

# **BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH OF ACTION TOOLKIT**

**Preventing and Responding to Hate in Schools**

**#StrongerThanHate**

**Stop  
Hate  
Project**



**LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
U N D E R L A W**

**PREP**  
PARENTAL READINESS AND  
EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

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# INTRODUCTION

Dear Community Member,

We at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law firmly committed to fighting for the rights of students to attend school in a welcoming and safe environment. Yet as we have seen individuals feeling newly emboldened to commit acts of hate across the country, we are also hearing from students and teachers about an increase in hate related incidents in schools.

That is why this October we are joining organizations across the country in recognizing National Bullying Prevention Month with a Month of Action to raise awareness and connect students, parents, and teachers with important resources to help prevent and respond to hate in schools.

This toolkit provides information on how you can participate in the Lawyers' Committee's Bullying Prevention Month of Action, by raising awareness of the issue of hate in schools and obtaining resources that can help create a welcoming and safe environment for all students.

Please know that this toolkit is designed for informational purposes only. It is not legal advice and is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship. Please note that this resource is not exhaustive. Situations or inquiries may arise that are not answered below. In those circumstances, you may call 844-9-NO-HATE.

We are looking forward to a productive month.

Sincerely,

The Stop Hate Project & PREP Teams

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## OCTOBER 2017

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
1 Launch of Bullying Prevention Portal. 8449nohate.org/bullying	2 "I am Stronger Than Hate" Art Competition Begins  Wear Blue in support of StompOutBullying	3	4	5 2PM Twttter Storm	6	7
8	9 Week Long: Electronic Resource Packet Distribution to Schools	10	11 Happy Hour Trivia Night in DC Supporting LCCRUL	12 2PM Twttter Storm	13	14
15	16	17 Recognizing Signs of Bullying Webinar. English - 6PM Spanish - 7PM	18	19 2PM Twttter Storm	20	21
22	23 "I am Stronger Than Hate" Art Competition Ends	24 PANEL: Stronger Than Hate: Responding to & Preventing Hate in Schools 4PM	25 Wear orange in support of PACER Ntl Bullying Prev. Center	26 2PM Twttter Storm	27	28
29	30	31 	To RSVP for events visit: <a href="http://8449nohate.org/events">8449nohate.org/events</a>			

# GET INVOLVED

## STUDENTS

There are many ways students can get involved in the Bullying Prevention Month of Action. Including:

- Learn about your rights.
- If you are being bullied, or see someone being bullied, say something.
- Advocate for your school to have a strong anti-bullying policy. Use these resources to help suggest strong policy provisions.
- Engage in positive interactions on social media like sharing important resources on bullying prevention.
- Participate in the "I am Stronger Than Hate" Art Competition.

## PARENTS

This Bullying Prevention Month, learn how you can be a strong advocate for your child.

- Attend the "Identifying and Responding to Bullying" Webinar to learn how to recognize the signs of bullying, and learn about the mental health impacts of bullying. The webinar takes place on October 17th; English: 6PM EST, Spanish: 7PM Est. RSVP at [8449nohate.org/events](http://8449nohate.org/events).
- Have a conversation with your children about bullying.
- Learn about the steps you should take to document and report incidents of bullying to your child's school.

## EDUCATORS

Educators play an important role in preventing, responding to and ending bullying. This Bullying Prevention month, educators can take a proactive role and work to prevent bullying in their schools, by:

- Encourage strong anti-bullying policies at the school level.
- Request a school-wide training on identifying and responding to bullying.
- Attend the "Stronger Than Hate: Preventing and Responding to Hate in Schools" Panel on October 24th at 6PM or watch live on Facebook. RSVP at [8449nohate.org/events](http://8449nohate.org/events).

# **BULLYING PREVENTION**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

# What is bullying?

**Bullying** is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by someone or a group that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or it will probably be repeated many times. Bullying can hurt the targeted person and cause physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.

**Bullying can come in many forms. The four types of bullying are:**

- 1. Verbal.** Verbal bullying includes the use of words. Name-calling, threatening, teasing, degrading comments are all examples of verbal bullying.
- 2. Physical.** Physical bullying includes inappropriate touching. Hitting, kicking and pushing are all examples of physical bullying.
- 3. Social.** Social bullying includes the use of exclusionary tactics. For example, deliberately excluding someone from a group or social activity.
- 4. Cyber.** Cyber bullying involves the use of social media, e-mail, texts, or other cyber platforms to harm others by spreading rumors, derogatory or racist remarks or mean words.

**Bullying can be direct or indirect.**

- **Direct bullying** is hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, taunting, teasing, degrading racial or sexual comments, threatening, obscene gestures.
- **Indirect bullying** is getting another person to hurt someone, spreading rumors, deliberate exclusion from a group or activity

# Are you being bullied?

Have you seen someone being bullied?

## Talk to an adult.

### Who can you talk to?



Speak with a parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, or other trusted adult.

