

# Bullying

***FFI (LOCAL)***--addresses student bullying, including cyberbullying, and establishes procedures for reporting and investigating allegations. Because this conduct may also rise to the level of discrimination or harassment if based on a protected characteristic,  
***FFH(LOCAL) and (EXHIBIT)*** are also included.

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**Note:** This policy addresses bullying of District students. For purposes of this policy, the term bullying includes cyber-bullying.

For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, see FFH. Note that FFI shall be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

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<b>Bullying Prohibited</b>	The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.
Examples	Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.
<b>Minimum Standards</b>	In accordance with law, the Superintendent shall develop administrative procedures to ensure that minimum standards for bullying prevention are implemented.
<b>Retaliation</b>	The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.
Examples	Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.
<b>False Claim</b>	A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
<b>Timely Reporting</b>	Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.
<b>Reporting Procedures</b>	To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other District employee. The Superintendent shall develop procedures allowing a student to anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying.
Student Report	

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Employee Report	Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.
Report Format	A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.
Periodic Monitoring	The Superintendent shall periodically monitor the reported counts of bullying incidents, and that declines in the count may represent not only improvements in the campus culture because bullying declines but also declines in the campus culture because of a decline in openness to report incidents.
<b>Notice of Report</b>	When an allegation of bullying is reported, the principal or designee shall notify a parent of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The principal or designee shall also notify a parent of the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported.
<b>Prohibited Conduct</b>	The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.
<b>Investigation of Report</b>	The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.
<b>Concluding the Investigation</b>	<p>Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.</p> <p>The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.</p>
<b>Notice to Parents</b>	If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

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<b>District Action</b>	
Bullying	If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. The District may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances.
<i>Discipline</i>	A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.  The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.
<i>Corrective Action</i>	Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine whether any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.
<i>Transfers</i>	The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.
<i>Counseling</i>	The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.
Improper Conduct	If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.
<b>Appeal</b>	A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.
<b>Records Retention</b>	Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).
<b>Access to Policy and Procedures</b>	This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

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**Note:** This policy addresses discrimination, including harassment, and retaliation against District students. For provisions regarding discrimination, including harassment, and retaliation against District employees, see DIA. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG. Note that FFH shall be used in conjunction with FFI (bullying) for certain prohibited conduct.

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**Prohibited Conduct** In this policy, the term “prohibited conduct” includes discrimination, harassment, dating violence, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

Prohibited conduct also includes sexual harassment as defined by Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

**Statement of Nondiscrimination** The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student. Discrimination is defined as treating a student or group of students differently from similarly situated students on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. One type of harassment this policy prohibits is dating violence, as defined below. Retaliation against anyone exercising their rights under this policy is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

**Harassment** Harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student’s race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

Harassment includes dating violence as defined by law and this policy.

**Examples** Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person’s religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct; offensive jokes, name call-

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ing, slurs, or rumors; cyberharassment; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

**Title IX Sexual Harassment**

As required by law, the District shall follow the procedures below at Response to Title IX Sexual Harassment upon a report of sex-based harassment, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and dating violence, when such allegations, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment in an education program or activity and against a person in the United States under Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

**Other Sexual Harassment**

By an Employee

Sexual harassment of a student by a District employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
  - a. Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
  - b. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

Romantic or other inappropriate social relationships between students and District employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual. [See DH]

By Others

Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or

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3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples

Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, contact, or communications, including electronic communication.

Necessary or permissible physical contact such as assisting a child by taking the child's hand, comforting a child with a hug, or other physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature is not sexual harassment.

**Gender-Based Harassment**

Gender-based harassment includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's gender, the student's expression of characteristics perceived as stereotypical for the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. For purposes of this policy, gender-based harassment is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples

Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; cyberharassment; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

**Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense.

For purposes of this policy, dating violence is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

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1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples

Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults; name-calling; put-downs; or threats directed at the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household. Additional examples may include destroying property belonging to the student, threatening to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempting to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, threatening a student's spouse or current dating partner, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

**Reporting  
Procedures**

Student Report

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct and any person who believes that a student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, other District employee, or the appropriate District official listed in this policy.

