

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR ADDRESSING BIASED-BASED ACTS OF AGGRESSION

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Scope:

Bias-Based Incidents centered around:

1. Religion/Culture/Language/Ethnicity,
2. Neurodiversity/Differing Abilities,
3. Gender, or gender identity,
4. LGBTQ+

Purpose

This guidance serves to offer action-oriented solutions that harbors an inclusive, safe, positive, respectful, and welcoming learning environment for every student.

Definitions

- **Acts of aggression** include hate speech, social bullying, or cultural triggers used in a way that is intended to inflict mental or physical hurt or harm.
- **Bullying:** seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce (someone perceived as vulnerable).
 - Social bullying: the act of intentionally causing isolation for an individual
- **Hate speech:** abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc.
- **Trigger:** causes individuals to have an extreme reaction of fear, anger, or oppression which is linked to a traumatic experience.

Note: The use of insensitive or degrading pictures, objects, and harmful language is likely to be triggering, even if a student is not individually targeted by the language used. The use of harmful language is a Class III code violation, falling under verbal abuse, harassment, and bullying in the Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) Student Code of Conduct.

Stakeholders and Responsible Parties

- Schools
- Teachers
- Students
- Families
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Office (DEIB Specialists)

Sources

- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Employee Code of Conduct](#)

Examples of Concern

- A. A group of male students make fun of another male student for joining an all girls dance team, by placing sticky notes on his back and locker.
- B. A student thought it was funny to call an African American student “a big, black monkey” which upset the student but the student said they were unaware that this wasn’t funny and very hurtful. The teacher discussed the situation with the class. However, from the African American students’ perspective, the discussion wasn’t looked at as a big deal or wasn’t addressed in a manner that shows that this was a serious matter.
- C. A male student on the basketball team wears nail polish. A few of the players on the team periodically make comments about him needing to play with the girls team. One player has convinced the rest of the basketball team that they should feel uncomfortable changing in front of this student stating “he must be gay.” At the next home game, the entire basketball team refused to go into the locker room to change for the game.
- D. A student who has a hard time discerning the difference between right and wrong is constantly asked by a group of students to do inappropriate things. The student looks up to these students and thinks they are her friends. When they ask her to conduct an inappropriate act, they record it and post it on a social media platform under the handle “stupid is as stupid does.” There are at least 15 posts so far of this one student, spanning over 3 months.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR BIAS-BASED ACTS OF AGGRESSION

Schools can...

- In pertinent languages, provide communication to families and students with clear expectations and consequences that focus on harboring an inclusive, safe, positive, respectful, and welcoming learning environment for all.
- In pertinent languages, provide communication/signage that has schoolwide expectations regarding respect, caring for classmates, and not hurting each other with words or actions.
- Create a culture of acceptance by posting on bulletin boards, social media, and flyers of diverse family structures, people of different races, gender expressions, ethnicities, and abilities, and displays encouraging respect for all people.
- Conduct a diversity audit of the school library and teaching content to ensure books, resources, and programs are culturally representative, collectively promote inclusion, and integrate global perspectives.
- Ensure teachers, faculty, and staff take advantage of professional learning opportunities made available from the district regarding best practices that harbor an inclusive, safe, positive, respectful, and welcoming learning environment.
- Empower and prepare teachers to interpret bias-based incidents with ways to respond and interrupt name-calling, jokes, or use pictures or objects that are offensive to one's race, color, national origin, age, religion, identity, or differing ability.
- Increase a culture of inclusion and belonging through non-academic clubs and affinity groups.
- Address biased-based behavior of anyone on school campus early on as a "non-negotiable." Ignoring these issues can cause a threat to the safe space of students.

For example:

- Uplift and recognize positive behaviors that demonstrate love and respect for each other with "equity champion" awards, this helps create a school-wide culture of diversity, inclusion, and belonging are essential and expected.

Teachers can...

- Focus on building a relationship of trust before focusing on academics- <https://youtu.be/kzvm1m8zq5g> The Power of Relationships in School (Edtopia)
- Consistently interrupt hurtful name-calling or intimidation.
- Attend Professional Learning opportunities that focus on harboring an inclusive, safe, positive, respectful, and welcoming learning environment for all.
- Create consistent expectations, routines, procedures and follow through.
- Model expected behavior in all supervised spaces.
- Give room for thought, creativity, and expression.
- Build relevance between your classroom and your students' lives.
- Display student work that collectively reflects themes of diversity and commonalities.

