

## HOPE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FLOW CHART

The Bullying Management System (BMS) will become the Hope Management System (HMS). At that time, it will not only track all bullying and harassment allegations, but also all Hope eligible incidents. Until then, BCPS administrators access forms within the [DMS SharePoint](#) or the DMS landing page via BASIS. Charter administrator may access forms within the [SharePoint Charter Hub](#).

### COMPLAINT OF A STUDENT BEING THE VICTIM OF A HOPE ELIGIBLE INCIDENT IS RECEIVED

- Corresponding BCPS Incident Types eligible for the Hope Scholarship Program include: Bullying (ZA), Harassment (HA), Threat or Intimidation (A6, A7), Hazing (ZT), Robbery (R2, R4), Fighting (F1, F2), Aggravated Battery (23), Physical Attack (PA), Kidnapping (K1), Sexual Harassment (50), Sexual Assault (S2), Sexual Battery (S1), or Sexual Offenses-Other (56).
- All complaints are investigated by the Principal or the Investigative Designee (ID).
- The complaint can be received orally, anonymously, or in writing.
- A qualifying incident must be reported during the same school year in which it occurred.



- Within 24 hours:
  - Mail the alleged student victim the original 2-page form (the State's Hope Scholarship Notification Form and Hope Scholarship Initial Notification Form). It details the Hope Scholarship Program rights and provides directions on the application process. The family must apply within 15 days. Retain a copy for your records.
  - Mail the accused student the Initial Student Accused Hope Eligible Incident Notification Form. Retain a copy for your records.
- Within 48 hours interview the accused and alleged victim separately and take written statements.
- Within 15 days:
  - Interview any witnesses, take written statements, and gather evidence.
  - Complete the investigation and make a determination of substantiated or unsubstantiated.
  - **Note:** If the allegation is bullying or harassment, you must mail the alleged victim and the accused a Final Bullying Harassment Notification Form letter.
- As needed, provide interventions to all parties and document them electronically. BCPS staff will use the BMS/HMS to document allegations of bullying or harassment no matter the determination. Scan and upload all investigation documentation.

#### **Please Note:**

- The Investigative Designee (ID) must be an administrator.
- No matter what the determination, the investigator will monitor and follow up with all parties regularly.
- "Days" refers to school days for student or parent accused, work days for staff accused.
- All complaints of bullying or harassment must follow the timelines and procedures in Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9.
- If the accused is instructional staff, the immediate supervisor of the accused conducts the investigation. If the accused is a principal, the Office of School Performance and Accountability conducts the investigation.
- Questions related to Hope processes are to be directed to the School Climate & Discipline Department at 754-321-1655.
- Questions related to applying to District schools once provided the Hope Scholarship forms are to be directed to the Office of School Choice at 754-321-2480.

Until the Bullying Management System (BMS) is converted to the Hope Management System (HMS), the principal or investigating **administrator** **must email a completed copy** of the attached 2 page “Initial Student Victim Hope Notification Form 2020-21” (the State’s Hope Scholarship Notification Form and Hope Scholarship Initial Notification Form) to [DMS@Browardschools.com](mailto:DMS@Browardschools.com) for reporting purposes.

Discard this cover sheet before mailing the alleged target the original 2-page Initial Student Victim Hope Notification Form 2020-21.

Retain a copy of the 2-page Notification Form for your records.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

- Questions related to Hope processes are to be directed to the School Climate & Discipline Department at 754-321-1655.
- Questions related to applying to District schools once provided the Hope Scholarship forms are to be directed to the Office of School Choice at 754-321-2480.

#### **RATIONALE:**

Pursuant to section 1002.40, Florida Statute and Florida Administrative Code 6A-6.0951, any student(s) alleging a Hope Scholarship Program eligible incident must receive the State’s Hope Scholarship Notification Form within 24 hours. Districts must report all substantiated and unsubstantiated Hope Scholarship eligible incidents in SESIR, as required by s.1006.09(6), F.S.

