

University of Tennessee High School

LGBT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Policy Statement

The University of Tennessee High School prohibits acts of harassment or bullying based on discrimination of sexual minorities or those perceived to be sexual minorities. UTCHS has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for all LGBT students or perceived LGBT students to learn and meet their future goals. Harassment or bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that disrupts the student or educators ability to effectively educate in a safe environment. All administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers are required to provide positive examples for student behavior.

Bullying of LGBT in any gesture, written, verbal, graphic, or physical act is strictly prohibited. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at school-sponsored functions or in a school vehicle.

“Bullying” is conduct that meets any of the following criteria:

- Is directed at one or more pupils
- Interferes with the learning process of one or more pupil
- Adversely affects the pupils ability to participate in or benefit from extra curricular activities as perceived by the pupil
- Is based on pupils actual or perceived sexual orientation or association with actual or perceived sexuality

The UTCHS administration believes that it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations as learning opportunities for helping students learn to assume responsibility and consequences for their behavior. Staff that interacts with pupils who are in violation of bullying based on perceived sexual orientation for the first violation will utilize school counseling services where students in violation of the zero tolerance for discrimination against perceived or actual sexual minorities parents or guardians will be contacted to review policy concerning discrimination or “bullying” of sexual minorities.

Since bystander support of bullying can support these behaviors, UTCHS prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying.

Because UTCHS understands that staff and faculty are role models in the classroom environment. All teaching, administrative and support staff will receive cultural competence training and agree and sign written contract to help provide and maintain a safe, appropriate environment conducive to optimal learning.

Reasons for Policy and Statistical Data

In a study commissioned by Atlanta’s Youth Pride and conducted by the Georgia State University Center for Research on School Safety, School Climate and Classroom Management, 437 middle students were surveyed about bullying and another seventeen “sexual minority” high school students from around Atlanta were interviewed. Some seventy-five percent of the Georgia students surveyed said that they heard homophobic

slurs like “dyke” and “fag” from fellow students, and sixty-six percent reported hearing negative comments about gender expression. (Hudson, 2006)

America’s most lethal school shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold of Columbine High School, reportedly faced anti-gay bullying before their 1999 rampage, as did the school shooters in Kentucky in 1997 and California in 2001. (2006)

Policy Reasoning and Conflict Resolution

UTCHS believes that it is the moral and ethical responsibility of all staff and employees to provide a culture where all students feel respected and valued.

It is proposed that this policy will provide a positive safe environment for sexual minorities to learn. A place where the emphasis is not on survival but education becomes the primary focus.

Supervision of Policy

UTCHS requires the principle and or principal designee will be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations to the principle or the principle designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously.

The policy dictates the principal or designee will determine whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. A prompt, thorough investigation of each alleged

incident will be conducted. The investigation must be completed within three school days after being reported

UTCHS requires school officials to disseminate school policy to all members of school community on a yearly basis and ensure that adequate explanation of policy is given to all parties involved.

No reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment or bullying will be tolerated and appropriate action will be taken against those who engage in retaliation.

Literature Review

Many researchers agree that that homophobia is a damaging influence on lesbian, gay and bisexual youths. Young people who identify themselves as, or are perceived as sexual minorities, are potential victims of verbal and physical assaults. (Van Wormer, 2003)

The most common form of anti-gay harassment is verbal. There are several common slang words that are utilized to alienate and marginalize gay youth. The most common are “fag”, “Dyke” and “queer”. (Hudson, 2006) Unrelenting verbal attacks create a hostile climate and undermine the ability of the targeted student to concentrate on learning and the teacher’s ability to teach. Sexual Minority youths receive the message that they are not worthy of protection, and that harassment is an inevitable consequence of being gay. (Kijewski, 2003) Because of the hostile climate in which this population is forced to learn, they often are more focused on surviving school rather than their education. Gay and lesbian youths are at an increased risk of suicide, substance abuse, being victims of violence and of becoming a runaway. (Russell, 2001) Often, there is a

deliberate indifference to this abuse by school officials, who sometimes blame the abused student as provoking the attacks by not fitting the rigid stereotypes of traditional gender roles. (2003)

Definition of Significant Terms

Sexual orientation- refers to the direction of an individual's sexuality, usually conceived of as classifiable according to the sex or gender of the persons whom the individual finds sexually attractive. The most commonly used categories of sexual orientation are heterosexuality (being sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex), homosexuality (being sexually attracted to members of the same sex) and bisexuality (being sexually attracted to members of either sex).

Sexual minority- is a group whose sexual identity, orientation or practices differ from the majority of the surrounding society. The term was coined (most likely in the late 1960s or early 1970s)

Bullying- is the act of intentionally causing harm to others through verbal harassment, physical assault, or other more subtle methods of coercion such as manipulation. There is currently no legal definition of bullying.

Verbal abuse- is a form of abusive behavior involving the use of language. Verbal abuse is different from profanity in that it can occur without profanity.

Gender role- is a set of perceived behavioral norms associated particularly with males or females, in a given social group or system.

LGBT- in use (since the 1990s) refers collectively to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. The acronym is an adaptation of the initial LGB. In modern use, the acronym relates the diversity of the Gay culture.

Youth- is defined by Webster's New World Dictionary as, "The time of life when one is young; especially: a: the period between childhood and maturity b: the early period of existence, growth, or development."

Examples of Consequences

- Admonishment
- Temporary removal from classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Cultural sensitivity training
- In-school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Legal Action
- Expulsion or termination
- Student counseling
- Parent conferences

Chronological Steps

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Upon first incidence of allegation of LGBT bullying, the pupil will be referred to the school counciler where student will be admonished and parents or guardian will be contacted to review school policy against LGBT bullying

If further incidents of LGBT bullying occur, the second incidence will result in the pupil being temporarily removed from the classroom where he/she will receive cultural sensitivity training. Parents or Guardians will be contacted for conference.

A third incidence of LGBT bullying will result in the pupil's expulsion or termination from school.

It is UTCHS policy that any incident of physical violence may be referred for legal action depending on the severity of the violation.

Any school or faculty member who is found to be in violation of the school LGBT policy will result in immediate termination.

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LGBT RESOURCES

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE)

International and national organization supporting young people with LGBT parents.

www.colage.org

Lavender Youth Recreation Center Talk line (LYRIC)

Peer support and counseling phone line on coming out, family, friends, dating, sex, HIV and relationships. Supports individuals ages 13-24.
1-800-969-6884

www.lyric.org

PFLAG

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

http://www.pflag.org/About_PFLAG.about.0.html

Gay/Straight Alliances

To provide a safe place for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth to get together and socialize with other young people and to address the isolation and invisibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth and to provide educational services. AGLY's educate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth about health issues, as well as gay and lesbian history and culture. They help students with their educational and professional goals and provide services to get young people back in school or keep them in school.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/gsa/>

National Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Youth Hotline

GLSEN is a national network of youth and adults working to end discrimination against LGBT youth in K-12 schools.

www.glsen.org

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