Employee Report

Any District employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed in this policy and take any other steps required by this policy.

Definition of District  
Officials

For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent.

*Title IX  
Coordinator*

Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, or dating violence, may be directed to the designated Title IX coordinator for students. [See FFH(EXHIBIT)]

*ADA /  
Section 504  
Coordinator*

Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the designated ADA/Section 504 coordinator for students. [See FFH(EXHIBIT)]

*Superintendent*

The Superintendent shall serve as coordinator for purposes of District compliance with all other nondiscrimination laws.

**Alternative  
Reporting  
Procedures**

An individual shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX



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coordinator or ADA/Section 504 coordinator, may be directed to the Superintendent.

A report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

**Timely Reporting**

To ensure the District's prompt investigation, reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act.

**Notice to Parents**

The District official or designee shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by a District employee or another adult. [For parental notification requirements regarding an allegation of educator misconduct with a student, see FFF.]

When the District receives a report of prohibited conduct that includes dating violence, the appropriate District official shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the student who has been identified in the report as the alleged victim or perpetrator.

**Investigation of Reports Other Than Title IX**

The following procedures apply to all allegations of prohibited conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)] For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and dating violence, see the procedures below at Response to Title IX Sexual Harassment.

The District may request, but shall not require, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form.

**Initial Assessment**

Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proved, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District shall immediately undertake an investigation, except as provided below at Criminal Investigation.

If the District official determines that the allegations, if proved, would not constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy, the District official shall refer the complaint for consideration under FFI.

**Interim Action**

If appropriate and regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the alleged conduct is pending, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to address prohibited conduct or bullying prior to the completion of the District's investigation.

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District Investigation	<p>The investigation may be conducted by the District official or a designee, such as the principal, or by a third party designated by the District, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the principal shall be involved in or informed of the investigation.</p> <p>The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.</p>
Criminal Investigation	<p>If a law enforcement or regulatory agency notifies the District that a criminal or regulatory investigation has been initiated, the District shall confer with the agency to determine if the District investigation would impede the criminal or regulatory investigation. The District shall proceed with its investigation only to the extent that it does not impede the ongoing criminal or regulatory investigation. After the law enforcement or regulatory agency has finished gathering its evidence, the District shall promptly resume its investigation.</p>
Concluding the Investigation	<p>Absent extenuating circumstances, such as a request by a law enforcement or regulatory agency for the District to delay its investigation, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.</p> <p>The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether prohibited conduct or bullying occurred. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.</p>
<i>Notification of Outcome</i>	<p>Notification of the outcome of the investigation shall be provided to both parties in compliance with FERPA.</p>
District Action <i>Prohibited Conduct</i>	<p>If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.</p>
Corrective Action	<p>Examples of corrective action may include a training program for those involved in the report, a comprehensive education program for the school community, counseling to the victim and the student who engaged in prohibited conduct, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of</p>

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	areas where prohibited conduct has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.
<i>Bullying</i>	If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, as defined by FFI, the District official shall refer to FFI for appropriate notice to parents and District action. The District official shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.
<i>Improper Conduct</i>	If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or other corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.
Confidentiality	To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.
Appeal	A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. A student or parent has the right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.
<b>Response to Title IX Sexual Harassment</b>	For purposes of the District's response to reports of harassment prohibited by Title IX, definitions can be found in FFH(LEGAL).
General Response	<p>When the District receives notice or an allegation of conduct that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, the Title IX coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss the availability of supportive measures and inform the complainant that they are available, with or without the filing of a formal complaint;</li><li>• Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; and</li><li>• Explain to the complainant the option and process for filing a formal complaint.</li></ul> <p>The District's response to sexual harassment shall treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to both parties, as appropriate, and by following the Title IX formal complaint process before imposing disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.</p>

If a formal complaint is not filed or dismissed, the District reserves the right to investigate and respond to prohibited conduct in accordance with Board policies and the Student Code of Conduct. The Title IX coordinator also reserves the right to sign a formal complaint, initiating the Title IX grievance process, if it would be deliberately indifferent not to investigate and respond to the prohibited conduct in accordance with Board policies and the Student Code of Conduct.