Eligible incident types aligned to the Code of Student Conduct are: Bullying (ZA), Harassment (HA), Threat or Intimidation (A6, A7), Hazing (ZT), Robbery (R2, R4), Fighting (F1, F2), Aggravated Battery (23), Physical Attack (PA), Kidnapping (K1), Sexual Harassment (50), Sexual Assault (S2), Sexual Battery (S1), or Sexual Offenses-Other (56).

## Hope Scholarship Notification Form

Pursuant to section 1002.40, Florida Statutes, the Hope Scholarship Program provides a public school student who was subjected to a qualifying incident with the opportunity to transfer to another public school with capacity (within the school district or another school district) or request a scholarship to attend an eligible private school. Upon receipt of a report of an incident, the school principal (or designee), is required to notify the parents of the reported incident and to investigate the incident to determine if it must be reported in SESIR, as required by s. 1006.09(6), F.S. After the investigation is completed, or within 15 days after the incident was reported to the principal, whichever comes first, the school district must notify the parent of opportunity to transfer to another school under the Hope Scholarship Program.

By completing and signing this form, the principal is confirming that the parent was provided the form within the required timeframe and was notified of the educational opportunities under the Hope Scholarship Program. The school should retain a copy and provide original document to the parent.

### Student Information

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
FLEID: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_  
School of Enrollment and MSID: \_\_\_\_\_ School District: \_\_\_\_\_

### Incident Information

Date and Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Incident Reported: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Location:

- School Grounds/On Campus
- School-Sponsored Activity/Off Campus
- School-Sponsored Transportation (Including Bus Stops)
- Other School Location (please specify):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Incident Type as defined in Rule 6A-1.0017 SESIR\*:

- |                                             |                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aggravated Battery | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Assault         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Battery         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazing             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Offenses-Other  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kidnapping         | <input type="checkbox"/> Threat or Intimidation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Attack    | <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Robbery            |                                                 |

\*Includes substantiated and unsubstantiated incidents

### Confirmation of Hope Scholarship Notification and Reporting

Principal or Designee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Schools: Please report the number of Hope Scholarship Notification Forms provided to parents for substantiated and unsubstantiated incidents in your Student Information System.

Parents: To transfer your student to another public school please contact your school district office. For more information on how to apply for the private school option, please visit [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org). The maximum amount awarded to a student enrolled in a public school located outside of the district the student resides shall be \$750. Parents are required to inform the school district when the parent withdraws a student to attend a private school under this program.

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Student Name:

Student's Current School:

HMS Referral#:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This correspondence along with the State of Florida Hope Scholarship Notification Form, serves as formal notice that the school principal (or designee) has received a report of a Hope eligible incident. A thorough and fair investigation will be conducted and completed within fifteen (15) school days to determine if the allegation can be substantiated. Put an "X" in the box next to the alleged incident type as defined in Rule 6A-1.0017 SESIR:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bullying (ZA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Harassment (HA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Threat or Intimidation (A6, A7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazing (ZT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robbery (R2, R4)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fighting (F1, F2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aggravated Battery (23)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Attack (PA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kidnapping (K1)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Harassment (50)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Assault (S2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Battery (S1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Offenses-Other (56)		

Based on the incident type, the student is eligible to apply for the educational opportunities under the Hope Scholarship Program. The Hope Scholarship Program was established by the Florida legislature to provide the parent of a public school student, who was subjected to an eligible incident, an opportunity to exercise one of the following options. If you choose to apply for one, follow the steps below:

- To transfer the student to another Broward County Public School (BCPS) with capacity, within 15 school days from the date of this letter, email this 2-page form (the State's Hope Scholarship Notification Form and Hope Scholarship Initial Notification Form) to [schoolchoice@browardschools.com](mailto:schoolchoice@browardschools.com). Upon receipt, the Office of School Choice will provide a link to complete the BCPS online Hope Scholarship Application. Should you have specific questions related to the District transfer, please contact the Office of School Choice at 754-321-2480 or visit <https://www.browardschools.com/schoolchoice>.  
*Note: The District does not provide public school Hope Scholarship Program students transportation.*
- To apply for funding to attend an eligible private school or to apply for the \$750 transportation scholarship for a public school enrollment outside the BCPS District, please visit the [Scholarship Funding Organizations website](#) or [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org). Parents are required to inform the school district when withdrawing a student to attend a private school under this program.
- To apply to a charter school, please contact the individual charter school for their application process. Charter schools manage their own application and registration processes.

