; negotiating and compromising); and
6. Friendship skills (cooperation, including others, joining in with others).

Data Collection

Data Collaboration

The Deans of Solutions will be responsible for the review and documentation of incidents motivated by bullying. Interventions provided, and scholar response to those interventions, will be documented separate from general disciplinary data and reviewed quarterly. Prior to each academic year, AP will utilize school-wide disciplinary and incident data to support further development or refinement of the bullying prevention and intervention policy. Based on this data, AP will make necessary changes to the Plan for the upcoming school year that will be shared with parents, scholars, and staff.

Incident Measures

AP will collect the following pieces of information about reported incidents of bullying:

1. Name(s) of the victim, bully, and any witnesses a. Reliable contact information for the victim, bully and any witnesses
2. Relevant attributes about the victim, bully and any witnesses including:
 - a. Any prior incidents involving either the victim or bully
 - b. Connection of the victim, bully, and any witnesses to the incident (i.e. are they scholars, staff, volunteers, etc.)
3. The nature of the bullying incident
 - a. Where the incident took place
 - b. What time the incident took place
 - c. What type(s) of bullying it was (physical, verbal, cyber, relational, etc.?)
 - d. What factors drove the incident of bullying (social status, personal appearance, race, sexual orientation, etc.)
 - e. What adult supervision was in place



f. Context of the incident

4. AP will only attempt to collect this information insofar as it does not jeopardize the safety of the victim and witness(es) and allows non-staff reports of bullying to be made anonymously.

Service and Climate Measures

AP will collect the following measures of prevention service provision:

1. Training Measures
 - a. Number of staff who have attended prevention training sessions;
 - b. Staff knowledge about bullying prevention dynamics and strategies.
2. Curriculum Measures
 - a. Number of prevention curricula sessions provided to scholars
 - b. Number of at-risk scholars referred to treatment and services
 - c. Number of treatment sessions provided to at-risk scholars
3. AP Climate- surveys administered to scholars and staff desired to measure perceptions of:
 - a. AP climate
 - b. Safety at AP
 - c. Scholars self-reports of bullying

In addition, the behavior support team will be responsible for conducting scholar needs assessments as well as parent response surveys bi-annually (Fall & Spring) to further assess overall climate.

Prevention Goals

At the beginning of each academic year, the Deans of Solutions will review and update goals for AP's bully prevention efforts. AP will set out clear, reasonable goals to be achieved in incident reduction, training and curriculum development and AP climate improvement. Each goal created should have clear data measures being collected to track AP progress toward these goals. These goals will be reviewed throughout the year.

Secondary Prevention Strategies

Identifying At-Risk Groups

All staff at AP will actively seek out scholars who are at risk of being victims or bullies to proactively remedy incidents of bullying before they occur.

In determining whether a scholar is at risk of being a victim of aggression, staff will consider the following risk factors:

1. Individual factors
 - a. Cautious, sensitive, insecure personality
 - b. Difficulty asserting themselves among peers
 - c. Physical weakness, particularly in boys
2. Parental factors
 - a. Possible over-protective parents
3. Peer risk factors
 - a. Lack of close friends



Risk factors for being a bully in an incident include:

1. Individual factors
 - a. Impulsive, hot-headed, dominant personality lacking empathy
 - b. Difficulty conforming to rules and low frustration tolerance
 - c. Positive attitudes toward violence
 - d. Gradually decreasing interest in school or academic achievement
2. Parental factors
 - a. Lack of parental warmth and involvement
 - b. Overly-permissive or excessively harsh discipline/physical punishment by parents
 - c. Lack of parental supervision
3. Peer risk factors
 - a. Friends/peers with positive attitudes towards violence
 - b. Exposure to models of bullying

Referral to Secondary Service for At-Risk Scholars

AP staff members who have reason to believe that a scholar is at risk of being a victim or bully will send the scholars to the Deans of Solutions, who will work with the school mental health team to refer them to the appropriate services based on the school's available resources. Resources will be given directly to the scholars. If outside agencies are contacted, the scholar's and/or parent or guardian's written consent must first be obtained.

Referral to service as part of a secondary prevention measure is not a disciplinary action and will never be noted on a scholar's record as such. At the time of a referral, Behavior Support Staff will notify the scholar's parents or guardian about referring scholars to services, request parental consent for the delivery of reasons they are referring scholars, the type of service they are referring the scholars.

Secondary Services for At-Risk Scholars

Secondary services provided to at-risk scholars are not designed to punish and will not be reported on AP records as such. Rather, the objective of secondary services is to support at-risk scholars and address risk behaviors before they become serious safety or disciplinary issues. To this end, remedial measures will be tailored to the scholars receiving them to build on scholars strengths while addressing skills and behavior deficits.

When considering what remedial services should be offered to a scholar, the mental health team will take into account: life skill competencies and deficiencies, extracurricular and academic strengths and weaknesses, available peer and home support networks, and personal traits. Based on these attributes scholars will be referred for behavior support services inside of the school or, when appropriate, to an outside agency who can address these needs.

