

Guidelines for Investigation of Incidents of Bullying

When YOU INTERVIEW SOMEONE accused of bullying or harassment, you must, *confidentially*:

Find a private spot where you won't be interrupted.

Set aside enough time.

Tell them that someone has made a (serious) complaint about them and ask them if they would like to bring someone in with them now (or as soon as possible) to hear what has been said. Explain that you want to hear their side of the story and that you want to be fair.

Tell them exactly what they are supposed to have done, to whom. Explain that this appears to be about a type of bullying or harassment that is against the district's policy.

Explain how the investigation procedure works and what outcomes are possible. Tell them what records or notes (if any) you will keep, where these will be kept and who else (if anyone) might get to see them (for example, the Principal or Affirmative Action Officer).

Ask them for their side of the story.

Listen sensitively and without judging - take notes.

Get their side of the story clear.

If their story is different, ask if they have any witnesses or evidence that supports what they are saying. Tell them that they must not talk with these witnesses - you will do this.

Find out what they think will fix the problem.

Tell them that they must now keep things confidential. They must not speak to anyone except the person who has been with them in this interview, or someone else who will help them through this process. That person must not speak to anyone else either. Find out who they think already knows about this.

Make sure they know where they can go for both internal and external confidential advice or support. Make sure they know how to contact anyone they might need.

Explain what you are going to do now - for example, that you will talk with the complainant again (as soon as possible/exactly when) and then report back to them by ...(time/date), or that you may get the two of them together to try to sort things out (as soon as possible/exactly when) if that would make the situation better.

NOTE The investigation and results must be documented. This may include statements, acknowledgment of our policy, any steps taken as a result of the investigations and preventive measures taken to prevent future incidents.

Guidelines for Investigation of Incidents of Bullying

When SOMEONE COMES TO YOU about being a victim of bullying or harassment, you must, *confidentially*:

When the claim is being handled by you, your primary concerns are:

Find a private spot where you won't be interrupted.

Set aside enough time.

Reassure the person making the complaint that he or she has done the right thing by coming forward.

Tell them how the investigation will proceed.

Listen sensitively and without judging.

Get the facts/their story clear.

Ask if there are any witnesses, or any other evidence that supports what they have told you.

Tell them that you will talk with any witnesses - they must not do this.

Check that the complaint does seem to be about a type of bullying.

If you think you are not the right person to help them, refer them to someone else in the school system that might be able to help.

Find out what they think will fix the problem.

Give advice about the options they have to deal with the unfair treatment or harassment:

- Can you empower them to deal with it themselves?
- Tell them where they can go for both internal and external confidential advice or support. Make sure they know how to contact anyone they might need. Maybe help arrange this.

Explain how the investigation procedure works and what outcomes are possible. Tell them what records or notes (if any) you will keep, where these will be kept and who else (if anyone) might get to see them (for example, Principal or Affirmative Action Officer).

Tell them that they must now keep things confidential. They must only talk with those involved in confidentially supporting or counseling them, or with you. Find out who else knows already.

Explain what you are going to do now - for example, talk with the alleged discriminator(s) or harasser(s) as soon as possible to get their side of the story (tell them exactly when, if you can) and then report back to them by (time/date).

Determine whether the individuals should be around each other during the investigation or if schedule adjustments should be made - in more serious cases, the accused person might be suspended pending investigation.

Everyone is entitled to a thorough, respectful and prompt investigation.

Adopted (first and final read): September 9, 2013