The safety and security of students and staff remains the priority of Broward County Public Schools. Please contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Principal

Mail the original, retain a copy. Date of mailing: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Current School: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This correspondence serves as formal notice that an investigation will be conducted into a complaint that your child committed a Hope Scholarship Program eligible incident. The alleged incident is checked below:

Bullying (ZA)	Harassment (HA)	Threat or Intimidation (A6, A7)	Hazing (ZT)	Robbery (R2, R4)
Fighting (F1, F2)	Aggravated Battery (23)	Physical Attack (PA)	Kidnapping (K1)	
Sexual Harassment (50)	Sexual Assault (S2)	Sexual Battery (S1)	Sexual Offenses-Other (56)	

A thorough and fair investigation will be conducted and completed within fifteen (15) school days to determine if the allegation can be substantiated. If founded, your child will receive consequences in accordance with Policy 5.8: Code of Student Conduct and the Discipline Matrix.

The safety and security of students, staff, and visitors remains the priority of Broward County Public Schools. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Principal

Retain a copy, mail the original. Date mailed: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Hope Scholarship Program Frequently Asked Questions

Adapted from the [Florida Department of Education's FAQ](#) and the [BCPS School of Choice Hope webpage](#).

## What is the Hope Scholarship Program?

- The Hope Scholarship Program is a state of Florida school choice program.
- The Hope Scholarship Program was established by the Florida legislature to provide parents of public school students (K-12), who allege they were victims of one of the 13 qualifying incidents, the opportunity to 1) transfer his/her child to another public school with capacity, 2) request a scholarship for the student to enroll in and attend an eligible private school, or 3) apply for a \$750 transportation scholarship to a public school outside of the BCPS District.
- The District does not provide public school Hope Scholarship Program students with transportation.

## Who is eligible for the Hope Scholarship Program?

- Any BCPS student who reports they were the victim of a qualified incident at a K-12 public school or event.
- Qualifying incidents must be reported during the same school year in which they occurred.

## What are the qualifying incidents for the Hope Scholarship Program?

- There are 13 qualifying incidents defined in Rule 6A-1.0017 SESIR.
- A qualifying incident must have taken place at a K-12 public school, any school related or school-sponsored program or activity, riding the bus, or waiting at the bus stop during the same school year.
- Below is the list of qualifying incidents along with each's corresponding BCPS code:

	State Qualifying Incidents	Corresponding BCPS Incident Codes	Corresponding BCPS Incident Types
1	Battery	23	Battery Serious
2	Hazing	ZT	Hazing (Grades 6-12)
3	Kidnapping	K1	Kidnapping or Abduction
4	Physical Attack	PA	Physical Attack
5	Robbery	R2	Robbery or Attempted Robbery
		R4	Robbery (Armed) or Attempted Armed Robbery
6	Sexual Assault	S2	Sexual Assault /Threat
7	Sexual Battery	S1	Sexual Battery/Rape (Actual or Attempted)
8	Sexual Offenses	56	Sexual Misconduct and/or Indecent Exposure
9	Threat/Intimidation	A6	Assault/Threat - High
		A7	Assault/Threat - Serious
10	Bullying	ZA	Bullying
11	Fighting	F2	Fighting - Medium
		F1	Fighting – Major (Mutual Combat)
12	Harassment	HA	Harassment
13	Sexual Harassment	50	Sexual Harassment

## How do I apply for Hope?

- **Step #1:** To begin the Hope Scholarship application process, a parent must contact the student's school and report the alleged Hope eligible incident to the Principal. Then the Principal will begin an investigation into the incident and complete it within 15 school days.

