

Monument Academy's Bullying Prevention Policy

Objectives and Purpose

A key responsibility of the Monument Academy community is to provide a positive and mindful environment. Acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation do not fit with our core values. To facilitate our mission, Monument Academy has established this comprehensive bullying prevention policy. This policy aims to protect the dignity and safety of the Monument Academy community, and it describes our strategies to identify, prevent, and respond to incidents. Monument Academy will promptly report and investigate all incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation and provide recommended responses for victims of an incident.

Background

On June 22, 2012, the District of Columbia City Council passed the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012 (hereafter referred to as 'the Act') to address bullying on a comprehensive, citywide level. The policy requires that all District agencies, grantees, and educational institutions that provide services to youth adopt a bullying prevention policy.

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Definitions

The District of Columbia 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 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 agency, educational institution, or grantee.
- 3. Monument Academy additionally defines bullying as repeated, intentional negative conduct that involves a perceived power differential.

Prohibition against Bullying

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

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

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.

Publication and Contact Information

The school's bullying policy, and age appropriate versions thereof, will be distributed to students and parents of youth attending Monument Academy annually, and Monument Academy will emphasize that the policy applies to functions sponsored by Monument Academy as well.

Gerron Cooper, Director of Behaviour Management, will serve as Monument Academy's Bullying Prevention Coordinator. The Bullying Prevention Coordinator is responsible for managing Monument Academy's bullying prevention efforts. All questions, comments

and concerns about the bullying policy and Monument Academy prevention efforts should be able to be directed to Gerron Cooper at gerron.cooper@monumentacademydc.org

Policy Evaluation

Monument Academy 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 school data collection. Policy changes will be made to rectify gaps identified in the current prevention efforts and to build on successful strategies.

Primary Prevention Strategies

Create Positive Agency Atmosphere

Monument Academy will establish a culture built upon our 5 core values. We will maintain an environment of safety and respect. Staff must be committed to creating a positive and mindful environment.

1. Kindness
2. Integrity
3. Excellence
4. Positivity
5. Mindfulness

Code of Conduct

All Monument Academy students and staff are expected to provide a positive and mindful environment for members of the community. Youth who are part of the **Monument Academy** community are expected to:

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

Ongoing Professional Development

Monument Academy recognizes that in addition to training, staff members require ongoing professional development to build the tools and knowledge needed to prevent,

identify, and respond to incidents of bullying. Therefore, Monument Academy will ensure that staff has ongoing access to professional development opportunities that include information on:

1. The review of Monument Academy's data related to bullying;
2. Age and developmentally appropriate strategies for identifying, preventing, and responding constructively to incidents of bullying;
3. Specific populations that may be particularly at-risk in the Monument Academy environment;
4. Internet safety and cyberbullying issues;
5. The components and delivery of the agency's Restorative Justice framework.

Curriculum

Monument Academy will implement a comprehensive social emotional curriculum, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), the components of which will be integrated into all youth related Monument Academy activities. This curriculum will teach youth the following skills:

1. Mindfulness
2. Distress Tolerance
3. Emotional Regulation
4. Interpersonal Effectiveness

Reporting Incidents of Bullying or Retaliation

Monument Academy expects all staff members and volunteers to report incidents of bullying or retaliation, whether they witness the incident or are made aware of it secondhand. Staff members should immediately report all such incidents using the Bullying Referral Form found in the Resources section of the bulletin.

Youth, parents, guardians, and community members are encouraged by Monument Academy to report any incidents of bullying, whether they witness the incident or are made aware of it secondhand. Reports of bullying may be made in person to a member of the leadership team, by email to the Director of Behaviour Management at gerron.cooper@monumentacademydc.org, or by mail to Monument Academy, 500 19th St. NE, Washington, DC 20002. Persons can report of bullying anonymously, although no formal response will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Investigating Incidents of Bullying

Prior to the investigation of an incident, a member of the Monument Academy Leadership Team, the Bullying Coordinator, or a designee, 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 her or him from further incidents if necessary.

Once an official report of bullying has been received by Monument Academy, the following groups will be notified as needed by Bullying Coordinator, Head School, Director of Behaviour Management, or another designated staff member of Monument Academy so long as, in the absence of legal imperative, the parent or guardian's written consent is obtained prior to notification.

