

# A Toolkit for Educators, Families, and Students

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# BULLY FREE Montana

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## Table of Contents

Four Key Steps for Schools	3
Checklist for Schools	4
Bullying Tips for Educators	6
Students: Know the Facts	7
What to do if you are being Bullied	8
The Bystander	9
Bullying Tips for Families	10
Tips for Dealing with a Child who Bullies	11
<b>Appendices</b>	
Accreditation Standards, Student Protection Procedures	12
Model School District Policy Bullying, Intimidation and Hazing of Students	13
Bullying/Intimidation/Hazing Investigation Form	17
Bullying/Intimidation Model Incident Reporting Form	19
Model Safety Plan	24
2023 YRBS Data Comparison	26

# Four Key Steps for Schools

## 1. Clearly define bullying behavior, including cyber-bullying. Sample Definitions:

- Bullying is negative, often repeated, behavior with the intent to hurt someone physically or emotionally and involves an imbalance of power (physical size, social status) between the aggressor(s) and the target(s)
- Cyber-bullying is the use of cell phones, texting, social networking sites, email, or other electronic media to harass, threaten or intimidate someone. (Definitions adapted from [www.bullyingprevention.org](http://www.bullyingprevention.org).)

## 2. Establish clear policies and procedures for how your school will address bullying behavior.

- School districts are required by the Board of Public Education under the Accreditation Standards (ARM 10.55.719, Student Protection Procedures) to have a policy and procedures to address bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Provide training for teachers, staff (bus drivers, lunchroom attendants, playground supervisors), students, parents and community members that includes what bullying is, how to prevent it and how to appropriately intervene.

## 3. Make bullying prevention and intervention part of the school environment by promoting a safe school and classroom culture where educators model positive behavior.

- Conduct regular assessments of school culture and track reported incidents of bullying. Useful survey tools that can provide your school with an assessment of school climate include the MyVoice survey and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

- Require all faculty and staff to model the same positive behaviors expected of students with one another and with students.
- Increase adult supervision in areas identified as “hot spots” such as in hallways between class periods, playgrounds, the lunch room and bus stops.
- Commit to bullying prevention for the long-term. Successful prevention efforts are an on-going part of the school curriculum and culture.
- Train school personnel and students in appropriate ways to respond when they observe bullying.

## 4. Establish clear guidelines for reporting, investigating, and responding to bullying incidents.

- Depending on the severity of the incident, the school may also need to contact law enforcement authorities. a person who is the point of contact at the school for parents, students, teachers and staff who need to take additional steps in reporting and/or intervention.
- Require a firm claim for investigating and response.
- Allow reports made by students, parents, guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, to be made anonymously and confidentially.
- Make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box and a suggestion box.
- Depending on the severity of the incident, the school may also need to contact law enforcement authorities.

# Bully Free Montana Checklist for Schools

Use this checklist to help monitor your school's progress and identify areas that need attention.

## Bullying Prevention Policies and Procedures

### Short-term Goals

- Our school has an anti-bullying policy with clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying. These documents are easy to find on the school website.
- The policies and procedures are given to parents and students annually.
- Our school has a variety of means for students to report bullying incidents including anonymous reporting and parent reporting.

### Long-term Goals

- Our school has collected data from a variety of sources to identify the types, frequency and locations of bullying in our school.
- Our school conducts an annual assessment of the effectiveness of the bullying prevention and intervention procedures.
- Our school has observed a reduction in bullying behavior.

## Professional Development

### Short-term Goals

- All of the staff have received training in bullying prevention and intervention and know what bullying is, factors that put children at risk, how to establish prevention practices in the classroom and on school property, how to intervene quickly and effectively and how to support children who have been bullied.
- Teachers have established clear classroom procedures and expectations and have communicated the consequences for bullying behavior to students.
- Students are taught to recognize bullying and how to respond.
- School personnel model positive social behavior.

### Long-term Goals

- The school provides regular opportunities for staff to discuss how to improve school climate and effective bullying prevention and intervention strategies.
- The school has made a long-term commitment to bullying prevention and improving school climate and culture.



# Bully Free Montana Checklist for Schools

## School Climate and Culture

### Short Term

- Adult supervision is in place in locations around the school where bullying occurs.
- Teachers model inclusive behaviors, making a special effort to reach out to those most at risk for bullying and encourage students to be inclusive of their peers.

### Long Term

- Every student has at least one adult staff member with whom he/she feels comfortable and safe discussing personal problems and challenges and to whom he/she can report bullying incidents.
- Teachers work to promote conditions that foster a positive learning environment.
- The school conducts an assessment of school climate every two years.

## Community and Family

### Short Term

- Parents receive the bullying policy and procedures each year.
- School personnel acknowledge the perspectives of families and treat families with respect.
- The school offers a welcoming environment to students, staff, families, and community members.

### Long Term

- The school provides parent trainings during each school year on topics related to social and emotional skill development.
- The school provides bullying prevention and intervention information to parents and families every year.