- **Step #2:** Within 24 hours of the report, the parent will be mailed or provided the signed original 2-page Hope Scholarship Initial Notification Form. This form contains directions on how to apply for Hope.
  - To apply for transfer to a school within BCPS, a parent will submit the completed 2-page Hope Scholarship Initial Notification Form to the Office of School Choice. The Office of School Choice will then provide the parent a link to an application. Note: The District does not provide public school Hope Scholarship Program students with transportation.
  - To apply for a private school or transportation funding to another public school district, parents will contact and submit the form to the nonprofit Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO) [Step Up for Students](#). The SFO is responsible for determining eligibility and awarding funding. The scholarship is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and is contingent upon available funds.
- Parents choosing to apply for Hope are to do so within 15 days and must notify their home school if they choose to go to a private school.
- If no action is taken by the parent, the home school will assume the student will remain.

**How long does it take to receive a scholarship?**

- Once the parent has completed the application and returned it to the Office of School Choice, the Office of School Choice will process the application within 48 hours of receipt.
- When applying for private scholarship funding, the SFO is responsible for determining eligibility and awarding funding.

**What if the BCPS school I want is not on the Hope Application?**

- The only schools available are the ones on the application. The schools are chosen based on capacity.

**What do I do if my child is in elementary school, but I want to choose the Hope transfer based on where they will go in high school?**

- The below table demonstrates that school progression is based on feeder tracks. Once a track is chosen, the student remains on that track and may not deviate other than to return to their boundary home school.

HOPE Scholarship Feeder Pattern		
Elementary Schools	Middle School	High Schools
Banyan Elementary	Westpine Middle	Piper High
Mary Bethune Elementary	Attucks Middle	Hollywood Hills High
Broward Estates Elementary	Parkway Middle	Dillard High
Colbert Elementary	McNicol Middle	Hallandale High
Greenwood Elementary	Greenwood Middle	Plantation High
Lauderhill P. T. Elementary	Lauderhill Middle	Boyd Anderson High
Morrow Elementary	Silver Lakes Middle	Coconut Creek High
North Fork Elementary	Parkway Middle	Stranahan High
Oakland Park Elementary	James Rickards Middle	Northeast High
Sunset Lakes Elementary	Glades Middle	Everglades High

**If I get the Hope Scholarship, how long will it last?**

- Once a child receives the Hope Scholarship, the child will be permitted to matriculate to the next school level in the identified feeder pattern on the Hope Scholarship application. Reapplication to attend the next school year or level is not necessary.

- A Hope scholarship shall remain in force until the student returns to public school from private school or graduates from high school, whichever occurs first. If a student chooses to leave the public school they transferred to as part of Hope, they will return to the BCPS school determined by their home address.

### **Can the scholarship be forfeited?**

- The scholarship is forfeited when a parent enrolls the student in a public school or the student is enrolled in a DJJ commitment program.
- The student is not eligible for scholarship while he or she is:
  - Receiving a Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, Gardiner Scholarship or McKay Scholarship.
  - Participating in a home education program.
  - Participating in a private tutoring program pursuant to section 1002.43, F.S.
  - Participating in a virtual school, correspondence school, or distance learning program that receives state funding unless the participation is limited to no more than two courses per year.
  - Enrolled in the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind.

### **What is the average scholarship amount if I choose the private school option?**

- Grades K-5 \$6,519.00
- Grades 6-8 \$6,815.00
- Grades 9-12 \$7,112.00

### **Where can I find a list of eligible private schools?**

- The Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice maintains a [directory of private schools](#).

### **My child needs a new school, but is not eligible. What are my options?**

- If the alleged incident involving a student is not to be an eligible Hope Scholarship incident, the School Choice, [School Board policy 5004.1](#), provides parents with the option to apply to a school other than their assigned school during an open application window. Go to the [BCPS School of Choice Hope webpage](#) to learn more.
- Parents always have the option to apply to a Charter school. Charter schools manage their own application and registration processes and are to be contacted directly.