For Example:

- Focus on building relationships of trust; Kids don't learn from people they don't like; they especially do not feel safe with people that do not take the time to get to know them. Learn about students' likes and dislikes, what they do on the weekends, what sports they play, their favorite music, their family lives, and the names of their pets. Also, share things about yourself! students like to know that their teacher is an actual human with interests and hobbies, not just someone who assigns them work in class.

Students can...

- See something, say something; be an interrupter of hurtful name-calling or intimidation of other students by others.
- Share your own experiences and be accepting of others' experiences.
- Encourage others to be inclusive, positive, respectful, and welcoming.
- Practice putting themselves in another person's shoes or viewing their perspectives.
- Be open to differences between different cultures, practices, and thoughts.

For Example:

- [Join in activities](#) (Appreciation, Aha, Apology, Gallery Walk) to share who you are and get to know others and their interests. Participate in Dialogue Circles: where students sit facing each other, preferably in a circle where conversations and open communication occur and they listen to each other as they share their thoughts about a topic. Share your experiences and opinions about topics that may be sensitive (for example, gender barriers, bullying, or a traumatic experience); this might cause slight discomfort initially.

Families can...

- Participate and support school events that recognize or celebrate diversity and inclusion.
- Model behavior that is respectful of people different from themselves.
- Expose children to diverse, positive thoughts and role models.
- Expose and provide positive content and images that are not stereotypical.
- Learn how to have difficult conversations around hate and discrimination.

For example:

- When there is a multicultural night at your school, find ways to participate in sharing your culture, and have authentic conversations about differences and similarities with other cultures.

DEIB Specialist(s) can...

- Provide guidance and a framework that harbors an inclusive, safe, positive, respectful, and welcoming learning environment for all.
- Provide support, advice, and a platform for feedback.
- Be a cheerleader and publicly recognize schools' efforts to provide a culture that harbors an inclusive, safe, positive, respectful, and welcoming learning environment for all.
- Provide professional learning opportunities.

ADDRESSING INDIVIDUAL BIAS-BASED ACTS OF AGGRESSION

Schools can...

- Implement school-specific expectations and consequences that promote BOTH healing and justice.
- Ensure staff members are addressing all incidents, whether they happened under their direct supervision or they were the adult witness.
- Ensure all incidents are addressed regardless of the locations they occurred in.
- Ensure all incidents are addressed, whether it was during the school day, before/after school, and/or during any school sponsored events.
- Inform, and involve, families of both the victim(s) and aggressor(s).
- Inform, and involve, families of other students who may have witnessed the incident and/or the larger school community, when necessary.
- Use individual incidents as teachable moments, when appropriate.
- Follow up with the students involved to ensure their well-being and self-care.
- Follow up with the staff who addressed the issue to ensure their well-being and promote self-care.
- Foster reflective practices for students, families, and staff.

For example:

- School's expectations should emphasize the importance of a safe and welcoming environment that harbors a sense of belonging for all.
- School's expectations should emphasize the intolerance of harmful language use by all people in the school community, at all locations, and during all times of day.
- Possible consequences may include:

Supportive responses	Traditional Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agreement or plan ● Behavior group ● Conference, warning, reprimand ● Home/school partnership ● Mediation or mentoring ● Referral for services ● Restorative practices ● Reteach expectations ● Alternative education program ● Restitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detention ● Property confiscation ● Schedule changes ● School privilege denied ● Service penalty ● In-school removal ● Out-of-school suspension ● Expulsion recommendation

- Utilize supportive AND traditional responses to address incidents.
- Communicate the expectations, behavior, and consequences to families using their preferred method of communication, in a language they can fully understand.
- Encourage, and discuss, families' feedback.
- Connect the observed behavior with the school's expectations and explain its effects on the learning environment.

Teachers can...

