

STUDENT WELFARE
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING

FFI
(REGULATION)

Note: This regulation addresses procedures for reporting a bullying, including cyberbullying, incident and investigation of reports of bullying of District students. For procedures regarding transfer of a student who is a victim of bullying or who engaged in bullying, see FDB. For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, including sex-based discrimination such as sexual harassment, see FFH. Note that FFI should be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct.

Reporting a Bullying Incident

Student Report

Bullying, including cyberbullying, is defined in FFI(LEGAL). A student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying, including cyberbullying, or that another student has, or that other students have, experienced bullying is encouraged to report the incident, in accordance with District policy. A student may report an incident of bullying anonymously.

The method(s) for a student to report bullying anonymously will be the following:

Link on the homepage of the District's website: www.hpsid.org is https://www.hpsid.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=930616&type=d&pREC_ID=1300167

Link on the District's website: www.hpsid.org is <https://safe2speakup.com/onlinebully?workspace=HighlandParkTX>

Safe2SpeakUp app

Employee Report

An employee will adhere to the requirements of District policy in reporting an alleged bullying incident.

Report Format

The report may be made orally or in writing by completing the Incident Report form [see FFI(EXHIBIT)]. If the report is made orally, the principal or designee will document the allegations in writing and record the date and circumstances of the interview on a form designated by the District, as applicable.

The parent of the alleged victim will be notified of the incident of bullying on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The alleged bully's parent will be notified within a reasonable amount of time after the incident, but no later than six business days.

Investigative Procedures

The principal or designee must determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct under FFH. If so, the

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principal or designee must refer the report for processing under the policies and procedures at FFH. If not, the principal or designee, herein referred to as the investigator, will proceed under this policy following the guidelines below, as appropriate.

*General
Considerations*

The investigator must maintain confidentiality to the extent possible and as required by law and should advise the complainant that limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

If a student desires to be accompanied by a parent or friend during his or her interview, the District will consider the request and determine whether the presence of a parent or friend in the interview will help or hinder the investigation process. If the student's request is granted, the District will adhere to all applicable laws, policies, and associated procedures to protect the privacy of all students involved.

Guidelines

In conducting the investigation, the investigator will:

1. If appropriate, take action to protect the student and to prevent bullying during the investigation. If the District determines that a serious risk to the student's physical safety exists, the principal or designee may contact law enforcement directly. [See GRAA for classes of offenses for which the District is required to contact law enforcement.]
2. Secure any evidence.
3. If the investigator did not receive the initial complaint, interview the complainant first, proceeding chronologically through the allegations, and advise the complainant that the District does not tolerate bullying. If the complainant is a student, help the student feel secure about presenting allegations of wrongdoing. Ask the names of any witnesses who might confirm the complainant's version of the events. Also ask if the complainant is aware of or able to provide evidence that supports his or her version of the events. Assure the complainant of protection from retaliation.
4. Interview the alleged victim if that person is not also the complainant and explain how the investigation process will work. Advise the alleged victim that the District does not tolerate bullying and help the student feel secure about presenting allegations of wrongdoing. Ask the names of any witnesses who might confirm the alleged victim's version of the events. Also ask if the alleged victim is aware of or able to provide evidence that supports his or her version of the events. Assure the alleged victim of protection from retaliation.

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5. Interview the alleged bully and explain how the investigation process will work. The alleged bully will be presented with each allegation and provided an opportunity to respond. Ask the names of any witnesses who might confirm the alleged bully's version of the events. Also ask if the alleged bully is aware of or able to provide evidence that supports his or her version of the events. Advise the alleged bully that retaliation against the victim, the complainant, or any witnesses is strictly prohibited by District policy.
6. Interview any witnesses. Help a student witness feel secure and assure him or her of protection from retaliation. Ask the names of any additional witnesses who might have information about the alleged incident(s).
7. Do not divulge information regarding the identity of the alleged victim, alleged bully, complainant, or witnesses unnecessarily when interviewing other witnesses.
8. If necessary, interview the alleged bully, alleged victim, and any witnesses again to address any new information discovered during the course of the investigation.
9. Maintain detailed notes of all interviews. Notes will be read to the person being interviewed to verify details and to ensure accuracy. In addition, the interviewer may audio record the interview with permission of the person being interviewed.
10. Document all efforts made to investigate the alleged bullying. Gather all relevant evidence.

**Resolution of the
Complaint**

The investigator will prepare a written report of the investigation, which will include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and, if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. The investigator will notify the parties to the complaint of the resolution.

Disciplinary Action

If upon completion of the investigation the investigator determines that disciplinary action against a student is warranted, the investigator will proceed with the appropriate course of action, in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct. After an investigation is completed, the principal or designee may report to law enforcement if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has engaged in harassment using electronic communications or assault. In accordance with law, a school counselor may not be designated as the person to report to law enforcement because a counselor's duties include serving as an impartial, non-reporting conciliator.

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Counseling Options	If the students involved have not yet been notified, the District will notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.
Improper Conduct	If upon completion of the investigation the investigator determines that the alleged incident does not rise to the level of bullying, the District will proceed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.
Notice to Superintendent	Within ten District business days of the completion of an investigation, the principal will submit the Investigation Report [see FFI(EX-HIBIT)] and any appropriate materials associated with the investigation to the Superintendent or designee.
Notice to Parents	If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the investigator will promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying. The investigator must document that notice was provided to parents on the Investigation Report.
Notice of Right to Appeal	A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.
Reporting Child Abuse	In accordance with law, if the District has reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected, the District must contact a local or state law enforcement agency or Child Protective Services (CPS). [See FFG]
Follow-Up	After concluding the investigation, the District should periodically follow up with the complainant or other persons involved in the incident(s), as appropriate.