### **Where can I find more information about the Hope Scholarship Program?**

- The [Florida Department of Education's Hope FAQ](#) webpage and the [SFO websites](#).
- The [BCPS School of Choice Hope webpage](#).
- Section 1002.40, F.S.
- Rule 6A.6-0951, F.A.C.



The Bullying Management System (BMS) will become the Hope Management System (HMS). Until then, BCPS administrators access forms in the [DMS SharePoint](#) and Charter administrators in the [SharePoint Charter Hub](#).

### STUDENT ACCUSED OF BULLYING

Complaint can be received orally, anonymously, or in writing. Staff make referrals via the BMS/HMS.

#### PRINCIPAL OR ID INVESTIGATES

- Within 24 hours, mail both parties (accused, alleged victim) their original initial notification forms. Retain copies for your records.
- Alleged student victims are eligible for the Hope Scholarship and receive a 2-page Student Victim Hope Notification Form found in the BMS/HMS. Hope application details are within this form.



- Within 48 hours, interview the accused and alleged victim separately.
- Within 15 school days of complaint receipt:
  - Complete all bystander interviews individually.
  - All complaints are Formal unless a written request for Informal is made by both parties in writing during individual interviews.
  - Make a determination and document the investigation finding in the BMS/HMS.
  - Mail both parties the Final Student & Staff Bullying Notification Form containing the findings and appeal processes.
  - Scan and upload all statements and investigative documents into the BMS/HMS.
- If founded, a DMS referral will be generated by the BMS/HMS to the administrator's referral queue. Access it to complete the accused's DMS consequences.

### STAFF ACCUSED OF BULLYING

All complaints are investigated, but anonymous complaints must be corroborated for disciplinary action.

#### ACCUSED IS NON-INSTRUCTIONAL

The immediate supervisor of the accused conducts the investigation.

#### ACCUSED IS INSTRUCTIONAL OR PRINCIPAL

The immediate supervisor of the accused (if instructional) or OSPA (if principal) conducts the investigation.



- Within 24 hours mail both parties (accused, alleged victim) their original initial notification forms. Retain copies for your records.
- Alleged student victims are eligible for the Hope Scholarship and receive a 2-page Student Victim Hope Notification Form found in the BMS/HMS. Hope application details are within this form.
- Enter the investigation into the BMS/HMS as Formal.
- All interviews are to be conducted separately.
- Complete the investigation within 15 work days of complaint receipt.
- Mail both parties the Final Student & Staff Bullying Notification Form containing the findings and appeal processes.
- If founded, staff disciplinary consequences, and/or appropriate interventions will be instituted in accordance with District policies, procedures, and agreements; certified educators may also receive sanction(s) against state issued certificates.

#### Please Note:

- The Investigative Designee (ID) must be an administrator.
- No matter what the determination, referring staff and the ID will monitor and follow up with all parties regularly. The ID will communicate investigation progress with the alleged victim's family at minimum every other day during the investigation.
- The bullying investigation does not supplant all other investigative processes (i.e., threat assessment, child abuse, criminal), but with alleged student victims, a referral for external investigation does not remove the responsibility of the ID to complete the bullying investigation and make a determination within fifteen (15) days of complaint receipt.
- "Days" refers to school days for student accused, work days for staff accused.
- During the individual interviews, if both parties request in writing the complaint be handled as Informal, the administrator may do so. The administrator will enter it into the BMS/HMS, upload the written requests, and no finding will be made. If the resolution is unsuccessful, switch to Formal in the BMS/HMS and complete the investigation with a determination.
- BMS = Bullying Management System, DMS = Discipline Management System, HMS = Hope Management System
- Questions related to sexual harassment, discrimination and/or bullying based on a protected category listed in Federal and State Laws, Local Regulations and/or School Board Policy 4001.1, are directed to Department of EEO/ADA Compliance.
- Questions related to student accused are to be directed to School Climate & Discipline Department.
- Questions related to staff accused are to be directed to Office of School Performance and Accountability (OSPA).
- Questions related to threat assessment are to be directed to Psychological Services Department.