### What should you say?



It can be hard to talk about bullying. It helps to write down what you want to say.

### Talk about it.



What happened? Were you bullied at school or online? Did you tell a teacher? What was their response? How does it make you feel?

### Most importantly, ask for help.

Sometimes adults don't know what they should do to stop the bullying. Point them to these resources:

- [www.prepparents.org](http://www.prepparents.org)
- [www.8449nohate.org/bullying](http://www.8449nohate.org/bullying)
- [www.pacer.org/bullying](http://www.pacer.org/bullying)
- [www.stompoutbullying.com](http://www.stompoutbullying.com)
- [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)



# Is your child being bullied?

## Talk to your child.

Talk to your child as calmly as possible. Ask them questions, like:



Who bullied you?  
When did they bully you?  
Where did they bully you?  
How did they bully you?  
How often do they bull you?

## Document.



Document the bullying incidents. Have your child start to journal as objectively as possible. When you report the issue to the school, write down when and to whom you reported the incident. Include the school's response.

## Discuss.



Discuss different strategies to keep your child safe at school. See if there are local organizations in your area that can support you and your child through this experience.

## Develop.



Develop a safety plan for your child with the school. Check in regularly with your child and the school to ensure the plan is implemented.

# What is a school required to do when bullying is reported?

Under Federal Civil Rights laws, schools have a duty to intervene and protect students from harassment that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school.

Schools must address harassment on the basis of race, national origin, sex and gender, and disability. Although harassment on the basis of sexual orientation is not yet expressly addressed by federal law, the law provides protections for all students, including LGBT students, who are harassed because of their sex or gender characteristics.

When an incident of bullying is reported to the school, the school should investigate the report. If the complaint is founded, the school should work to end harassment, eliminate hostile environments, prevent additional harassment, and prevent retaliation.

Not all incidents of harassment and bullying rise to the legal definition of harassment and require school intervention. However, that does not mean they should be ignored. There are numerous resources for individuals that experience incidents that don't rise to the level of harassment or hate crimes. These incidents can have significant impacts on children's well-being.

Additional resources can be found on The Communities Against Hate: Resource Map which provides information on local organizations that provide various services to community members, including community support. Visit [www.8449nohate.org](http://www.8449nohate.org) to find a local organization.

# **BULLYING PREVENTION**

## **RESOURCES**

# SAMPLE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This sample policy provides an outline of key provisions that should be present in an anti-bullying policy.

## **Purpose Statement**

Outlines the range of detrimental effects bullying has on students, including impacts on student learning, school safety, student engagement, and the school environment. Declares that any form, type, or level of bullying is unacceptable, and that every incident needs to be taken seriously by school administrators, school staff (including teachers), students, and students' families.

## **Statement of Scope**

Covers conduct that occurs on the school campus, at school-sponsored activities or events (regardless of the location), on school-provided transportation, or through school-owned technology or that otherwise creates a significant disruption to the school environment.

## **Specification of Prohibited Conduct**

Provides a specific definition of bullying that includes a clear definition of cyberbullying. The definition of bullying includes a non-exclusive list of specific behaviors that constitute bullying, and specifies that bullying includes intentional efforts to harm one or more individuals, may be direct or indirect, is not limited to behaviors that cause physical harm, and may be verbal (including oral and written language) or non-verbal. The definition of bullying can be easily understood and interpreted by school boards, policymakers, school administrators, school staff, students, students' families, and the community. Is consistent with other federal, state and local laws. (For guidance on school districts' obligations to address bullying and harassment under federal civil rights laws, see the Dear Colleague Letter: Harassment and Bullying, issued by the Department's Office for Civil Rights on October 26, 2010.

Prohibited Conduct also includes: (1) Retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. (2) Perpetuating bullying or harassing conduct by spreading hurtful or demeaning material even if the material was created by another person (e.g., forwarding offensive e-mails or text messages).

## **Enumeration of Specific Characteristics**

Explains that bullying may include, but is not limited to, acts based on actual or perceived characteristics of students who have historically been targets of bullying, and provides examples of such characteristics. Makes clear that bullying does not have to be based on any particular characteristic.

## **Development and Implementation of LEA Policies**

Directs every LEA to develop and implement a policy prohibiting bullying, through a collaborative process with all interested stakeholders, including school administrators, staff, students, students' families, and the community, in order to best address local conditions

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## Components of LEA Policies

### A. Definitions

Includes a definition of bullying consistent with the definitions specified in state law.

Example Components of LEA Policies: Definitions

### B. Report Bullying

Includes a procedure for students, students' families, staff, and others to report incidents of bullying, including a process to submit such information anonymously and with protection from retaliation. The procedure identifies and provides contact information for the appropriate school personnel responsible for receiving the report and investigating the incident.

Requires that school personnel report, in a timely and responsive manner, incidents of bullying they witness or are aware of to a designated official.