Adapted from DuPage County Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention: [www.dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/.../BestPracticesManual.pdf](http://www.dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/.../BestPracticesManual.pdf)



# Bullying Prevention Tips for Educators

## Know the Hotspots

Bullying "hot spots" are areas in and around schools where bullying is more likely to occur, often due to **limited adult supervision** or **unstructured time**. Identifying and monitoring these locations is crucial for prevention.

**Schools:** Playgrounds, cafeterias, hallways, bathrooms, and in the classroom

**Online:** Social media, Gaming Communities, and text messaging

**Community Spaces:** Sports teams, school buses and within neighborhoods

**Home Environments:** Within Families (sibling rivalry can sometimes escalate to bullying)

## Get police help or medical attention immediately if:

- A weapon is involved.
- There are threats of serious physical injury.
- There are threats of hate-motivated violence, such as racism or homophobia.
- There is serious bodily harm.
- There is sexual abuse.
- Anyone is accused of an illegal act

## Responding to Bullying Behaviors

**Immediate Intervention:** Step in to stop the bullying quickly without escalating the situation. If witnessed, separate the involved parties to ensure safety and speak with them individually to assess the incident and gather information.

**Support the Victim of the Bullying:** Offer comfort and support for the victim, reassuring safety. Consider the need for an individualized safety plan to ensure the student feels safe and heard.

**Address the Student who is Bullying:** Use restorative practices where possible to help the student understand the impact of their behavior and take responsibility. Focus on behavior change but apply appropriate consequences according to school policy.

**Document the incident:** Keep record of what happened-who, what, where, when, why. This documentation is crucial for any follow-up actions. Adhere to your schools anti-bullying policies and reporting procedures.

**Involve Others:** After addressing the immediate situation, communicate with both parties parents or guardians. Transparency builds trust and this also gives an opportunity to provide resources.

**Follow-up:** Monitor the situation for further incidents and provide ongoing support. Make referrals for appropriate support services when needed. Evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

**Foster a Positive Environment:** Focus on promoting inclusiveness, respect and connection in the classroom. Teach students how to safely intervene, report, or seek help. Engage in classroom discussions or activities to build empathy and awareness.

## Best Practices for Proactive Prevention

### Understand

Understand Federal and Montana Law as it relates to Student Protection and Bullying Prevention.

### Establish

Establish clear anti-bullying policies which include reporting procedures and guidelines for follow-up.

### Promote

A positive school which is characterized by a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where students feel connected to their peers and staff. It promotes respect, engagement, and high expectations for all.

### Engage

Engage students, families, and the community in education and awareness campaigns and student leadership programs. Emphasize parent involvement and community partnerships.

[opi.mt.gov/bullyfree](http://opi.mt.gov/bullyfree)



# Students: Know the Facts

Every school district is required to have policies and procedures for addressing the issues of bullying and cyber-bullying. Ask to see your district's policy and learn how your school is implementing the policy.

## What is Bullying?

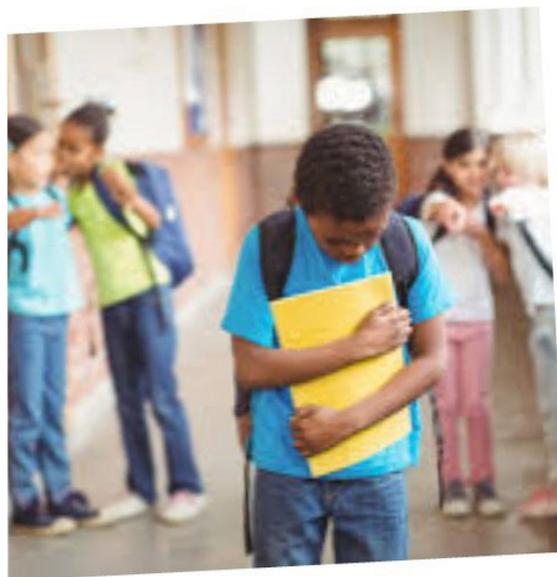
Bullying is negative, often repeated behavior with the intent to hurt someone physically or emotionally and involves an imbalance of power (physical size, social status) between the aggressor(s) and the target(s).

### An Imbalance of Power

Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

### Repetition

Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the **potential** to happen more than once.



## Types of Bullying Behavior



### Physical bullying

Physical bullying involves overt aggression such as hitting, kicking, or damaging someone's belongings, and is often the most visible form of bullying.



### Emotional bullying

Emotional bullying refers to behaviors that undermine a person's self-worth or mental health, such as exclusion, gossiping, or manipulation.



### Verbal bullying

Verbal bullying includes threats, name-calling, and taunting, which can inflict emotional pain and significantly affect the victim's self-esteem and social relationships.



### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying takes place in digital environments and can involve harassment through social media, text messages, or online gaming, complicating its detection and prevention.

# Students: Know the Facts



Bullying can result in physical injuries, social and emotional problems, and lead to poor academic outcomes for all students involved. Harmful effect of bullying can often be felt by friends, families, and can impact the climate and culture of the school, making others feel less safe in the environment and in society as a whole.

