

Bullying Reporting and Procedural Requirements

The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights provides detailed procedures and timelines for reporting incidents of bullying. **All school employees and contracted service providers are required to report such incidents.**

- All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying must be reported verbally to the school principal on the same day when the school employee or contracted service provider witnesses or receives reliable information regarding any such incident. The school employee or service provider must submit a written report of the incident to the principal within two days.
- The principal must inform the parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident and may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services.
- The principal or principal's designee must initiate an investigation of the incident within one school day of the report. The school anti-bullying specialist conducts the investigation. The principal may appoint other staff to assist the specialist.
- The investigation must be completed as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days after the principal had received the initial written report of the incident. The report of the investigation may be amended by the anti-bullying specialist if new information becomes available.
- The superintendent must receive the report of the investigation within two days of its completion. The superintendent may provide intervention services, establish training programs, impose discipline, order counseling, or take other appropriate actions.

The school board must receive the report at its first meeting following the investigation along with information on actions taken to address the incident or incidents.

Parents of student involved in the incident are entitled to information about the investigation and may request a hearing with the school board in its executive session. The board may also hear from the anti-bullying specialist at the hearing. At its next meeting, the board must issue a written decision affirming, rejecting, or modifying the superintendent's decision. The board's decision may be appealed to the commissioner of education.

The law defines harassment, intimidation or bullying as “any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds ... that substantially

disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students, and that a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage his property.”

What do we mean by bullying?

Bullying is an unacceptable form of behavior through which an individual or group of individuals are or feel threatened, abused or undermined by another individual or group of individuals. Bullying can be expressed through physical, verbal or intimidating behavior. Bullying can be subtle or it can be overt. It can cause short-term suffering for the victim or it can have long-term effects. It can be for clearly identified reasons, e.g. racism, actual or perceived sexual orientation issues, differing abilities, physique, etc. or for no clearly defined reason. It is always damaging and it must always be taken seriously and addressed.

People can be bullied on the grounds of:

- Race
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Socio-economic status
- Nationality
- Language
- Religion
- Other differences

Type/Nature of Incident:

Written: Graffiti, notes, letters, written threats, ridicule through drawings, etc...

Verbal: Name calling, threatening, sarcasm, discriminatory comments, etc...

Physical: Pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, etc...

Damage to Property: theft of belongings, clothes, money; tearing of personal item, ripping books, etc...

Isolation: Shunned, rejected, left out of activities/groups, etc...

Incitement: Encouraging others to bully, behave in a discriminatory manner, wearing discriminatory insignia such as racist badges, distributing racist or other discriminatory literature etc...

Extortion: Using threats in order to obtain money, property, etc...

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying, instead of happening face-to-face, happens through the use of Technology such as computers, cell phones and other electronic devices.

Examples include: sending hurtful, rude or mean text messages to others, spreading rumor or lies about others by e-mail or social networks (Facebook, etc...) Creating websites, videos or social media profiles that embarrass, humiliate, or make fun of others.