



UPchieve Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Introduction

In order to achieve our mission, the UPchieve platform must be an environment in which ALL students feel comfortable asking for help. We strive to make sure that students feel welcome and supported during their sessions on UPchieve regardless of their race, gender identity, physical and mental ability, citizenship status, sexual orientation, and more. Volunteers play a critical role in fostering this supportive environment by treating each student as an individual, making all students feel supported, believing that all students are capable of success, using intentional language, and working to eliminate your biases and assumptions.

Your Responsibilities As a Volunteer

1. Treat each student as an individual

Treat every student you have as an individual, after a few sessions you'll recognize how different each student is even though they may share a similar socio-economic status and age group. Recognize that our students do not fit into the stereotypes and [implicit biases](#) we all hold and actively strive to question and unlearn the stereotypes you've acquired throughout your life.¹

2. Make all students feel respected and supported

We support all students, regardless of their skill or knowledge level. Students who attend low-income schools have [less access to high quality teaching](#) and as a result are more likely to be [behind grade level](#). Comments that make judgments about gaps in skills such as, "you should already know this," or "this is an easy one for 10th grade" degrade a student's confidence. Never make a student feel judged or guilty for not understanding, instead work to understand how to tailor your coaching to meet the needs of students while boosting their self-confidence so that they can thrive as learners.

3. Hold high expectations for every student

Each UPchieve student has different academic strengths and goals. We want to avoid making assumptions about a student's capacity for academic success. Research shows that actions like rewriting someone's essay or solving a problem for them give students the message that they are incapable of learning and negatively impacts their academic outcomes.² By having high expectations for the capacity of every UPchieve student, we signal to them that they are capable of achieving their goals.

¹ [Edgoose, et. al 2019, Kirwan Institute, 2023](#)

² [Napper, 2019, de Boer, et al., 2018, Fordham Institute, 2021](#)

4. Be mindful of the impact of your words

A casual joke or comment might seem trivial to you, but for a student, it could impact how they view themselves in this world. This is especially the case when a comment centers on a part of a person's identity, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, etc. because studies suggest that [microaggressions](#) will have negative social, emotional, and academic outcomes. Remember, it's critical that you be mindful and intentional with the words you use on UPchieve.

5. Actively work on eliminating your biases and assumptions

Depending on your own background, what you were taught growing up, where you live, and other dimensions of your identity, it's very common for individuals to have biases that they're completely unaware of. These implicit biases can influence your actions in ways you don't notice, ultimately hampering your ability to provide high-quality academic support to students from marginalized groups.

At UPchieve, we want our coaches to work on recognizing and combating their biases on an ongoing basis through taking concrete actions:

- **Action 1: Become aware of your own biases**
 - The [first step](#) to combating biases is to become aware of them. One way to do this is to take the well researched [implicit association test](#).
- **Action 2: Question your biases & engage in perspective taking**
 - Once you're aware of biases, you can become more mindful of them. When you feel yourself slipping into a negative bias, ask yourself why. What lived experiences, social norms, or parts of your identity are influencing your actions? Could there be another way of interpreting the interaction? Learning to apply this type of [introspection](#) has been proven to lessen implicit bias.
- **Action 3: Pick up lots of sessions**
 - Research has demonstrated that [intergroup contact](#) and exposure to counter-stereotypical examples decreases implicit biases. It's much more difficult to rely on stereotypes, or incorrect implicit biases, about students from low-income backgrounds as a whole if you have meaningful experiences with people from that group.
- **Action 4: Keep learning!**
 - Becoming aware of our own biases is a great first step, but [studies](#) have shown that we need to become concerned about the consequences of implicit bias in order to be spurred into action. Here's a resource to [learn more](#) about how implicit biases seriously negatively impact the students we work with and why we all need to care about these critical issues.

Consequences

Any violation of the DEI policy could result in your immediate termination as a volunteer with UPchieve. Depending upon the severity of the violation and our perception of your intentions, a volunteer may receive written warning, have their account put on probation, be temporarily suspended from the platform, or be fully banned from the platform.