

## Template for Organization Anti-Bullying Policy

### United Way of Summit County

The (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) believes that providing an environment for all youth, employees, volunteers and families, free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying supports a total learning experience.

This environment promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships, wellness, and freedom from discrimination and abuse.

Therefore, harassment, intimidation and bullying are forms of dangerous and disrespectful behavior that will not be tolerated.

#### Definitions:

**“Bullying”** is any written, verbal or electronic expression, physical acts or gestures, or a pattern of behavior that is intended to cause distress upon one or more persons in the agency, on organization grounds, in organization vehicles, or at organization activities or sanctioned events. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, harassment, hazing, intimidation or menacing acts of a person which may, but need not be, based on the person’s sex, race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, disability or sexual orientation.

**“Harassment”** means knowingly pursuing a pattern of conduct that is intended to threaten, alarm or terrorize another person.

**“Disability Harassment”** is defined as intimidation or abusive behavior toward a person based on disability that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a person’s participation in, or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the organization. Harassment and Disability Harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal acts, teasing, inappropriate use of sarcasm or demeaning jokes
- Name-calling, belittling
- Non-verbal behavior such as graphic or written statements
- Conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating
- Inappropriate physical restraint by another person

**“Racial Harassment”** consists of physical or verbal conduct relating to an individual’s race when the conduct:

- Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual’s performance
- Otherwise adversely affects an individual’s opportunities

**“Sexual Orientation Harassment/Homophobic Bullying”** consists of physical, verbal, electronic communication or gestures relating to an individual’s sexual orientation when the conduct is intended to threaten, alarm, or terrorize the person.

**“Sexual Harassment”** means any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may take place under any of the following circumstances:

- When submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of obtaining participation in or outcomes of organization programs
- Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used to factor in decisions affecting that individual’s participation or outcome
- That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual’s participation or outcome or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment

**“Hazing”** means committing an act against a person (or group of persons), or coercing a person (or group of persons) into committing an act that creates a risk of harm to a person. This would include initiation practices connected with any activity or club. This also applies to any and all GANG initiation activities or practices. Hazing includes but is not limited to:

- Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, shocking, or placing a harmful substance on or in the body.
- Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the person to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the person
- Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the person to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the person.
- Any activity that intimidates or threatens that person with ostracism, that subjects the person to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame, or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the person or discourages the person from remaining in the organization.
- Any activity that causes or requires the person to perform a task that involves a violation of state or federal law, or organization policies.

### **Notice of Prohibition against Bullying and Anti-Bullying Interventions**

The prohibition against bullying shall be published by including the following statement in organization handbooks or personnel manuals:

“Bullying behavior by any person in the (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) is strictly prohibited and such conduct may result in disciplinary action including suspension and/or expulsion from the organization. “Bullying” means any repeated and pervasive written, verbal or electronic expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more person in the organization, on organization grounds, in organization vehicles, or at organization activities or sanctioned events.”

Bullying includes, but is not limited to hazing, harassment, intimidation or menacing acts of a person which may, but need not be based on the person’s race, color, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability , age, or sexual orientation that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- Placing a person in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the person’s property
- Physically harming a person or damaging a person’s property
- Insulting or demeaning any person or group of persons in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the organization’s mission or the progress of any person in the organization. This behavior may possibly cause long-term psychological/emotional harm to the target

Clients and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior to organization personnel and administrators. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the alleged aggressor, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion from the organization.

- Staff will be reminded at the beginning of each year about the Anti-Bullying Policy, as well as their responsibilities regarding bullying behavior. By the 2010 fiscal year, a copy of the policy will be disseminated to all staff and will be included in the Staff Orientation Handbook and/or personnel manual.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be available on the (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) website and in all client and staff handbooks and/or personnel manuals by the beginning of the 2010 fiscal year.

## Reporting Intimidation, Harassment, or Bullying Behavior

- Any person who believes he/she has been the victim or harassment, intimidation, bullying, or hazing by any person or organization personnel, or any person with knowledge, or belief of such conduct that may constitute harassment, intimidation, bullying, or hazing toward any person should immediately report the alleged acts.
- The report may be made to any staff member. The staff member will assist the client in reporting to the Executive Director or designee.
- Teachers and other agency staff who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying are **REQUIRED** to promptly notify designated staff.
- Reports should be done in writing using the Formal Bullying Complaint Form. A copy of this form will be submitted to the Executive Director or designee.
- The Executive Director or his/her designee is **REQUIRED** to accept and investigate all reports.

