

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 to find a local organization.



For more information visit PrepParents.com or 8449nohate.org