DATE:

TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT: **Notice of Bullying and/or Harassment Complaint**

This correspondence is provided as formal notice that a bullying and/or harassment incident has been reported in violation of School Board Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9. It is alleged that:

\_\_\_\_\_ You are the victim of this incident.

\_\_\_\_\_ You are accused of committing this Policy violation.

Please consider this your three-day notice for a pre-disciplinary meeting. You are to report to \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of giving a statement and providing any information that is relevant. You have the right to representation through all phases of this investigation. If you desire representation, it is your responsibility to notify your representative of this meeting. Know and understand this investigation could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The safety and security of students, staff, and visitors remains the priority of Broward County Public Schools. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Principal

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*My signature evidences receipt of this correspondence:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign Name\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Retain a copy, provide or mail the original. Date provided/mailed: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Guardian or staff name

Address line 1

Address line 2

Student Name:

Student's Current School:

SUBJECT: Allegation Findings

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The investigation of the alleged violation of School Board Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9, involving you or your child has been completed. Staff previously furnished a copy of the complaint, should not disseminate this report to the public and/or media since it may contain protected information. After careful review, the following determination has been made.

**ALLEGED VICTIM**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Student:** Sufficient factual basis exists to establish the validity of the allegation. Consequences will be issued in accordance with Policy 5.8: Code of Student Conduct and the Discipline Matrix.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Student:** Sufficient factual basis does not exist to establish the validity of the allegation or the incident occurred off school grounds. School districts are not allowed to sanction off campus incidents unless it can be proved the behavior substantially interfered with the student's educational performance or the orderly operation of the school. If the allegation was regarding bullying/harassment, you have the right to appeal within 5 school days using the process outlined in Section X of Policy 5.8: Code of Student Conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Employee:** Sufficient factual basis exists to establish the validity of the allegation and to recommend that the Superintendent take disciplinary action regarding this incident. It should be noted that employees may have due process rights regarding this matter.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Employee:** Sufficient factual basis does not exist to establish the validity of the allegation or the incident occurred off school grounds. School districts are not allowed to sanction off campus incidents unless it can be proved the behavior substantially interfered with the professionals' ability to perform their job or the orderly operation of the school. If the allegation was regarding bullying/harassment, you have the right to appeal within 5 school days using the process outlined in Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9, and the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**ACCUSED**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Student:** Sufficient factual basis exists to establish the validity of the allegation. Consequences will be issued in accordance with Policy 5.8: Code of Student Conduct and the Discipline Matrix. You have the right to appeal this decision within 5 school days. The process to appeal a Code of Student Conduct violation is detailed in Section X of said policy.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Student:** Sufficient factual basis does not exist to establish the validity of the allegation or the incident occurred off school grounds. School districts are not allowed to sanction off campus incidents unless it can be proved the behavior substantially interfered with the student's educational performance or the orderly operation of school.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Employee:** Sufficient factual basis exists to establish the validity of the allegation and to recommend that the Superintendent take disciplinary action regarding the incident. You will be notified soon of any action that may be taken. You have the right to appeal this decision as detailed in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Your written request to appeal must be given within the timeframe outlined in the agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Employee:** Sufficient factual basis does not exist to establish the validity of the allegation or it is not sanctionable by the school.