Title IX Formal  
Complaint Process

To distinguish the process described below from the District's general grievance policies [see DGBA, FNG, and GF], this policy refers to the grievance process required by Title IX regulations for responding to formal complaints of sexual harassment as the District's "Title IX formal complaint process."

The Superintendent shall ensure the development of a Title IX formal complaint process that complies with legal requirements. [See FFH(LEGAL)] The formal complaint process shall be posted on the District's website. In compliance with Title IX regulations, the District's Title IX formal complaint process shall address the following basic requirements:

1. Equitable treatment of complainants and respondents;
2. An objective evaluation of all relevant evidence;
3. A requirement that the Title IX coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or any person designated to facilitate an informal resolution process not have a conflict of interest or bias;
4. A presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sexual harassment until a determination is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process;
5. Time frames that provide for a reasonably prompt conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process, including time frames for appeals and any informal resolution process, and that allow for temporary delays or the limited extension of time frames with good cause and written notice as required by law;
6. A description of the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies that may be implemented following a determination of responsibility for the alleged sexual harassment;
7. A statement of the standard of evidence to be used to determine responsibility for all Title IX formal complaints of sexual harassment;
8. Procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal a determination of responsibility or a

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dismissal of a Title IX formal complaint or any allegations therein;

9. A description of the supportive measures available to the complainant and respondent;
10. A prohibition on using or seeking information protected under a legally recognized privilege unless the individual holding the privilege has waived the privilege;
11. Additional formal complaint procedures in 34 C.F.R. 106.45(b), including written notice of a formal complaint, consolidation of formal complaints, recordkeeping, and investigation procedures; and
12. Other local procedures as determined by the Superintendent.

Standard of  
Evidence

The standard of evidence used to determine responsibility in a Title IX formal complaint of sexual harassment shall be the preponderance of the evidence.

**Retaliation**

The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report of harassment or discrimination, files a complaint of harassment or discrimination, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation. The definition of prohibited retaliation under this policy also includes retaliation against a student who refuses to participate in any manner in an investigation under Title IX. In the absence of a formal complaint, allegations of retaliation shall be investigated under Investigation of Reports Other Than Title IX, above.

Examples

Examples of retaliation may include threats, intimidation, coercion, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

**False Claim**

A student who intentionally makes a false claim or offers false statements in a District investigation regarding discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with law.

**Records Retention**

The District shall retain copies of allegations, investigation reports, and related records regarding any prohibited conduct in accordance with the District's records control schedules, but for no less than the minimum amount of time required by law. [See CPC]

[For Title IX recordkeeping and retention provisions, see FFH(LEGAL) and the District's Title IX formal complaint process.]

**Access to Policy and  
Procedures**

Information regarding this policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

### **Title IX Coordinator**

The District designates and authorizes the following person as the Title IX coordinator to be responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, for students:

Name: Kimberly Freeman  
Position: Director of Student Services  
Address: 100 Rebel Road, Ore City, TX 75683  
Email: Title IX coordinator (freemank@ocisd.net)  
Telephone: (903) 968-1208

### **ADA/Section 504 Coordinator**

The District designates and authorizes the following person as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator to be responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, for students:

Name: Kimberly Freeman  
Position: Director of Student Services  
Address: 100 Rebel Road, Ore City, TX 75683  
Email: ADA/Section 504 coordinator (freemank@ocisd.net)  
Telephone: (903) 968-1208