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COALITIONS

Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions Group Recommendations for Drafting a Bullying Prevention Policy

The most effective and evidence-based bullying policies should:

- Provide a definition of bullying behavior including;

  - a reference to a real or perceived power imbalance, (or state that there is often a real or perceived power differential); and

  - that bullying behavior is or has the potential to be repeated over time

- Describe the relationship between bullying and harassment;

- May include situations that happen away from activity/facility if the behavior impacts a person's ability to participate in the activity;

- Enumerate specific characteristics while also indicating that the policy is not limited to those characteristics and applies whether or not the individual belongs to or identifies with the characteristics; and

- Not mandate zero tolerance.

Additional work group recommendations:

- Include youth and staff in its development whenever possible;

- Provide bullying prevention training and information to youth and parents; and

- Provide mandatory training for staff;

- Require mandatory reporting by staff if they witness bullying behavior; Be consistently applied using situation appropriate levels of discipline which balance consequences with need for youth to participate; and;

- Designate a staff person to whom reports of bullying should be made.

***Important note: Your organization may be under separate legal requirements when it comes to bullying and harassment. It is important to research and adhere to all obligations your organization may have due to memberships, affiliations, funding sources or the population you serve.

Sample Bullying Prevention Policy

1. Purpose Statement

    [Organization] is committed to providing all participants with a safe and healthy environment, free from bullying. All forms of bullying behavior are strictly prohibited. Anyone who engages in bullying behavior in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate discipline and other corrective action. [Organization] values civil and respectful speech and conduct, it is essential that all our staff comply with the organization's policy prohibiting bullying.

2. Statement of Scope

    a. Discipline rules apply when a person is on the facility or grounds of the activity; situations that happen away from activity or facility if the behavior impacts a person's ability to participate in the activity.

3. Definition

    Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among peers that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

4. Specification of Prohibited Conduct

    Bullying behaviors may include physical aggression involving hurting a person or their property; verbal aggression such as saying or writing mean things; social aggression including hurting a person's relationships or reputation and cyberbullying which occurs using electronic technology. Examples include but are not limited teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, theft, public humiliation, retaliation, destruction of property. These may occur in person, in writing and through email, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, cell phones, online games, and other websites.

5. Bullying and Harassment

    a. Bullying behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics and applies whether or not the individual belongs to or identifies with the characteristic.

    b. Some bullying actions can fall into criminal categories, such as harassment, hazing, or assault. These cases may be violations of civil rights, hate crime laws or are other types of legal offenses.