## What to Do If You Are Being Bullied

### Tip #1: How to respond as bullying is happening

- **Walk away.** Bullies want to know they have control over your emotions, so don't react with anger or retaliate with physical force.
- **Protect yourself.** If you can't walk away and are being physically hurt, protect yourself so you can get away. Your safety is the first priority.
- **Report the bullying to a trusted adult.** It's scary to report and no one wants to be seen as a snitch or tattle-tale, but you have a right to be safe at school. Adults are responsible to help with the problem without letting the bully know it was you who reported them.
- **Repeat as necessary.** Report each bullying incident until it stops. There is no reason for you to ever put up with bullying.

### Tip #2: How to deal with a cyber-bully

- **Do not respond** to cyber-bullying messages.
- **Document and report cyber-bullying.** Save or print out emails, text messages or screenshots for reporting the incident to adults.
- **Block the cyber-bully** on your phone, IM list, websites or social media pages. Report inappropriate messages to an adult, the internet service provider or website moderator. Report threats against your safety to the police.

### *The Stats: Bullying in Montana*

In 2023, **25.3 percent** of high school students reported being bullied at school (up significantly from 15.6 in 2021) and **19.4 percent** reported being electronically bullied (up from 16.4 in 2021).

Source: 2021, 2023 YRBS Survey

### Tip #3: Avoid isolation

- **Let People Know.** Talk to a parent, counselor, coach, religious leader or trusted friend. Expressing what you're going through can make a huge difference to the way you feel, even if it doesn't change the situation.
- **Don't blame yourself.** It is not your fault. No matter what someone says or does, you should not be ashamed of who you are or what you feel.

Adapted and used by permission from Helpguide.org:  
<http://helpguide.org/mental/bullying.htm>

# The Bystander

**Bullying situations usually involve more than the aggressor and the target. They also involve bystanders—those who watch bullying happen or hear about it. Depending on how bystanders respond, they can either contribute to the problem or to the solution.**

## Hurtful Bystanders

Some bystanders encourage the bullying by laughing, cheering, or making comments, and other bystanders join in the bullying once it has begun.

## Passive Bystanders

Most bystanders passively accept bullying by watching and doing nothing. Without realizing it, these bystanders also contribute to the problem. Passive bystanders provide the silent acceptance that allows people who bully to continue their hurtful behavior.

## Why don't more bystanders intervene?

- They think, "It's none of my business."
- They are afraid of getting hurt or becoming a victim.
- They feel powerless to stop the bully.
- They don't like the victim or feels the victim "deserves" it.
- They don't want to draw attention to themselves.
- They fear retribution from the bully.
- They think that telling adults won't help or it may make things worse.
- They don't know what to do.

**Bystanders who don't intervene or don't report the bullying often suffer negative consequences themselves. They may experience:**

- Pressure to participate in the bullying.
- Anxiety about speaking to anyone about the bullying.
- Guilt for not having defended the victim.

The **Bystander Effect**: A social phenomenon where individuals are less likely to intervene or offer help when they witness bullying, especially when others are present.



**Bystanders have the power to play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying by:**

- Discouraging the aggressor from continuing the behavior. Reporting the bullying to adults.
- Working with a group of students to help prevent bullying at school.

**Preparing children to become helpful bystanders**

Adults can prepare students to become helpful bystanders by talking to them about the different ways bystanders can make a difference and by letting them know that adults will support them when they step forward.

Adapted and used by permission from eyesonbullying.org  
<http://www.eyesonbullying.org/bystander.html>

Additional Resources:

[How kids can Stop Bullying](#)

# Bullying Prevention Tips for Families

## Talk to your child about bullying

Make sure your children know what bullying is. If they know what bullying is, they will know what not to do and will be able to recognize a bullying incident. Teach empathy and respect. Keep communication open and set clear expectations around behavior.

Ask for a copy of the school's bullying policy and procedures. Every Montana school district is required to have policies and procedures to address bullying and cyberbullying. Make sure you and your children know how to report an incident, whether it is your child being bullied or someone else.

## Take bullying seriously

Encourage and listen to your kids when they talk about their days. Are they telling you about a bullying incident? Children may be embarrassed or afraid to acknowledge that they are being bullied. Let them know they can come to you **without fear of judgment or punishment**.

Encourage your children to report incidents of bullying. Let them know that you will support them through the reporting process.

## Report the incident to school personnel

Share your child's concerns and specific information about bullying incidents with appropriate school personnel. Ask how the school plans to deal with the incident as well as their plans for preventing future bullying incidents as well as preventing retaliation. Work in partnership with your school to develop a plan. If you feel the problem hasn't been addressed, follow-up with the school administration to make sure they are following the district's policies and procedures.

## What NOT TO Do:

- Do not ignore your child's report.
- Do not advise your child to physically fight back. (Bullying lasts longer and can become more severe when children fight back)
- Do not confront the child who bullies.
- Do not confront the family of the child who bullies.