The safety and security of students and staff remains the priority of Broward County Public Schools. Please contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

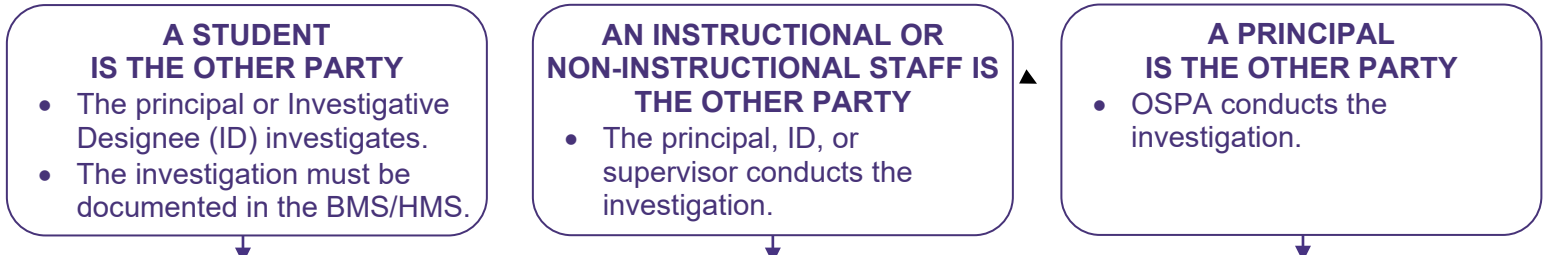
Sincerely,

Principal

Mail the original, retain a copy. Date of mailing: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**ADULT NON-STAFF ACCUSED OF OR BEING A VICTIM OF BULLYING/HARASSMENT**

- All complaints are investigated.
- Complaints can be received orally or in writing.
- The Bullying Management System (BMS) will become the Hope Management System (HMS). At that time, it will not only track all bullying and harassment allegations, but also all Hope eligible incidents. Until then, BCPS administrators access forms within the [DMS SharePoint](#) or the DMS landing page via BASIS. Charter administrator may access forms within the [SharePoint Charter Hub](#).



- Complaints must be handled as Formal (not Informal).
  - Within 24 hours both parties are mailed the initial notification letters. Alleged student victims are eligible for the Hope Scholarship and receive a 2-page Student Victim Hope Notification Form found in the BMS/HMS. Hope application details are within this form. Retain a copy for your records.
- All interviews will be conducted separately.
- Complete the investigation within 15 days of complaint receipt and mail both parties the Final Notification Letters containing findings.
- If founded:
  - Staff or student disciplinary consequences, and/or appropriate interventions will be instituted in accordance with District policies, procedures, and agreements.
  - Visitors, volunteers, or parent/guardians accused shall receive consequences and/or appropriate interventions in accordance with District policies and procedures after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act. This may include reports to appropriate law enforcement officials. Consequences should be graduated, natural and logical in nature with the goal of protecting the victim from any further abuse. For example, restrictions may include methods or frequency of access to the victim and/or methods or frequency of access to the campus.

**Please Note:**

- The Investigative Designee (ID) must be an administrator.
- If there is a case creating extraordinary operational issues, refer it to the Special Investigative Unit for investigation. No matter what the determination, referring staff and the ID will monitor and follow up with all parties regularly. The ID will communicate investigation progress with the alleged victim at minimum every other day during the investigation.
- The bullying investigation does not supplant all other investigative processes (i.e., threat assessment, child abuse, criminal), but with alleged student victims, a referral for external investigation does not remove the responsibility of the ID to complete the bullying investigation and make a determination within fifteen (15) days of complaint receipt.
- “Days” refers to school days for student accused, work days for staff accused.
- Questions related to sexual harassment, discrimination and/or bullying based on a protected category listed in Federal and State Laws, Local Regulations and/or School Board Policy 4001.1, are directed to Department of EEO/ADA Compliance.
- Questions related to student accused are to be directed to the School Climate & Discipline Department.
- Questions related to staff accused are to be directed to the Office of School Performance and Accountability (OSPA).
- Questions related to threat assessment are to be directed to the Psychological Services Department.



## BULLYING/HARASSMENT INITIAL NOTIFICATION FORM

### ADULT NON-STAFF ALLEGED VICTIM OR ACCUSED

Date

Adult Non-Staff Name

Address line 1

Address line 2

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This correspondence is provided as formal notice that a bullying and/or harassment incident has been reported, in violation of School Board Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9. It is alleged that:

\_\_\_\_\_ You are the victim of this incident.

