

GANG CONTROL POLICY

The purpose of the South Tech Charter Academy, Inc. Gang Control Policy is to address problems associated with youth gangs through proactive education and disciplinary action, where necessary. **South Tech Charter Academy, Inc. has a zero tolerance for gang or gang-related activities in school buildings or on school grounds. Participation in any gang or gang-related activity in school buildings or on school grounds will result in the assignment of appropriate discipline and withdrawal from the school. This notice will appear in all student recruitment literature, student admission applications, and the Student Code of Conduct.**

1. DEFINITION OF GANGS (Florida Statute Section 874.03)

- a. Youth and street gang - Any ongoing organization, association or group of three (3) or more persons, either formal or informal, which meets BOTH of the following criteria:
 - i. Has unique common name or common identifying signs, colors, or symbols, and.
 - ii. Has members or associates who, individually or collectively engage repeatedly in, or have repeatedly engaged in criminal activity.
- b. Youth and street gang member - A person who meets any two (2) of the following criteria:
 - i. Admits to gang membership, is a youth up to age 21 who is identified as a gang member by a parent or guardian,
 - ii. Is identified as a gang member by a documented reliable informant,
 - iii. Resides in or frequents, a particular gang's area and adopts their style of dress, use of hand signs, symbols, or tattoos, and associates with known gang members,
 - iv. Is identified as a gang member by an informant of previously untested reliability and corroborated by independent information,
 - v. Has been arrested more than once in the company of identified gang members for offenses which are consistent with usual gang activity,
 - vi. Is identified as a gang member by physical evidence such as photographs or other documentation.

2. OPERATIONAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- a. Gang control is the responsibility of all staff members. South Tech Charter Academy, Inc. staff will be vigilant and sensitive to dress, behavior, and activities typically associated with gangs. Administration will be notified immediately upon recognition of any suspected gang-related issues or incidents.
- b. Graffiti is a communication vehicle for gangs and must be removed or covered immediately upon discovery. Allowing graffiti to remain encourages additional graffiti and may contribute to outbreaks of violence. Graffiti will be immediately reported to the office staff, who will, in turn, dispatch a custodian to remove or cover the graffiti. Staff will generate an emergency work order for painting over graffiti that cannot be rendered invisible or illegible through cleaning.
- c. The school administrator shall justify in writing any restrictions of symbolic expression as follows and prior to imposing such restrictions shall articulate:

GANG CONTROL POLICY

- i. Which item of dress, expression, or article is being restricted, and
 - ii. The basis of the administrator's belief based on articulated facts that the exercise of the prohibited activity would materially interfere with or substantially disrupt school activities.
 - d. The type of dress, apparel, activities, acts, behavior or manner of grooming displayed, reflected, or participated in by the student shall not:
 - i. Lead school officials to reasonably believe that such behavior, apparel, activities, acts or other attributes are gang related and would materially interfere or substantially disrupt the school environment or activity and/or educational objectives;
 - ii. Present a physical safety hazard to self, students, staff, employees, or other persons authorized to be on the school campus.
 - e. Student behavior or other attributes in violation of these provisions will be corrected by the student upon direction by school personnel. If the student refuses, the parent/guardian will be notified and appropriate discipline assigned to the student.
 - f. Students identified as being involved in, influenced by, or affiliated with gangs shall be provided assistance and/or programs which discourage gang involvement or affiliation, enhance self-esteem, encourage interest and participation in school or other positive activities and promote membership in authorized school organizations.
 - g. Training to provide increased awareness of the threat to the safety of students, staff and school property which gang-related activity poses shall be provided on an as-needed basis. Presentations shall provide training in current identification symbols used by those involved in gang-related activity and shall include the identification of hand signals, apparel, jewelry, and/or other pertinent gang-related information.
- 3. NOTIFICATION:
 - a. The Academy President or Management Company Representative shall notify the student body of the South Tech Charter Academy, Inc. Gang Control Policy through presentations and publications, including, but not limited to recruitment literature, student admission applications, and the Student Code of Conduct.
 - b. It shall be the responsibility of students and parents to familiarize themselves with said policy.
- 4. REVIEW PROCEDURE:
 - a. Student and/or parents who are in disagreement with handling of gang related issues and/or corrective and disciplinary action associated with the gang control policy may follow Due Process.
 - b. Grievance Procedures stated in Board Policy 5.19 prescribe appropriate steps involved in Due Process.

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Implemented: 230.23(6)(c)(d); 231.05; 232.25 FS

History: New: 11/04/2004; Revised: 7/07/2005; 3/11/2010