

**MOUNT SINAI UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
MOUNT SINAI, NEW YORK 11766**

DISTRICT OFFICE MEMORANDUM

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The issue of bullying has become a growing topic of concern over the years. There probably are as many reasons for this increase as there are people. Regardless of the reasons we, in the schools, must be proactive and do whatever we can to minimize, if not eliminate, any potential fear a student may have during the school day. While the extreme situations of bullying are apparent, it is often a difficult behavior to identify because each of us has our own idea and threshold as to what constitutes bullying behavior versus "typical" behaviors that vary throughout a child's development. Add to that mix a child or young adult's value system and you have many shades of grey. Even with that understanding, it is our goal to provide the students with an atmosphere free from overt and latent behaviors that would make them uncomfortable. Below is a listing of programs and strategies, by school building, being implemented to address this issue:

Mount Sinai Elementary School

- ✓ Grades 3-4 Student Organizer contains resources on Bully Prevention. Used by all teachers in grades 3-4.
- ✓ Bully Prevention Program- Grade 4 push in by ES social worker
- ✓ Priority administrative follow-up of reports of bullying. Issues are documented, parents contacted and documented as necessary.
- ✓ First week of school conduct grade level meetings to discuss 'Bully Free Zone' and rights of person being bullied, role of person who observes bullying and consequences for bullying behavior.
- ✓ District based groups gift Character Education Assemblies that focus in part on bully prevention.
- ✓ Bully Prevention poster series currently displayed in the hallway: "What is bullying?" "What to do if you are bullied." "Telling an adult if you are bullied."
- ✓ Character Education Program includes monthly themes including but not limited to: responsibility, compassion, tolerance, citizenship. Committee meets monthly to review activities that all classes participated in.
- ✓ Caught Being Good initiative promotes positive behaviors. Children are recognized during morning announcements and a monthly picture of CBG kids is displayed in the foyer.
- ✓ Peaceful Bus initiative assigns a teacher to work with drivers of every bus. They meet with children, develop a 'contract' for suitable behavior and are rewarded weekly if bus behaviors meet expectations.
- ✓ Social Group meetings with Social Worker for identified children exhibiting inappropriate behaviors.

Mount Sinai Middle School

Mount Sinai Middle School utilizes standards and strategies to foster a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment. A proactive approach in helping students persevere and grow as individuals is maintained through all staff by:

- ✓ Promoting and creating respectful, positive and safe learning environments and constructive relationships that are based on mutual trust, provide social support for all students and foster positive attitudes to learning, participation and achievement.

- ✓ Establishing, communicating and maintaining clear expectations for student learning and behavior and provide explicit feedback on appropriate behavior.
- ✓ Applying behavior management strategies in a fair, sensitive and consistent manner.
- ✓ Adherence to the District Code of Conduct and the Dignity for all Students Act – effective July 1, 2012 which focuses on: instruction in civility, citizenship and character education by expanding the concepts of tolerance, respect for others and dignity. This includes an awareness and sensitivity in the relations of people, including but not limited to, of different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, gender identity or expression and sexes.

The above are facilitated through presentations/activities that include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Police Smart presentations on topics such as: diversity, internet safety, cyber bullying and character education.
- ✓ Offer grade level assemblies that focus on relevant topics that reinforce the positive relationships, academic excellence and respect for all walks of life.
- ✓ Guidance counselors push in to classrooms to present role playing scenarios on relevant topics in order to give students the tools necessary in dealing with negative situations.
- ✓ Foster “cross-campus” collaboration with the Elementary and High Schools in order to communicate “best practices” and meet the needs of all the children.
- ✓ Maintain a wide range of clubs and activities that foster a connection with the school community, specifically Peer Support groups meet in order to discuss strategies in helping adolescents deal with pertinent concerns. This culminates in an annual “Awareness Night” event that creates a sense of “family” among all who attend.
- ✓ Identify “at-risk” students early on so that staff can work as partners with parents in order to assist in providing support beyond the school day.
- ✓ Encourage and offer professional development opportunities to staff on the social emotional development of middle level learners.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for student groups/leaders to act as “ambassadors” of positive behaviors and promote the message of tolerance and acceptance among the entire student body.