## Recognize Warning Signs

- Look for changes in behavior: withdrawal, aggression, anxiety, reluctance to go to school.
- Unexplained injuries, missing belongings, or frequent complaints of headaches/stomachaches and changes in sleep patterns can also be signs.
- Avoidance of technology, changes in online behavior, threatening messages or hiding devices could signal cyberbullying.

## Monitor Digital Behavior

- Know which apps, games and other platforms your child is accessing.
- Teach your child about cyberbullying and digital safety.
- Keep devices in common areas and establish boundaries around screen time.
- Utilize monitoring services or child protection settings.

## Additional Resources for Families

- [Parents Preventing Cyberbullying](#)
- [Tips for Parents](#)
- [How to Talk about Bullying](#)
- [Protecting Kids Online](#)

Adapted from [stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov/parents/index.html): <http://www.stopbullying.gov/parents/index.html>.

# Bullying Prevention Tips for Families

## Tips for Parents Dealing with a Child who Bullies

It can be difficult for any parent to learn that their child is bullying others. The sooner you address the problem, the better chance you have of avoiding the long-term effects this behavior can have on a child.

### People who bully others:

- Are more likely to get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school.
- Have a high risk of abusing alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults.
- Are twice as likely as their peers to have criminal convictions as adults and four times more likely to be multiple offenders.
- Are more likely as adults to be abusive toward their intimate partners, spouses, or children.

## Warning signs your child may be bullying others

### Your child:

- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others.
- Gets sent to the principal's office or detention a lot.
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained.
- Is quick to blame others.
- Does not accept responsibility for his or her actions.
- Has friends who bully others.

Adapted from [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov) and [Helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org):  
<http://www.stopbullying.gov/parents/index.html> <http://helpguide.org/mental/bullying.htm>

## What to do if your child is engaging in bullying behavior

- **Educate your child about bullying.** Foster empathy by encouraging your child to look at his/her actions from the victim's perspective. Remind your child that bullying can have legal consequences.
- **Remember you are a model for your children.** Kids learn from adults' aggressive and mean-spirited behavior as well as from acts of kindness and empathy.
- **Establish consistent rules of behavior.** Make sure your child understands your rules and the consequences for breaking them.
- **Set limits with technology.** Let your child know you'll be monitoring his or her use of computers, email, and text messaging.
- **Seek Support.** Talk to school personnel, mental health providers, the PTA or other parenting organizations in your community about how to address the issue. Also, there are many good resources online.

(Review the "Resources" tab on the Bully Free Montana page).



# Appendices

## ADMINISTRATIVE RULES OF MONTANA STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION STUDENT PROTECTION PROCEDURES

### 10.55.719 STUDENT PROTECTION PROCEDURES

- (1) A local board of trustees shall adopt a policy designed to deter persistent threatening, insulting, or demeaning gestures or physical conduct, including an intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication or threat directed against a student or students regardless of the underlying reason for such conduct, that:
- (a) causes a student physical or emotional harm, damages a student's property, or places a reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student's property;
  - (b) substantially and materially interferes with access to an educational opportunity or benefit; or
  - (c) substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.
- (2) Behavior prohibited under (1) includes retaliation against a victim or witness who reports behavior prohibited under (1).
- (3) "Persistent" as used in this rule can consist of repeated acts against a single student or isolated acts directed against a number of different students.
- (4) The behavior prohibited in (1) includes but is not limited to conduct:
- (a) in a classroom or other location on school premises;
  - (b) during any school-sponsored program, activity, or function where the school is responsible for the student including when the student is traveling to and from school or on a school bus or other school-related vehicle; or
  - (c) through the use of electronic communication, as defined in 45-8-213, MCA, that substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of the school or any school-sponsored program, activity, or function where the school is responsible for the student.
- (5) Each local board of trustees has discretion and control over the development of its policies and procedures regarding behavior prohibited under (1), but each district's policies and procedures must include at a minimum:
- (a) a prohibition on the behavior specified in (1), regardless of the underlying reason or reasons the student has engaged in such behavior;
  - (b) a procedure for reporting and documenting reported acts of behavior prohibited under (1);
  - (c) a procedure for investigation of all reports of behavior prohibited under (1)(a) that includes an identification of the persons responsible for the investigation and response;
  - (d) a procedure for determining whether the reported act is subject to the jurisdiction of the school district or another public agency, including law enforcement, and a procedure for referral to the necessary persons or entity with appropriate jurisdiction;
  - (e) a procedure for prompt notification, as defined in the district policy, of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator, or the parents or guardian of such students when the students are minors;
  - (f) a procedure to protect any alleged victim of behavior prohibited under (1)(a) from further incidents of such behavior;
  - (g) a disciplinary procedure establishing the consequences for students found to have committed behavior prohibited under (1); and
  - (h) a procedure for the use of appropriate intervention and remediation for victims and perpetrators.
- (History: 20-2-121, MCA; IMP, 20-2-121, MCA; NEW, 2012 MAR p. 2042, Ef. 7/1/13.)