- Address all incidents they notice/are made aware of, in and outside of the classroom.
- Notify administration of the incident.
- Document the incident, if warranted.
- Ensure the focus is on the behavior, not the student, emphasizing that a misstep in behavior does not define the student as a 'bad person' but rather signifies a need for growth and learning in a specific area.
- Talk to the students involved to help restore the relationship.
- Address the larger group of students who witnessed the incident, if any. Reemphasize expectations.
- Use the incident as a teaching moment.
- Promote healing and justice.
- Be prepared to address these situations and lead these tough conversations. *Having a pre-written script is encouraged.*
- Rely on learned strategies (i.e. Restorative practices) in leading the conversations.
- Notify the families of the students involved and the families of the larger student group who witnessed the incident, if warranted.
- Reflect on how they handled the situation.
- Be aware of their implicit bias when reflecting on which incidents they address and how they address them.
- Practice self-care. Addressing these situations and leading these conversations can take an emotional toll on oneself.

For example:

- Open The Front Door conflict resolution technique:
 - Observe: Address facts only. I noticed that you did/said/ ...
 - Think: I think you may have meant to
 - Feel: I feel that this may make people feel
 - Desired outcome: We want to ...
 - *Example: I noticed that you made animal noises when your friend was talking. I think you may have meant to make the classroom laugh at the expense of your friend. I feel that this may hurt their feelings and anyone else in the classroom. We want to learn in a safe and welcoming environment. Actions like this go against that. Do you see why?*
- Have rules that govern courageous conversations between students.
Example:
 - Stay engaged.
 - Expect to experience discomfort.
 - Assume positive intentions.
 - Accept and expect lack of closure.
- Ask yourself afterward:
 - If I was a student, how would I want my teacher to address this situation?
 - What would I do differently?
 - Were there any similar incidents before? Have I addressed them? Was that different?
- Give yourself grace. No one is perfect. Every interaction is a learning experience.

- Practice self-care: Journal, run, jam to music, eat your favorite food, talk with your close circle.

Students can...

- Abide by the school expectations to ensure learning in a safe and welcoming environment.
- Be interrupters and stand up for their peers when they notice harmful language being used.
- Engage in staff-led restorative practices in an authentic manner.
- Abide by the conversation's ground rules given by the teacher, if any.
- Be mindful of their own implicit biases.

For example:

- Follow the school-wide expectations.
- Respect the protocol and conversation ground rules implemented by the teacher.
- Use incidents like this as teaching moments and growth opportunities.
- Reflect after incidents.
- Practice self-care.

Families can...

- Ensure they are familiar with the school-wide expectations and consequences.
- Ensure their students are familiar with the school-wide expectations and consequences.
- Engage with their students and emphasize the importance of following the school-wide expectations and consequences.
- Inform the school if they are made aware of harmful language being used in the school.
- Partner with the school when addressing situations of using harmful language.
- Follow up on concerning situations in accordance with school practices.
- Ensure and respect the privacy of all students.
- Be mindful of their own implicit biases.

For example:

- Familiarize themselves with the school expectations and consequences.
- Discuss those expectations with their student(s) to ensure their understanding of them and their purpose.
- Emphasize that the school objective is ensuring all students feel welcome and safe. Different people have different tolerance levels toward possible harmful language. What is okay to say for one student, may not be okay for another. The school's responsibility is ensuring *everyone* feels safe and respected.
- Respond, show up, and engage with the school community.

DEIB Specialist(s) can...

- Offer guidance and support in writing and formalizing the school expectations and set of consequences in partnership with other stakeholders.
- Offer training to staff to ensure an increased comfort level and build capacity when addressing situations.
- Offer resources to ensure an increased comfort level and build capacity.
- Provide a menu of options for situations that can't get resolved on the school level.

- Provide guidance to schools on best practices to address DEIB issues.
- Connect schools with other schools who have adopted this guidance.
- Follow the district chain of command when it comes to addressing incidents.

For example:

- Training
- Professional Learning Opportunities
- Guidance
- Outside speakers
- Virtual resources

ADDRESSING PERSISTENT PATTERNS OF BIAS-BASED ACTS OF AGGRESSION

School can....