Parents and guardians: Monument Academy 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.

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

Monument Academy's Head of School, Director of Behaviour Management, or the Chief Operating Officer is responsible for investigating reports of bullying. A preliminary check-in with the students involved will be initiated no more than 48 hours after a report of bullying and will conclude no later than 10 business days after the receipt of such a report (unless there are extenuating circumstances). As part of the investigation the Monument Leadership Team or the designee will interview any involved or relevant parties including alleged victims, bullies, witnesses, staff, parents or guardians.

Monument Academy 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 school wide aggregate data system to generate a more accurate picture of bullying behaviors at Monument Academy. Where necessary, provisions will be made to include the advice of legal counsel.

In investigating an incident of bullying, Director of Behaviour Management or the designee will seek to ensure that the reported incident is one of victimizations, a sign of bullying, rather than of conflict. This will include understanding whether there was a perceived power differential, if the behavior was repeated and intentional, and/or if the victim did not believe he or she could make the behavior stop. If Monument Academy determines that an incident of bullying has occurred, the school will take the response steps enumerated in Monument Academy's prevention plan to prevent the recurrence of an incident and restore the safety of a victim.

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

Schoolwide Post Incident Responses

Monument Academy recognizes that for anti-bullying behavior to become learned and consistent, teaching must be applied consistently, fairly, and equitably. To this end, Monument Academy shall utilize PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) and our Social-Emotional Learning curriculum consistently to ensure that staff and student "are in the know."

Monument Academy utilizes a system of natural and logical consequences for student who misbehaviours and this includes incidences of bullying. To ensure equitability in applying consequences, they will be determined on an individual basis, taking into account the nature of the offense, the disciplinary history of the youth involved, and the age and developmental status of the youth involved. Consequences are designed to: appropriately correct the bullying behavior, prevent another occurrence of bullying or retaliation, protect the target of the bullying, be flexible so application can be unique to the individual incident, and be flexible so application can be varied in method and severity based on (1) the nature of the incident, (2) the developmental age of the person bullying, and (3) any history of problem behavior from the person bullying. Responses to incidents of bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- Redirection and reteaching
- Teacher/student conference

- Parental contact
- Behaviour contract
- Restorative practices
- Suspension from certain activities or environments while new behaviors are being taught/practiced
- Peer and/or family mediation
- In extreme circumstances, could include - Ban or suspension from **Monument Academy** facilities and/or referral for legal action

While Monument Academy has no tolerance for bullying in any fashion, Monument Academy does not endorse the use of punitive strategies associated with “zero-tolerance” policies often employed to an incident of bullying.

Monument Academy shall communicate to all students at Monument Academy, the consequences that youth can expect for participating in bullying behavior.

Follow-Up Actions

When a formal investigation for bullying gets requested, the following actions take place:

(a) Bullying Coordinator logs in eSchoolPlus and notifies referring staff member. (b) Bullying Coordinator emails Chief of Operations, Director of Behavior Management, and Head of School to inform them of the need for formal investigation. (c) Bullying Coordinator tells the victim that a formal investigation is going to happen, and sets up a meeting between the victim and Director of Behavior Management to create a plan for moving forward. (d) Aggressor’s family is notified there will be a formal investigation.

Afterwards the parents/guardians of both the victim and aggressor are notified of the results of the investigation by the Bullying Coordinator and/or designee.

Appeals

Parties dissatisfied by the outcome of a bullying investigation may appeal the determination of the Behavioral Support Team and Bullying Coordinator to the Head of Monument Academy. All students are entitled to conferences, hearings, and/or appeals of disciplinary matters as provided by state and federal law and school policy. This appeal should be submitted no later than 30 days after the initial determination. Upon receipt of an appeal, the principal 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 principal sets forth in writing the reasons why more time is needed to conduct an investigation. Additionally, upon the receipt of an appeal, the principal must inform the party making the submission of their ability to seek additional redress under the DC Human Rights Act.

For decisions involving suspension and/or expulsion, please refer to Monument Academy's Disciplinary Policy and Appeals process located in the Charter Agreement.