### C. Investigating and Responding to Bullying

Includes a procedure for promptly investigating and responding to any report of an incident of bullying, including immediate intervention strategies for protecting the victim from additional bullying or retaliation, and includes notification to parents of the victim, or reported victim, of bullying and the parents of the alleged perpetrator, and, if appropriate, notification to law enforcement officials.

The **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** contains provisions restricting release of information pertaining to disciplinary actions taken against students. State and local officials are encouraged to seek guidance to make sure any policies comply with these provisions.

### D. Written Records

Includes a procedure for maintaining written records of all incidents of bullying and their resolution.

Example Components of LEA Policies: Written Records

### E. Sanctions

Includes a detailed description of a graduated range of consequences and sanctions for bullying.

The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** contains provisions related to the use of disciplinary measures with students with disabilities. State and local officials are encouraged to seek guidance to make sure any policies comply with these provisions.

### F. Referrals

Includes a procedure for referring the victim, perpetrator and others to counseling and mental and other health services, as appropriate.

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## **Review of Local Policies**

Includes a provision for the state to review local policies on a regular basis to ensure the goals of the state statute are met.

## **Communication Plan**

Includes a plan for notifying students, students' families, and staff of policies related to bullying, including the consequences for engaging in bullying.

## **Training and Preventive Education**

Includes a provision for school districts to provide training for all school staff, including, but not limited to, teachers, aides, support staff, and school bus drivers, on preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying.

Encourages school districts to implement age-appropriate school- and community-wide bullying prevention programs.

## **Transparency and Monitoring**

Includes a provision for LEAs to report annually to the state on the number of reported bullying incidents, and any responsive actions taken.

Includes a provision for LEAs to make data regarding bullying incidence publicly available in aggregate with appropriate privacy protections to ensure students are protected.

FERPA contains provisions regarding the appropriate safeguarding of privacy in educational records. State and local officials are encouraged to seek guidance to make sure any policies comply with these provisions.

## **Statement of Rights to Other Legal Recourse**

Includes a statement that the policy does not preclude victims from seeking other legal remedies.

# DOCUMENTING BULLYING 101

When documenting an incident of bullying, make sure you write down everything that happened as objectively as possible. Make sure to include:

- Who was involved,
- What the act of bullying was,
- The date and time it occurred,
- The location where the incident happened, and
- Name any witnesses that saw it happen.

Make sure you also note who the incident was reported to, and include their response.

## Example:

Incident #1 : Student X knocked Michael's lunch box out of his hand and kicked it down the hallway.

Date: Thursday, February 4, 2016 Time: During lunch (approximately 11:30AM)

Location: In the lunch line outside of the cafeteria Witnesses: Mrs. Clark (teacher), Mr. James (cafeteria worker), unidentified students in Mrs. Clark's class.

Reported to: Reported to Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Rivera (principal) right after incident on February 4th. Administrator Response: Mrs. Rivera called Student X's parents.

# SAMPLE LETTER OF CONCERN

[Your Name]

[Your Address] [

Your City, State, and Zip Code]

[Date]

Dear [Principal Name/Teacher Name],

I am writing to you as a parent of [child's name], a student at [school name], who is experiencing bullying/discrimination/harassment by fellow students. Attached is a documentation of incidents that have occurred so far. I hope that by bringing this to the administration's attention, we can begin a dialogue for how to address these issues and create a safe space for all students to learn.

Best,

[Your Name]

[Your Phone Number or E-Mail Address]



# SAMPLE LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

[Your Name]  
[Your Address] [  
Your City, State, and Zip Code]  
[Date]

[Principal's name]  
[Name of your child's school]  
[School Address]

Dear [Principal \_\_\_\_\_],

I am the parent of [your child's name], whose date of birth is [your child's birthdate]. My child was bullied at school. I am therefore requesting an investigation and prompt response from the school district to ensure that the bullying will stop. The bullying occurred on [insert date] at [insert time(s) of bullying]. The bullying took place in [insert where the bullying happened]. The bullying involved [insert detailed description of the bullying, including the name(s) of those student(s) who were bullying your child]. Witnesses of the bullying included [insert the names of anyone who saw your child being bullied.]

I request that the school interview all persons who were involved in or who witnessed the bullying. After the investigation, please intervene with the students responsible for the bullying in order to ensure that the bullying stops. For more information on how to prevent bullying at school, please visit [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov). Should you have any questions about this request, please contact me at [insert your phone number and/or e-mail address].

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This toolkit builds off of the great work that organizations across the country have been doing for decades to combat hate. It was designed for informational purposes to give individuals the resources they need to help make the schools in their community welcoming for all children. This toolkit is not exhaustive. Please visit the below websites for additional resources.

[www.PREPParents.com](http://www.PREPParents.com)

[www.8449nohate.org](http://www.8449nohate.org)

[www.safeschools.info](http://www.safeschools.info)

[www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

[www.stompoutbullying.org](http://www.stompoutbullying.org)

[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

You may also find your regional Education Equity Assistance Center by visiting the Department of Education's website at:

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/contacts.html>.