- Have a school-specific set of expectations and consequences that promote BOTH healing and justice.
- Ensure staff are addressing all incidents whether they happened under their direct supervision or they were merely the adult who witnessed it.
- Ensure all incidents are addressed regardless of the locations they occurred in.
- Ensure all incidents are addressed whether it was during the school day, before/after school, and/or during any school sponsored events.
- Inform, *and involve*, families of both the victim(s) and aggressor(s).
- Inform, *and involve*, families of other students who may have witnessed the incident and/or the larger school community, when necessary.
 - Conference with student about persistent behaviors and review school expectations.
 - Set up a conference with parent/guardian about the situation and address persistent issues.
- Document in a discipline referral followed with a resolution/consequence. Refer to the student code of conduct.
 - Document in PLP
- Recommend lessons from SEL platform

For example:

- School's expectations should emphasize the intolerance of harmful language used by all, at all locations, and during all times of day.
- The school set of consequences may include:

Supportive responses	Traditional Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agreement or plan ● Behavior group ● Conference, warning, reprimand ● Home/school partnership ● Mediation or mentoring ● Referral for services ● Restorative practices ● Reteach expectations ● Alternative education program ● Restitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detention ● Property confiscation ● Schedule changes ● School privilege denied ● Service penalty ● In-school removal ● Out-of-school suspension ● Expulsion recommendation

- Communicate the behavior, consequence, and expectations to families using their preferred method of communication and in a language they can fully understand.

Teachers can....

- Address all incidents they notice/are made aware of, in and outside the classroom.

- Speak to the student one on one (not in front of the entire class) and remind the student this is not the first time they have made comments that make other students feel disrespected.
- Write a detailed discipline referral referencing persistent behavior
- Contact parent/guardian about the situation
 - Document in PLP
- Notify administration of the incident.
- Confer with Student Support Staff on possible steps to eliminate persistent behavior

For example:

- Have rules that govern courageous conversations between students. For example:
 - Stay engaged.
 - Expect to experience discomfort.
 - Assume positive intentions.
 - Accept and expect lack of closure.
- Ask yourself afterward:
 - If I was a student, how would I want my teacher to address this situation?
 - What would I do differently?
- Give yourself grace. No one is perfect. Every interaction is a learning experience.
- Practice self-care: Journal, run, jam to music, eat your favorite food, talk with your close circle.

Students can...

- Offender
 - Conference with administration; possibly counselor
 - Receive progressive consequences for persistent behavior
 - Participate in restorative conference
- Victim
 - Report incident to law enforcement or other school official
 - Ask for a change of schedule
 - Contact district office (follow protocol hierarchy)

For example:

- Follow the school-wide expectations.
- Respect the protocol and conversation ground rules implemented by the teacher.
- Use incidents like this as teaching moments and growth opportunities.
- Reflect after incidents.
- Practice self-care.

Families can...

- At school
 - Meet with school officials about their child's persistent behavior.
 - Support the administration's decision about their child's consequences.
 - Participate in restorative conference
- At home
 - Help their child recognize the severity of their behavior.

- Take every opportunity to demonstrate kindness and stand up for every person's right to be treated with dignity and respect.

For example:

- Familiarize themselves with the school expectations and consequences.
- Discuss those expectations with their student(s) to ensure their understanding of them and their purpose.
- Emphasize that the school objective is ensuring all students feel welcome and safe. Different people have different tolerance levels toward possible harmful language. What is okay to say for one student, may not be okay for another. The school's responsibility is ensuring *everyone* feels safe and respected.
- Respond, show up, and engage with the school community.

DEIB Specialist(s) can...

- Share heightened examples with the equity council
- Collaborate to resolve issue with:
 - School level administration
 - District school chief
 - District legal office
 - FCPS Law Enforcement (if necessary)
- Track and monitor incidents in partnership with the district legal office
- Offer guidance and support in writing and formalizing the school expectations and set of consequences in partnership with other stakeholders.
- Offer training and resources to staff to ensure an increased comfort level and build capacity.
- Provide a menu of options for situations that can't get resolved on the school level.
- Provide the schools with guidance on best practices to address DEIB issues.
- Connect schools with other schools who have adopted this guidance.
- Follow the district chain of command when it comes to addressing incidents.

For example:

- Training
- Professional Learning Opportunities
- Virtual resources