# Model School District Policy

## Bullying, Intimidation and Hazing of Students

### Purpose

The following Model District Policy provided by the Montana Office of Public Instruction is to be used as a guide for districts in the development, implementation and enforcement of their own policies and procedures. Nothing in the model policy language prohibits school districts from including additional provisions or adopting a more or less comprehensive version of the models provided.

School districts are not required to adopt these models, the provision of which is meant to exemplify effective school policies and enforcement procedures for the topic areas covered. The Montana Office of Public Instruction is not responsible for implementation or enforcement of any models adopted. If a school district in Montana wishes to adopt all or part of the Model Policies provided by OPI, that school district assumes liability for the implementation and enforcement of such policies. The office of Public Instruction encourages school districts to develop policy content and format locally, in collaboration with local interest groups, and not based solely on the models provided herein.

### District Policy Statement

The \_\_\_\_\_ School District is committed to providing a safe, productive and positive learning environment at all grade levels. A safe and accepting school environment is conducive to, and necessary for optimal academic achievement. Like other disruptive behaviors, bullying, intimidation and hazing negatively impact the learning environment. Bullying, intimidating and hazing behaviors will not be tolerated at any grade level. Students and staff are strictly prohibited from taking any action that could be interpreted as bullying, hazing, or retaliation for reporting such action.

#### I. Definitions

- A. "Bullying or intimidation" means any threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical conduct, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication or threat directed against a student regardless of the underlying reason for such conduct that:
  - a. causes a student physical or mental harm, damages a student's property or places a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student's property;
  - b. substantially interferes with a student's access to educational opportunity or benefit; or
  - c. substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.
- B. "Electronic Communication" is defined in 45-8-213, MCA, and includes any communication by any electronic device including but not limited to text messaging, sexting, email, or use of social networking.
- C. "Hazing" means an act against a student or coercing a student into behavior that creates risk of harm to a person in order for the student to be initiated into, or affiliated with a student activity, team, club or organization, or for any other purpose.
- D. "Retaliation" means an intentional act or communication intended:
  - a. as retribution against a person who has reported an incidence of bullying, or intimidation; or
  - b. to improperly influence the reporting, investigation, or discipline that results from an incidence of bullying, or intimidation.
- E. "Sexting" means sending sexually explicit messages or photographs, primarily between mobile phones, such as sending a text message with a sexual image.
- F. "Staff member" includes but is not limited to teachers, specialists, coaches, administrators, board members, volunteers, custodians, and any others employed or authorized by the school, school board, or district.
- G. "Designated Investigator" is the principal of the school, or a staff member appointed by the principal responsible for receiving and investigating reports of bullying, or intimidation. ["Designated Investigator" may appropriately be the designated Title IX coordinator.]

## II. Prohibitions

- A. No school student or staff member will engage in any of the following:
  - 1. Bullying, intimidation or hazing of a student;
  - 2. Retaliation against a student or staff member for reporting an incident of bullying, intimidation or hazing; or
  - 3. Coercion of another person to commit bullying, intimidation, or hazing.
- B. Bullying, intimidation and hazing is strictly prohibited:
  - 1. in a classroom or any other location on school premises;
  - 2. during any school sponsored program, activity, or function where the school is responsible for the student, including on a school bus or other school-related vehicle; or
  - 3. through the use of electronic communication as defined in 45-8-213, regardless of when or where it occurs, that substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school or any school-sponsored program, activity, or function where the school is responsible for the student.

## C. Consequences

- A. If a student or staff member is found to have committed one of the above-prohibited behaviors, consequences may follow, up to and including expulsion or termination from employment. Such action is meant not only to discipline the offending student or staff member, but also to protect the target from future aggression or retaliation. Consequences may be implemented after reporting, investigation, and determination that a prohibited act has been committed.
- B. Depending on the age of the students involved and severity of the infraction, disciplinary and remedial actions for students may include:
  - 1. Parental notification
  - 2. Loss of privilege(s)
  - 3. Parent conference
  - 4. Reassignment of seats
  - 5. Reassignment of classes
  - 6. Reassignment to another mode of transportation
  - 7. Escort of the perpetrator
  - 8. Completion of apology letter and acknowledgement of behavior
  - 9. Referral or appointments with school counselor or other professionals
  - 10. Payment for damaged property
  - 11. Detention
  - 12. Suspension (in-school or out-of-school)
  - 13. Referral to law enforcement
  - 14. Expulsion

Any student disciplined will be afforded due process as required by District policy for action taken by school administration or the Board of Trustees.

C. Depending on the severity of the offense, disciplinary and remedial actions for school staff is subject and commensurate with the district’s personnel policies and may include:

1. Verbal warning
2. Written warning
3. Suspension
4. Referral to law enforcement
5. Termination of employment

#### **IV. Intervention**

- A. All staff members shall intervene when witnessing potentially bullying, or intimidating behavior. If the staff member witnesses or receives a report of unresolved bullying, intimidation or hazing the staff member will report the matter pursuant to VI. below.
- B. If it is determined that staff was aware of bullying, intimidation or hazing and did nothing to intervene, discipline or remedial action may be invoked.