The Executive Director or designee is **REQUIRED** to make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or guardian of a person who commits a verified act of intimidation, harassment, or bullying of the response of the organization staff, and consequences that may result from further acts of bullying.

Retaliation against an individual, who either orally reports or files a written complaint regarding harassment, intimidation, bullying and hazing, is prohibited.

The right to confidentiality for both the complainant and the accused shall be preserved whenever possible. Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed at the onset of an investigation as it cannot be predicted what will be discovered or what kind of hearing will result.

If harassment or bullying continues, the (alleged) aggressor will be immediately suspended and removed from the organization, pending a long-term hearing.

Agency staff is **REQUIRED** to make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or guardian of a person who is a target of bullying of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying.

## Investigating Intimidation, Harassment or Bullying Behavior

The Executive Director or his/her designee will appropriately and promptly investigate all reports of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or hazing. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes bullying, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, the person's history, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The following are key points to consider during the investigation process:

- The investigation shall consist of separate personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint was filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of other methods or documents deemed relevant by the investigators.
- The organization may take immediate steps to protect the complainant, clients, teachers, directors, or other personnel pending the completion of an investigation.

The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible. Each organizational site will be responsible for processing and maintaining a file of all formal incidents. Said reports may be used to compile data regarding the extent of bullying within the organization.

## **Consequences for Bullying**

Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the Executive Director or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against bullying behavior is enforced.

Bullying behavior can take many forms and may vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the targeted individual and other persons. Accordingly, there is not a single disciplinary response to bullying. Conduct that rises to the level of "bullying" as defined above will warrant disciplinary action against the (alleged) aggressor of such bullying. The extent to which to impose disciplinary action is a matter of professional discretion of the Executive Director/designee.

Consequences may include organization suspension or expulsion. Other consequences may include Restorative Justice or the involvement of other programs adopted by the organization to address bullying behaviors.

## **Consequences for Knowingly Making False Reports**

False reports of bullying behaviors will be regarded as serious offenses and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

## **Threats of Violence**

- Threats of violence toward other persons, organization staff, or facilities are prohibited and may result in suspension or expulsion, regardless of whether the person has previously engaged in such conduct.
- All employees and clients are required to report evidence of threats of violence to the Executive Director or designee.
- In cases of threats that may constitute a serious violation of criminal law, the Executive Director/designee shall notify law enforcement authorities.
- In cases of threats that constitute a minor violation of criminal law, the Executive Director/designee has the right to notify law enforcement authorities if appropriate.

Research "best practices" anti-bullying programs and make recommendation(s) to the Executive Director as to these findings.

Anti-Bullying Policies and procedures will be submitted to the (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) board of trustees for approval and adoption.

Anti-Bullying Policies and procedures will be included in all (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) handbooks and/or personnel manuals by January, 2010.

Pending board approval, begin use of Formal Bullying Complaint Form.

Disseminate copies (either electronically and/or by hard copy) of Policies and Procedures for Anti-Bullying in staff training and/or to all staff before January, 2010.

In order to be most effective in decreasing bullying behaviors, it is recommended that the (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) adopt an Anti-Bullying program immediately.

Include all staff in an anti-bullying training by January, 2010.

**(NAME OF ORGANIZATION) Formal Bullying Complaint Form**

Client Name(s)/(alleged target) \_\_\_\_\_

Client Name(s)/(alleged aggressor) \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Incident:

1. Did behavior meet criteria for: Bullying Harassment Racial Harassment  
Sexual Harassment Hazing/Gang Initiation Homophobic Harassment  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Was behavior: Verbal Physical Both  
Please describe behavior : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Any injuries: Client Staff No Injury  
If yes, please describe injury: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. If yes, was nurse contacted: Yes No Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_  
If no, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who witnessed behavior: Client Staff Both  
Names of witnesses if appropriate: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Formal complaint given to Executive Director/Designee:  Yes No  
Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Were parent(s)/guardian(s) of both target and aggressor contacted:  Yes  No  
Date and time: \_\_\_\_\_  
If not, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Was law enforcement or other agency notified:  Yes No  
Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, name of agency: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person(s) making report: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time Report Completed: \_\_\_\_\_