

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh is home to more than 45,000 children and youth under the age of 18; and,

WHEREAS, through the work of many agencies, the City is committed to uplifting its youngest residents with meaningful and impactful programming and robust recreational and educational opportunities through which children can express their creativity, develop skills, engage in sports, and explore career opportunities; and,

WHEREAS, the City strives to offer spaces and programming for youth to feel safe and welcome regardless of who they are, how they identify, where they come from, or how they choose to express themselves; and,

WHEREAS, Title 6, Article V, Chapter 659 of the Pittsburgh City Code protects against the discrimination of residents, visitors, and workers based on race, color, religion, familial status, ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, handicap, disability, or use of a support animal, status as a survivor of domestic violence, citizenship or immigration status, preferred language, and hairstyles and protective and cultural hair textures and hairstyles; and,

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the City provide quality programming in a safe and healthy environment to all children regardless of their association with any of the aforementioned protected classes; and,

WHEREAS, bullying is a form of youth violence and an adverse childhood experience (ACE); and,

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths, who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated; and,

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services about 20% of youth experience bullying by their peers; and,

WHEREAS, the National Education Association estimates that 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students; and,

WHEREAS, youth that are bullied are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, and loss of interests that they previously enjoyed; and,

WHEREAS, marginalized youth experience bullying at a much higher rate than others; and,

WHEREAS, according to Mental Health America, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) youth or those youth who are perceived to be LGBT are more than twice as likely to be called names, verbally harassed, or physically assaulted compared to non-LGBT peers; and,

WHEREAS, a study by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network finds that 9 out of 10 LGBT youth reported being verbally harassed due to their sexual orientation, and the same study finds that 75% of transgender students feel unsafe in school; and,

WHEREAS, research from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institute of Health, respectively, indicates that children with disabilities and special needs and immigrant children are more likely to be bullied by their peers; and,

WHEREAS, for these reasons, the City of Pittsburgh does hereby commit to developing and implementing a Youth Anti-Bullying Policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, William Peduto, Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, by the virtue of the authority vested in me by the City Charter and laws of the City of Pittsburgh do hereby direct the following actions:

1. The City of Pittsburgh Departments of Parks and Recreation, Human Resources and Civil Service, and Public Safety shall create a Youth Bullying Prevention Policy to cover all youth-serving programs sponsored and led by the City of Pittsburgh.
  - a. Bullying shall be defined as “any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that can reasonably be predicted to place youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property, cause a detrimental effect on the youth’s physical or mental health, substantially interfere with the youth’s academic performance or attendance, or substantially interfere with the youth’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, programs, facilities, or privileges provided by the City of Pittsburgh.”
  - b. The Policy shall include provisions that cover bullying based on all of the protected classes listed in Title 6, Article V, Chapter 659 of the Pittsburgh City Code and based on the perception of a youth’s association with any of these protected classes.
  - c. Any City Department that hosts youth-focused programming shall adhere to the Policy.
  - d. The Policy shall be communicated to all City staff who participate in and lead youth-serving programming.
2. The aforementioned Departments shall collaborate and develop an ongoing training plan for City staff who lead youth programming.
  - a. The training plan shall include training on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE).
3. The Mayor’s Office shall communicate and publicize the Youth Bullying Prevention Policy to external partners serving youth in Pittsburgh and encourage these organizations to adopt similar policies to protect Pittsburgh’s children from bullying.