#### **V. Reporting**

- A. Students who feel they have been subjected to bullying, intimidation or hazing, or other students, parents, staff, or other community members who believe they have witnessed bullying, intimidation or hazing of a student may report the incident either in writing (via Incident Reporting Form) or verbally. Reports may be made to any staff member.
- B. Any staff member who becomes aware of bullying, intimidation or hazing should attempt to resolve the matter immediately. When staff is made aware of unresolved incidents, they shall fill out an Incident Reporting Form and submit it to the principal (unless the principal is the subject of the complaint) within 48 hours of the incident.
- C. If the principal is the subject of the complaint, the report should be submitted to the District Superintendent.
- D. Anonymous reports containing adequate detail to investigate will be investigated.
- E. Incident Reporting Forms are available on the school district website and included in the student handbook.

#### **VI. Investigatory Process**

- A. All investigations should be initiated promptly, but no later than two school days after the Incident Report has been completed and filed with the school administration office.
- B. The designated investigator will determine whether bullying, intimidation or hazing has occurred by interviewing the aggressor(s), the target(s), the reporter, and known bystanders and other witnesses. Previous incident reports involving the same students should also be taken into consideration.
- C. Any interviewees should be informed that information given will be kept as confidential as possible in accordance with student due process rights, but that disclosure may be necessary.
- D. The investigation should be performed and concluded within five school days of receipt of a report. Upon conclusion, if it is found that bullying, intimidation or hazing has occurred parents of the target(s) and the aggressor(s) shall be notified immediately by a school administrator
- E. The school administration will determine whether another entity has jurisdiction over the incident. If instances of bullying, intimidation or hazing rise to the level of a possible criminal offense, a school administrator shall immediately notify the police.
- F. The school principal, in conjunction with the counselor or other appropriate staff, shall determine and implement appropriate consequences, which may include discipline and/or remedial action for the aggressor and the target. The aggressor will be informed that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will be met with similar or additional consequences.

- G. The school administration shall take all necessary steps to protect the target from further bullying, intimidation or hazing incidents. This can include but is not limited to changing the aggressor’s seat, transportation route, or classes and identifying a staff member to act as a supervisor for the aggressor. If an escort is appropriate, the aggressor - not the target - should be escorted.
- H. The principal or other designated school administrator will follow up with the target of any bullying, intimidation or hazing to ensure that the negative behavior has stopped.
- I. A written record will be kept of each reported incident, including the written report, investigatory steps and information, conclusive findings, referral to other entities (e.g. law enforcement) and disciplinary and/or remedial action taken.

## **VI. Notification and Training**

- A. The District policy and procedures will be included in student handbooks for all grade levels and prominently posted on the district’s webpage.
- B. Reporting form(s) will be readily available to staff members, students, and parents, including on-line on the district’s website.
- C. Staff and students will be educated on the policy and procedures, including: recognizing inappropriate behaviors; using appropriate intervention and remediation; and possible consequences and discipline.

## **REFERENCES:**

ARM 10.55.701

# Montana Office of Public Instruction Bullying/Intimidation Model Incident Reporting Form

**Disclaimer:**

The following Model Incident Report Form (form) is provided by the Montana Office of Public Instruction to be used by school districts at their discretion. Using portions or the entirety of this form is not mandatory. This form is to be used only as a tool to facilitate the enforcement of school district bullying policy and the Montana Office of Public Instruction encourages each school district to develop a form based on the unique characteristics of that district.

\_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL DISTRICT: BULLYING/INTIMIDATION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

This form is to be used to report incidents of bullying/intimidation. False reporting is prohibited.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, was a target of/witness to/received a report of (circle one) a bullying incident.

I am a:  
student          teacher          parent          other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

The incident took place:  
on school property          at a school sponsored event          on a bus or other school vehicle  
of school property (describe where) \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe in detail the incident, including location, any injuries or damage to property, etc. (Use back of form if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was this an isolated incident?          Yes          No

If "No," how many other incidents have there been? \_\_\_\_\_

Date and description of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Aggressor Information: \_\_\_\_\_

The aggressor was:

a student          a teacher          other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Aggressor's name, grade (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Other affected Students (Please indicate whether witness, bystander, or target):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

# Montana Office of Public Instruction Bullying/Intimidation Model Incident Reporting Form

Continued

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Other(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
of Person Filling out Report

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person Filling out Report

## For Administrative Use Only

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Receiving Form      Date: \_\_\_\_\_      Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident assigned for investigation to: \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of School Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Assigned to Investigate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# School District

## Bullying/Intimidation/Hazing Investigation Form

This form is to be filed in the disciplinary record of each aggressor and added to the file of the target for future reference.