Mount Sinai High School

Mount Sinai High School implements various (but not limited to) curricula and strategies to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

The following clubs/activities offered/facilitated at Mount Sinai High School require students to demonstrate an understanding of acceptance, diversity, compassion, service, volunteerism, etc.; all of which lend to the high school’s healthy learning environment (Best Buddies Interact Club, Peer Leaders, Model UN, National Honor Society, Peer Mentoring Program, Student Government, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)

Character Education Assemblies

Mount Sinai High School hosts various assemblies over the course of the school year to provide students with opportunity to experience expert speakers in the area of Character Education, Drug Awareness, Driver Safety and other applicable topics. Below are a few examples:

- ✓ Paul Failla – Character Education
- ✓ Paul Failla – The Class of Life
- ✓ Suffolk Police Department – Gang Awareness, Cyber Safety
- ✓ Dr. Steven Dewey – Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) – The Effects of Drug Use On the Brain

Awareness Day

Mount Sinai High School hosts a full day of speakers and assemblies related to self-awareness and making constructive decisions that will preserve students’ health and well-being. The day includes:

- ✓ Self Defense Workshops
- ✓ Father Frank Pizzarelli – Life’s Choices and Their Consequences
- ✓ Suffolk County Police Department – Computer Crimes Bureau
- ✓ Cyber Safety
- ✓ Cyber Bullying and the Law
- ✓ Sexting and the Law
- ✓ VIBES – Social Dating Precautions

Peer Mentoring Program – Ninth grade students who need assistance transitioning to the high school and/or students who are experiencing challenges at school, are partnered with a senior/junior student who has been identified by administration and guidance counselors as a potential leader/resource. Subsequently, said students meet informally (during lunch periods, after school, while walking in the hallways) and engage in conversation related to adolescent challenges. The intent of the program is to provide students with a contemporary who they can speak with regarding concerns and assist them with coping with the various challenges that often accompany adolescence.

Citizen of the Month Awards

Students who are observed demonstrating behaviors reflective of citizenship, respect, chivalry, etc., are nominated by staff to receive Citizen of the Month honors. Those students who receive such honors are recognized and applauded for their efforts at a breakfast hosted by high school administration along with Students of the Month.

Code of Conduct

All students are provided with access (Internet or hard copy) of Mount Sinai High School’s Code of Conduct, which clearly states the behavioral/social expectations of all students. Likewise, prohibited behaviors and examples of consequences that will be implemented as a result of conduct infractions are noted. Subsequently, all students (and their parents) sign a statement acknowledging that it is their responsibility to read the Mount Sinai High School Parent/Student Handbook and be familiar with its content.

Clubs and Activities: The following clubs/activities offered/facilitated at Mount Sinai High School require students to demonstrate an understanding of acceptance, diversity, compassion, service, volunteerism, etc.; all of which lend to the high school’s healthy learning environment:

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| <i>Best Buddies</i> | <i>Model UN</i> | <i>National Honor Society</i> | <i>Interact Club</i> |
| <i>Peer Leaders</i> | <i>Peer Mentoring</i> | <i>Student Government</i> | <i>Students Against Destructive Decisions</i> |

Administration and Staff Presence

Faculty and staff promote and maintain a safe learning environment that accommodates all students’ learning and social needs via the following strategies:

- ✓ Staff creates and cultivates relationships with students reflective of respect and consideration.
- ✓ Learning and behavioral expectations are clearly communicated to students.
- ✓ Staff members utilize management strategies that promote positive interactions amongst students to foster sound learning opportunities, both academic and social.
- ✓ Struggling students are identified and assistive strategies implemented to foster their success.

- ✓ **An administrative/staff presence is consistently provided in the less structured areas of the building as a precaution to maintain students' safety.**