

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 the 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 the local school board and the district superintendent in this work. This assistance helps local school districts meet federal and state requirements.

The Ohio department of education does not decide student discipline and 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 positive 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.
4. For information on conducting investigations, work with local mental/behavioral help agencies, educational service centers, local health departments or local law enforcement. These agencies also provide additional resources and support 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).
7. Identify who will be each student's "safe person" and develop the Action Plan including: what bullying is taking place and who is involved, where does the bullying behavior take place, when does the bullying behavior take place and how will the safe person help to implement the action plan to reduce and eliminate the reported bullying behavior.
8. If bullying occurs on the school bus include a representative from pupil transportation in the action planning and plan implementation.
9. If bullying occurs through the use of technology and impacts the safety of the learning day the principal or designee should investigate, intervene and contact local law enforcement to address bullying behaviors occurring before and after school to prevent bullying behavior at school.
10. If bullying is a part of an act 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 national human trafficking Resource Center 1-888-3737-888 to include in action planning and implementation.
12. Determine the frequency of reviewing the action plan. Stay abreast of each student's progress and revise plan as needed to meet each student safety needs.

Principal or Designee

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

Parents

If a bullying situation persists, contact your local school district superintendent. Explain your concerns and ask for assistance in working with the principal to create and Implement an action plan to eliminate the behavior.

15. If parents have continued concerns, they should 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

16. Can 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 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.

The Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying policy is an unfunded mandate no funding is administered to Local School District to implement the policy or evidence-based practices. State Auditors ensure school districts have an Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying policy upon district review.

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 and child abuse and human trafficking.

District and building leaders should use this training to:

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

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

According to the Ohio Department of Education 2013 policy on positive behavioral interventions and support, Restraint and Seclusion all public schools in Ohio must use [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support](#) (PBIS) to improve safety, social competence and academic achievement for all students.

The positive behavioral interventions and support framework guides students as they select and use the best practices for improving behavior and academics for all students. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework creates a learning environment that promotes the use of evidence-based behavioral interventions thus enhancing academic and social behavior 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, school-wide and class-based behavioral interventions, Truancy reduction and supportive school discipline practices. Selected programs need to culturally and linguistically match the target population(s) and sub-population(s). Local school districts are responsible for all aspects of implementing and overseeing the programs they choose.