Designated Investigator \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Investigation: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_ to \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Person who filed incident report: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number ----- \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter status:  Parent  Student  Teacher  Community Member

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Investigation Check List:

- Review and Attach Incident Report Form
- Review aggressor's discipline and school records
- List incident information: target(s), aggressor(s), date(s), reporter
- Parental Notification: Aggressor(s)
- Parental Notification: Target(s)
- Conduct and record interviews: target, aggressor, and witness
- Conduct and record interviews with other involved parties: nurse,  
 intervening staff, bus driver
- Attach pertinent forms, if applicable:

Incident Reporting Form

Nurse's report

Print-outs of cyber-bullying

Copies of other evidence (notes, drawings, pictures, etc.)

Police reports

- Investigation Findings

# School District Bullying/ Intimidation/Hazing Investigation Form

Continued

Incident Information:

Date of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Where did the incident occur?

- On school property - Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- On school bus - Route information: \_\_\_\_\_
- At a school event or of school property - Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- On the way to/from school - Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- Electronic or on-line: \_\_\_\_\_

Targeted Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name                      Grade Level

Aggressor(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Name    Grade Level

\_\_\_\_\_

Name    Grade Level

\_\_\_\_\_

Name    Grade Level

## Notification

- Target Student's Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_
- Aggressor's Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_
- Aggressor's Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_



# School District Bullying/Intimidation/Hazing Investigation Form

Continued

## Interviews

Target Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How many incidents: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the target still in fear of the aggressor?  yes  no

Was there physical injury or fear of physical harm  yes  no

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was there property damage?  yes  no

If yes, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the target feel apprehensive about attending school?  yes  no

**School District**

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**Bullying/Intimidation/Hazing Investigation Form**

Continued

Aggressor #1 Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Aggressor #2 Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Aggressor #3 Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Aggressor #4 Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# School District

## Bullying/Intimidation/Hazing Investigation Form

Continued

### Determination

#### Check all that apply:

Was there a verbal, written, or physical intentional act or electronic communication?

yes  no \_\_\_\_\_

Did the act interfere with the target's education, performance, physical wellbeing or psychological well-being?

yes  no \_\_\_\_\_

Was the act intentionally threatening or intimidating?  yes  no (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Did the event occur on school property, at a school sponsored event?  yes  no (where) \_\_\_\_\_

If it occurred outside of those areas, did it disrupt the orderly operation of the school or the target's educational opportunities?  yes  no (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Was the act in retaliation for reporting an incident of bullying? yes  no

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Final Determination:

- Incident did NOT meet the standard of bullying, intimidation or hazing
- Bullying, intimidation or hazing has occurred
  - Incident will be dealt with by school administration
  - Incident will be reported to police
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- A safety plan will be put in place for the target
- A conduct plan will be put in place for the aggressor
- Other

Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

# Individualized Student Safety Plan

## Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Discrimination Based on Race

This Safety Plan has been developed for \_\_\_\_\_ and does not replace the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504.

### Administrative Responsibilities

- Will continue communicating and enforcing the School/District Student Code of Conduct.
- Will be neutral and gather the facts from all involved parties.
- Will follow up with the involved parties to monitor that the behavior has stopped, and that the incident has been resolved.
- Will discuss the Safety Plan with the student and provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) with a copy.
- Will ensure that a copy of the Safety Plan is shared with the student's classroom teacher(s).
- Safety Plan is being implemented across all settings.

### Counselor Responsibilities

- Will meet with the student (*specify frequency*) to provide additional support and monitoring to ensure that the behavior has stopped. Check-ins may continue or may be modified as needed.
- Will provide any outside resources to support the safety and well-being of the student(s).

### Student Responsibilities

- Will tell the person who is exhibiting bullying behavior to "stop" and will not use physical means to address the behavior.
- Will report any concerns or incidents of racially motivated behavior, bullying, or cyberbullying immediately to my teacher, administrator, or any staff member on campus.

### Student Protections

Upon arrival on school campus, the student will \_\_\_\_\_ until the bell rings to begin the day.

During passing periods the student will \_\_\_\_\_

During lunch, the student will sit by (*specify the exact location*) \_\_\_\_\_

The student-designated after-school pickup location is (*specify the exact location*) \_\_\_\_\_

If the student does not feel safe taking the school bus, the student will/the school will \_\_\_\_\_

If the student does not feel safe walking home, the student will/the school will \_\_\_\_\_



