Code of Civility (TESD Employees)

Purpose

This Regulation implements Board Policy No. 4025 ("Code of Civility (TESD Employees)") by:

- Defining "incivility" in the context of Policy No. 4025;
- Identifying strategies for dealing with incivility when it arises in the school setting; and,
- Establishing a complaint procedure to address complaints of individuals who believe they have been treated in an unprofessional and disrespectful manner

Definition and Examples of Incivility

"Incivility," when used in this Regulation, means the following:

- rude, abusive or intolerant behavior in any type of school setting when such behavior may tend to erode education or diminish an atmosphere of professionalism or mutual respect; and/or,
- use of offensive or obscene language in person, voice-mail, written correspondence, e-mail or any other from of communication; and/or,
- threatening or belligerent conduct that in any way interferes or threatens to interfere with the orderly operations of the District or places another person in fear of imminent physical harm.

Strategies for Addressing Incivility When It Occurs

1. If a participant in a meeting becomes verbally abusive, the District employee responsible for chairing the meeting, on their own initiative or at the request of another meeting participant, should immediately ask the participant to stop and let them know that if the participant does not stop that the meeting will be terminated. If necessary, the meeting chair should request a five minute break to allow everyone to regroup. If problems recur after the meeting is reconvened, the chair should consider ending the meeting and documenting the basis for the meeting termination.

2. If the District is under a timeline to conduct a meeting involving an uncivil participant, the District employee responsible for chairing the meeting should advise the participant that the meeting will be completed without them.

3. If at any time a staff member, student, parent or other individual threatens bodily harm or attempts to physically touch in a threatening and harmful manner any person on school property, the police must be notified.

Complaint and Resolution Procedures

1. Employees Complaints About Other Employees

All complaints by District employees against other District employees will be handled in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement or, if none are applicable, in accordance with Policy 4960 ("Procedure for Resolving Issues of Concern of Non-Contract Staff Members").

2. Complaints by Students

The student should first make the complaint known to the staff member most closely involved (if one is identifiable) or a school counselor or other staff member with whom the student has an established personal relationship; and the staff member should work with the student to attempt to resolve the issue informally and directly. The staff member must report the complaint to the building principal who must in turn report the complaint to the Director of Assessment and Accountability. If the student refers the matter to a building administrator, the building administrator should refer the student to the appropriate staff member or may elect to work with the student to attempt to resolve the issue informally and directly themselves, in which case they must follow the procedures applicable to staff members.

Examples:

- A student is subjected to repeated verbal harassment from a student in physical education class. The student may seek the intervention of the physical education teacher or school counselor, whomever the student prefers.

- A student is verbally belittled by a teacher. The student may choose to make the problem known to the teacher or, if the student prefers, the student may seek the intervention of the school counselor.

If the issue is not resolved at this first level of intervention, the staff member must advise the student that if the student wishes to pursue the complaint that the student should prepare a written statement of their complaint which sets forth:

a) Specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of relevant facts.

b) Manner and extent to which the student believes they have been adversely affected.

c) Relief sought by the student.

The staff member must also report the outcome of the complaint to the building principal who must in turn report the outcome to the Director of Assessment and Accountability. The complaint is then submitted, in turn, to the building principal, the Superintendent and the Board. The Board, however, is the forum of last resort and it may, at any time, exercise its discretion not to hear a case.

At each level below the School Board the student will be afforded the opportunity to be heard personally by the school authority. Once the complaint reaches the Board level, the student may request the opportunity to be heard personally at a non-public meeting of the Board. If the request to appear personally is granted, the Board may request the attendance of District personnel at the meeting for the purpose of obtaining a balanced presentation.

The student may seek the help of a parent or guardian at any step.

3. Peer Mediation

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for implementing and overseeing a program of peer mediation for resolving employee disputes.

The Director of Individualized Student Services is responsible for implementing and overseeing a program of peer mediation for resolving student disputes.

4. Other Complaints

All other complaints should be raised with the applicable building administrator or supervisor. If necessary, complaints should be reviewed through successive administrative levels in sequential order to the Superintendent and subsequently to the Board, where appropriate. Board members will be encouraged to advise complainants to first consult with the appropriate staff member or administrator and then, if necessary, to bring the problem to the attention of the Board through the administrative process.

Examples:

- A teacher is alleged to be uncivil towards a parent. The parent should seek the intervention of the principal.
- A bus driver is reported to be uncivil toward a parent. The parent may seek the intervention of the principal or the Supervisor of Transportation.
- An employee believes a parent is being uncivil toward district personnel. The employee may seek the intervention of the principal or other administrator.
- A parent is determined to have been repeatedly uncivil toward district personnel. The parent may be directed to communicate with the district only through specific individuals.

- An individual employee uses email to communicate in an uncivil manner. The individual may be directed to cease using the email for such correspondence and may be provided with appropriate alternatives such as using postal services, in-person meetings, or phone conferences.

5. Record of Complaint

Each administrator must keep a written record of properly presented complaints whether presented by letter, informal conference or through a scheduled meeting. Such written records must include the administrator's response.

6. Sanctions for Violations of Policy

Violations of this Policy may lead to disciplinary action.

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