

Civility

1. Purpose

The Union Gap School District believes that a safe, civil environment is essential to high student and staff achievement, to the free exchange of ideas central to a quality educational process, and to the development of youth as thoughtful participants in our democracy. Conversely, uncivil conduct, like other forms of disruptive behavior, interferes with a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students.

The District encourages administrators, faculty, staff, students, volunteers, parents, and other community members to participate in maintaining a clear expectation of civil conduct and problem-solving throughout the school district. The District will not condone uncivil conduct on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, whether by staff, students, parents, volunteers, or other District visitors.

The basic purpose of this policy is three-fold:

- 1) To promote a work and learning environment that is safe, productive and beneficial for all staff and students, and to encourage the free flow of ideas without fear or intimidation;
- 2) To provide our students with appropriate models for respectful problem-solving; and
- 3) To reduce the potential triggers for violent conduct, such as fear, anger, frustration and alienation— especially by making problem-solving procedures and alternatives to violence readily accessible to both youth and adults who need them.

2. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, "uncivil conduct" includes, but is not limited to, the following: directing vulgar, obscene or profane gestures or words at another individual; taunting, jeering, inciting others to taunt or jeer at an individual; raising one's voice in anger at another individual or repeatedly interrupting another individual who is speaking at an appropriate time and place; imposing personal demands at times or in settings where they conflict with assigned duties and/or cannot reasonably be met; using personal epithets; gesturing in a manner that puts another in fear for his/her personal safety or is demeaning or intimidating; invading the personal space of an individual after being directed to move away; physically blocking an individual's exit from a room or location; remaining in a classroom or school area after a teacher or administrator in authority has directed one to leave; violating the privacy of another individual's belongings (except for lawful searches by school officials conducted in connection with the administration of school rules and applicable laws); or other similar disruptive conduct.

“Uncivil conduct” does not include the expression of controversial or differing viewpoints that may be offensive to some persons, so long as (1) the ideas are presented in a respectful manner and at a time and place that are appropriate, and (2) such expression does not materially disrupt, and may not be reasonably anticipated to disrupt, the educational process.

3. Resolution

Individuals who perceive they have been treated in an uncivil manner will be urged to resolve their concerns through simple, direct or assisted communication with the person(s) at the source of the concern. When this is not possible or appropriate, any person who needs help in identifying and/or using appropriate

problem-solving procedures may seek assistance from the school principal, principal designee, or administrator. Individuals are encouraged to work out issues of concern promptly—preferably no later than two (2) days after an incident has occurred. No retaliation will be tolerated against individuals for working in good faith under this operational procedure to resolve concerns.

All building employees are encouraged to guide, support, and evaluate local efforts to establish and reinforce a culture of civility and respect for all.

This policy seeks to promote a district culture of respect and civility. Severe or persistent acts of uncivil conduct may be in violation of other policies or school rules, such as the District’s policies and procedures regarding harassment and sexual harassment, or specific conduct codes. Violation of such policies or procedures or rules may result in further action, such as discipline, adverse employment action, or criminal charges, as applicable. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with the ability of school officials to maintain order and discipline in the schools or to enforce school rules and applicable laws.

Cross References:

Board Policy/Procedure 3205/5011 - Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
Board Policy/Procedure 5270 – Resolution of Staff Complaints