## 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey-Data Comparison

Health Risk Behavior by percentage of students	Students Who Got Bullied on School Property	Students Who Did Not Get Bullied on School Property	Probability
Felt Sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities, past 12 months	61.6%	32.3%	0.00
Mental health was reported to be not good most of the time or always, past 30 days	48.4%	25.8%	0.00
Ever seriously consider attempting suicide, past 12 months	44.2%	17.3%	0.00
Made a plan about how you would attempt suicide, past 12 months	36.5%	14.8%	0.00
Actually attempted suicide, past 12 months	23.3%	9.6%	0.00
Of those who attempted suicide, any attempts that resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse, past 12 months.	35.0%	27.0%	0.00
Received help from a resource teacher, speech therapist, or other special education teacher during the past 12 months	23.2%	14.7%	0.42
Spoke with a mental health provider, at school (counselor, psychologist, or social worker)	32.7%	20.2%	0.00
Carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property, past 30 days	14.6%	9.5%	0.00
Carried a gun on 4 or more days for reasons other than hunting or sporting in the past 12 months	5.4%	4.4%	0.00
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school during the past 30 days	21.6%	6.0%	0.00
Were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the past 12 months	17.3%	5.3%	0.00
Were in a physical fight 4 or more times in the past 12 months	5.3%	3.0%	0.00
Were in a physical fight 4 or more times on school property in the past 12 months	2.8%	0.8%	0.00
Ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to	25.4%	9.1%	0.00
Experienced sexual dating violence (unwanted kissing, touching, or sexual intercourse by someone they were dating), past 12 months	15.0%	4.8%	0.00
Experienced physical dating violence (being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon by someone they were dating), past 12 months	11.4%	3.8%	0.00
Felt that you were treated badly or unfairly in school because of your race or ethnicity most of the time or always	11.3%	2.6%	0.00
Ever tried cigarette smoking	40.0%	26.8%	0.00
Currently smoked cigarettes, past 30 days	12.1%	7.1%	0.00
Smoked at least one cigarette per day, past 30 days	7.2%	3.5%	0.00
Ever used an electronic vapor product	56.5%	40.1%	0.00

Currently used an electronic vapor product, past 30 days	<b>35.9%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Currently used an electronic vapor product on school property, past 30 days	<b>23.0%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Currently used smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip), past 30 days	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>0.03</b>
Currently smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars, past 30 days	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Currently drank alcohol, past 30 days	<b>34.4%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Had 4 or more drinks, if female, 5 or more drinks, if male, of alcohol within a couple hours during the past 30 days	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever used marijuana in their lifetime	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Currently used marijuana, past 30 days	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever took prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it (codeine, Vicodin, OxyContin, Hydrocodone and Percocet)	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever used cocaine in their lifetime	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever used inhalants in their lifetime	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever used heroin in their lifetime	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever used methamphetamines in their lifetime	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever used ecstasy in their lifetime	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever used a needle to inject an illegal drug in their lifetime	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ever had sexual intercourse in their lifetime	<b>50.1%</b>	<b>37.6%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Had sexual intercourse with four or more persons during their life	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Currently sexually active (sexual intercourse during the past 3 months)	<b>33.0%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>56.7%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Did not eat breakfast during the past 7 days	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Ate breakfast on all of the past 7 days	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Got 4 or less hours of sleep on an average school night	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Got at least 8 or more hours of sleep on an average school night	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>30.1%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Made mostly A's or B's in school during the past 12 months	<b>71.1%</b>	<b>77.6%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Experienced homelessness (not usually sleeping in their parent's or guardian's home) during the past 30 days	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Slept away from their parents or guardians because they were kicked out, ran away, or were abandoned, during the past 30 days	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Spent 3 or more hours per day on screen time (TV, computer, smart phone, or other electronic device watching shows or videos, playing games, accessing the Internet, or using social media, <i>not counting time doing schoolwork</i> ) on an average school day	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>68.8%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Used social media (Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Twitter) several times a day or more	<b>74.5%</b>	<b>73.4%</b>	<b>0.00</b>

## Bullying may also be Discrimination

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued a "Dear Colleague" letter of guidance to educational institutions and agencies across the country reminding them of their legal obligations to protect students from bullying pursuant to federal civil rights laws, including Title IX. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>

### The OCR letter explains:

The statutes that OCR enforces include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II). School districts may violate these civil rights statutes and the Department's implementing regulations when peer harassment is based on race, color, national origin, sex or disability is sufficiently serious that it creates a hostile environment and such is encouraged, tolerated, not adequately addressed, or ignored by school employees.

The applicable federal laws do not specify discrimination based on sexual orientation, but the OCR clarifies that there is overlap between sex discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation. When harassment targets a student for failing to conform to sex stereotypes (e.g., male who is perceived to be too effeminate looking or acting), it is considered sex discrimination that requires school officials' response.

Additional steps to address identified harassment or bullying-type discrimination may include: counseling and other appropriate resources for the affected students, providing school-wide training on the issues, issuing public statements on the school's policy regarding discrimination, and interim as well as long-term measures to protect students from alleged harassers.

When a student or parent believes a student is being harassed in a manner that is covered by Title IX, they should follow local school policies in notifying the school's Title IX Coordinator and request an investigation. If school officials are made aware of the harassment, but the affected student or parent believes the school has made inadequate response to the situation, they may file a complaint with the OCR. The local school Title IX Coordinator will have information on how to file a complaint, and

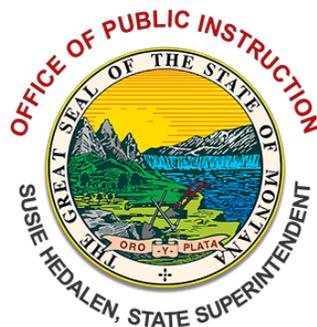
additional information may be accessed at the following link: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintprocess.html>





# BULLYFREE Montana

[opi.mt.gov/bullyfree](http://opi.mt.gov/bullyfree)



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