

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS BULLIED



Bullying may not only interfere with your child's education, but with his/her mental, emotional, or physical wellbeing. Every child has the right to a safe and supportive learning environment. NYC schools have very specific policies in place meant to protect your child if s/he is being bullied.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The NYC Department of Education guarantees students a **“safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying committed by students against other students.”**

Discrimination against students based on **race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or weight** is also prohibited.

Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are **forbidden**:

- on any school property
- in any DOE vehicles
- on non-school property if it interferes with the education of the student or the welfare of the school community

Bullying behaviors may be physical, verbal, or written and according to the DOE include, but are not limited to:

- physical violence
- stalking
- hostile gestures
- written or graphic materials (graffiti, photographs, drawings, videos) that negatively portray a student
- threats
- teasing
- intentional and/or aggressive social exclusion
- name-calling
- derogatory jokes or language
- cyber-bullying

HOW TO REPORT AN INCIDENT

1. A student may report harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or bullying to any school employee either verbally or in writing. Schools have at least one certified staff member (known as Respect for All (RFA) liaison) who is trained to handle such situations by the DOE.
2. If a student feels uncomfortable reporting the incident to a staff member, or wishes to remain anonymous, s/he may contact the Office of School and Youth Development (OSYD) by emailing a report to RespectforAll@schools.nyc.gov.
3. A staff member may report an incident on behalf of the student by submitting a written report to the RFA liaison. All reports are kept on file at the school.

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HOW TO REPORT AN INCIDENT (cont.)

4. Parents may report an incident in person, in writing to the principal or RFA liaison, or by emailing RespectforAll@schools.nyc.gov.

INVESTIGATION

1. Schools must enter complaints into the DOE's Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) within 24 hours of the incident. Student confidentiality is strictly kept according to state and federal law, unless the incident must be turned over to the police.
2. The principal/RFA liaison must do the following within five days after receipt of complaint:
 - a. Interview the alleged victim
 - b. Ask the victim to write a statement detailing the incident
 - c. Interview the accused student and inform him or her to stop all reported behaviors immediately
 - d. Ask the accused student to write a statement detailing the incident
 - e. Interview and obtain written statements from all witnesses
3. The principal/RFA liaison must advise the parents of both the victim and the accused student of the allegations unless this procedure compromises the victim in any way.
4. The school will advise all involved parents of the outcome of the investigation.

FOLLOW-UP

1. The accuser and the accused students may be referred to the guidance counselor, school social worker, or other appropriate staff member for separate counseling.
2. The principal may use intervention methods such as sensitivity training or referral to a community-based agency for counseling.
3. Students found to have violated the school's policies will receive disciplinary action according to the DOE's Discipline Code and Chancellor's Regulation A-443.
4. The principal/RFA liaison must ensure that the behaviors have stopped.

Office of School and Youth Development

NYC Department of Education
52 Chambers Street, Room 218
New York, NY 10007
(212) 374 6834, fax (212) 374-5751