Resources will be given directly to scholars and/or the family of the scholar. If outside agencies are contacted, the scholar's and/or parent or guardian's written consent will first be obtained. In all cases of remedial action, AP will take all possible steps to actively involve the scholar's parents or guardians in the skill-building process, as long as the scholar's written consent is obtained.

Examples of remedial services AP will provide directly or refer a for scholar to include, but are not limited to: peer mediation, therapy or counseling, closely monitored behavioral management plans, and parent conferences. Services will be provided to an at-risk scholar no more than one month after such a determination is made.

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Investigating Incidents of Bullying

Prior to the investigation of an incident, the Dean of Solutions 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, but are not limited to, 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 the school, the following groups will be notified as needed by the Dean of Solutions, so long as, in the absence of legal imperative, the parent or guardian's written consent is obtained prior to notification:

Parents and guardians: AP 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. The Dean of Solutions will determine if parents or guardians should be informed prior to or after the investigation of an incident.

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

Law enforcement agencies: If AP 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 the Dean of Solutions 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.

AP 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. AP will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of those who report bullying incidents.

The Dean of Solutions is responsible for investigating reports of bullying. An investigation of an incident will be initiated no more than one day after the Dean of Solutions 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 the Dean of Solutions will interview any involved or relevant parties including alleged victims, bullies, witnesses, staff, parents or guardians.

The Dean of Solutions 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 AP. Where necessary, provisions will be made to include the advice of legal counsel.

In investigating an incident of bullying, the Dean of Solutions 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 the Dean of Solutions 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.

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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.

The Dean of Solutions 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 the Dean of Solutions determines that an incident of bullying has occurred, they should take the response steps enumerated in AP's bully prevention plan to prevent the recurrence of an incident and restore the safety of a victim.

Sanctions and Remedies for Bullying

Sanctions

AP 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, AP shall ensure that the staff follows 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 scholars involved, and the age and developmental status of the scholars involved. Responses to incidents of bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- Reprimand
- Deprivation of AP privileges
- Bans on participating in optional AP activities
- Ban or suspension from AP 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, AP will always refer victims and bullies involved in an incident to services in addition to imposing sanctions on bullies. AP does not endorse the use of punitive strategies associated with "zero-tolerance" policies when applying sanctions to an incident of bullying. AP shall communicate to scholars in contact with AP, the consequences that scholars can expect for participating in bullying behavior.

Referral to Services

AP response to an active incident of bullying will always include the referral of both victim(s) and bully/bullies to remedial services. If an investigation determines that a scholar was involved in an incident of bullying as a bully, victim, or witness the Dean of Solutions or mental health team will refer them to the appropriate services. At the time of a referral the Dean of Solutions will inform the scholar's parents or guardian about referring the scholars to services with the scholar's consent if they have not already been informed as part of the investigation and determination process. The Dean of Solutions will also explain the reasons they are referring a scholar, the type of service they are referring the scholar to and the reason they think that particular service(s) will meet the scholar's needs. Resources will be given directly to the scholar. If outside agencies are contacted, the scholar's and/or parent or guardian's written consent must first be obtained. If parents or guardians do not consent to contact outside services than such services will only be applied to bullies in conjunction with any sanctions applied.

Services for Bullies, Victims and Witnesses



Remedial services to which scholars are referred are not designed to be punitive and will never be noted on a scholar's AP records as such.

Remedial services provided to the “aggressor” are designed to correct the thinking patterns, behaviors, and skill deficiencies that led to the incident, turning a bullying incident into a teachable moment.

Remedial services provided to the victim and witnesses are designed to restore scholars' sense of safety and to empower them to address bullying incidents in a constructive and non-violent manner.

Remedial services are designed to help scholars build the skills to participate safely and constructively in AP and will be tailored to scholars based on: life skill competencies and deficiencies, extracurricular and academic strengths and weaknesses, available peer and home support networks, mental and behavioral health concerns, and personal traits. Based on these attributes indicating what AP resources are best suited to address remedy these deficiencies, the Dean of Solutions will determine the appropriate remedial services. Services will be provided to scholars no later than one month after an incident of bullying is confirmed by the Dean of Solutions.

Appeals

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

Policy Evaluation

AP will annually review and update this policy with new prevention strategies developed after consultation with community stakeholders, continuing research on best practices in bullying prevention, and the agency's data collaboration with the citywide coordinator. Policy changes will be made to rectify gaps identified in the current prevention effort and to build on successful strategies. They will be further informed by whether or not AP successfully met or is on track to meet performance goals described in its “prevention goals” section.

This policy was reviewed, updated, and approved by the Leadership Teams, Deans of Solutions, and Mental Health Clinicians at Achievement Prep Wabler Place Elementary Campus and Achievement Prep Wabler Place Middle Campus in September 2016.