

Guidance for Implementing Ohio's Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy

COMMUNITIES CONTROL EDUCATION

Ohio is a local control state in education. Local communities vote for local school board members to represent the will of the community in overseeing schools. One of the many responsibilities of a local school board of education is to develop a district policy to prevent and address bullying. The term bullying in this guidance includes harassment and intimidation.

The Ohio Department of Education provides [information and resources](#) to assist local school boards and district superintendents in this work. This assistance helps local school districts meet federal and state requirements.

The Ohio Department of Education does not decide student discipline in bullying incidents. This is a local decision.

The Ohio Department of Education suggests schools work with community-based organizations to implement policy, [review data](#), create a good school environment, develop and implement student action plans and promote [positive behavior](#) so all students feel safe.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS ADDRESS STUDENT-TO-STUDENT BULLYING INCIDENTS

The following steps help identify, investigate and intervene in bullying behavior.

STUDENTS AND PARENTS

1. Report bullying behavior through a formal, informal or anonymous statement to the school principal or designee (*refer to [Ohio Department of Education Model Policy Section 2.2.3](#)*).

PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE

2. Conduct an investigation (*refer to [Ohio Department of Education Model Policy Section 2.2.6](#)*).
3. When conducting an investigation, meet with students and staff involved to learn about the reported incident (*refer to [Ohio Department of Education Model Policy Section 2.2.6](#)*).
4. For information on conducting investigations, work with local mental/behavioral health agencies, educational service centers, local health departments or local law enforcement. These agencies also provide additional resources and supports for students and families who are involved in bullying.
5. After the investigation, contact the parents and schedule a meeting to discuss outcomes of the investigation and develop an action plan.

PARENT, STUDENT AND PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE

6. Based on the investigation, develop an action plan with each student (bully, bullied and bystander) and his or her parent/guardian and appropriate staff and community partners.
7. Identify who will be each student's "safe person" and the what, where, when and how he or she will help to respond to ongoing issues.

8. If bullying occurs on the school bus, include a representative from pupil transportation in the action planning and implementation.
9. If bullying occurs through the use of technology and impacts the safety of the learning day, the principal or designee should investigate and provide an action plan for during the school day. In addition, the principal or designee should contact local law enforcement to address bullying behaviors occurring before and after school.
10. If bullying is a part of an act of teen dating violence, contact the Ohio Domestic Violence Network at (800) 934-9840 to include a local professional in the action planning and implementation.
11. If bullying is a part of an act of human trafficking, contact local law enforcement or the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at (888) 373-7888 for inclusion in action planning and implementation.
12. Determine the frequency of reviewing the action plan. Stay abreast of each student's progress and revise the plan as needed to meet each student's protection needs.

PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE

13. Work with teaching staff to implement the action plan along with the student, his or her safe person, parent/guardian, and community-based agency professional.
14. Teacher-based teams and building leadership teams are good opportunities to discuss and address student action plans and ways to positively intervene.

PARENTS

15. If a bullying situation persists, parents should contact the local school district superintendent. The parent should explain his or her concerns and ask for assistance in working with the principal to create and implement an action plan to eliminate the behavior.
16. If parents have continued concerns, contact a member of their local school board of education and ask to discuss the matter during the public forum time at the board's next meeting.

PARENTS, PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE

17. Contact local law enforcement for assistance if the bullying escalates and requires additional protection (refer to [Ohio Department of Education Model Policy Section 9](#)).

***Report incidents of teacher-to-student bullying to the [Ohio Department of Education, Office for Professional Conduct](#).*

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

When the Ohio General Assembly passes a law in education, the Ohio Department of Education does the following:

- Creates model policies that explain the law and requirements for local school districts;
- Provides professional development, information, training, conferences and web resources about legal requirements and best practices;
- Administers and monitors funding to local school districts for policy implementation as allocated in the state budget.

STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES TO CREATE A SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Safety and Violence Prevention Curriculum

This [curriculum](#) increases school professionals' awareness and knowledge of student behavioral issues. This includes mental and behavioral health, substance use and abuse in students, depression and suicidal ideation, anti-harassment, intimidation, bullying, teen relationship abuse, child abuse and human trafficking.

Building and district leaders should use this training to:

- Build understanding of the relationship between nonacademic barriers and student academic achievement;
- Increase awareness and knowledge regarding student behavioral issues;
- Provide information about identifying student behavior issues; and
- Build understanding about making referrals to an appropriate agency or organization.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

According to the Ohio Department of Education policy on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support and Restraint and Seclusion, all public schools in Ohio must use [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\)](#) to improve safety, social competence and academic achievement for all students.

The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework guides schools as they select and use the [best practices](#) for improving behavior and academics for all students. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework creates a learning environment that promotes the use of evidence-based behavioral interventions, thus enhancing academic and social behavioral outcomes for all students.

Evidence-based Programs

When applying positive intervention, schools will identify evidence-based programs and practices to prevent violent behavior, bullying, and mental and behavioral disorders, including substance abuse. There is proof through peer review, documented research and evaluation that these programs and practices are effective.

Selected programs can include implementation strategies, programs and policies that promote positive youth development, positive school climate, schoolwide and classroom-based behavioral interventions, truancy reduction and supportive school discipline practices.

The selected programs need to culturally and linguistically match the targeted population(s) and sub-population(s). Local school districts are responsible for all aspects of implementing and overseeing the programs they choose.

Evidence-based programs come from the following sources:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “**National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices**” <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>
- University of Colorado, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, “**Blueprints for Violence Prevention**” <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, “**Model Programs Guide**” <http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/>
- U.S. Department of Education, “**What Works Clearinghouse**” <http://www.whatworks.ed.gov>
- Find Youth Info, “**Program Directory Search**” <http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/program-directory>

FEDERAL RESOURCES

- [US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights](#)
- [US Department of Justice, Community Relations Services](#)

STATE RESOURCES

- [Ohio Attorney General](#)
- [Ohio Department of Education, Pupil Transportation](#)
- [Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children](#)
- [Ohio Department of Health - Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Prevention Program](#)
- [Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#); Search for Prevention
- [Ohio Department of Public Safety](#)
- [Ohio Mental Health Network for School Success](#)
- [Ohio Domestic Violence Network](#)