\_\_\_\_\_ You are the perpetrator of this incident.

A thorough and fair investigation will be conducted and completed within fifteen (15) school days to determine if the allegation can be substantiated.

The safety and security of students, staff, and visitors remains the priority of Broward County Public Schools. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Principal

Retain a copy, mail the original. Date mailed: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## BULLYING/HARASSMENT FINAL NOTIFICATION FORM ADULT NON-STAFF ALLEGED VICTIM OR ACCUSED

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Adult Non-Staff Name  
Address line 1  
Address line 2

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The investigation of the bullying and/or harassment complaint alleging a violation of School Board Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9, involving yourself has been completed. After careful review, the following determination has been made.

### ALLEGED VICTIM

\_\_\_\_\_ Sufficient factual basis exists to establish the validity of the allegation. Consequences will be issued in accordance with all policies, bargaining agreements and contracts, as appropriate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sufficient factual basis does not exist to establish the validity of the allegation or the incident occurred off school grounds. School districts are not allowed to sanction off campus incidents unless it can be proved the behavior substantially interfered with the orderly operation of the school.

### ACCUSED

\_\_\_\_\_ Sufficient factual basis exists to establish the validity of the allegation. Any necessary appropriate safeguards will be put in place to prevent any further violations of Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sufficient factual basis does not exist to establish the validity of the allegation or it is not sanctionable by the school.

The safety and security of students and staff remains the priority of Broward County Public Schools. Please contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Principal

Retain a copy, mail the original. Date mailed: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Broward County Public Schools Disciplinary Appeals Flowchart

STUDENT ACCUSED APPEALS	STAFF ACCUSED APPEALS		
	ACCUSED IS NON-INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF	ACCUSED IS INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF	ACCUSED IS PRINCIPAL OR ADMINISTRATOR
<b>Level 1 Appeal:</b> School Principal	<b>Level 1 Appeal:</b> District based - employee's supervisor School based - principal	<b>Level 1 Appeal:</b> District based - employee's supervisor School based - principal	<b>Level 1 Appeal:</b> District based - SLT Leader School based principal OSPA
<b>Level 2 Appeal:</b> OSQ	<b>Level 2 Appeal:</b> District based - SLT Leader School based - OSPA	<b>Level 2 Appeal:</b> District based - SLT Leader School based - OSPA	<b>Final Determination Level 2 Appeal:</b> Chief of Staff/designee Director of Talent Acquisition & Operations for Non-Instructional
<b>Final Determination Level 3 Appeal:</b> The Superintendent/designee Chief Student Support Initiatives & Recovery	<b>Final Determination Level 3 Appeal:</b> Chief of Staff /designee Director of Talent Acquisition & Operations for Non-Instructional	<b>Final Determination Level 3 Appeal:</b> Chief of Staff/designee Director of Talent Acquisition & Operations for Instructional	

### FOR ALL APPEALS REGARDLESS OF ACCUSED BEING STAFF OR STUDENT

- All appeals will be made by the appealing party in writing within 5 school days.
- Investigations will be completed within 5 school days from receipt of the appeal at all appeal levels.
- The appealing party will be notified in writing of the appeal results by the investigating party after the investigation is completed.
- Although the Superintendent and Chief of Staff may designate staff to conduct the appeal, the request for appeal should be given to the Superintendent and Chief of Staff, respectively, not the designees.
- With staff appeals, if at any point during the appeal the accused initiates arbitration or grievance procedures, the appeals process is supplanted.
- Employees or students wishing to file a complaint of sexual harassment, discrimination and/or bullying based on a protected category listed in Federal and State Laws, Local Regulations and/or School Board Policy 4001.1, are to be referred to the Department of EEO/ADA Compliance.

**KEY:** OSPA = Office of School Performance & Accountability, OSQ = Office of Service Quality,  
SLT = Senior Leadership Team

**SAMPLE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 5.9, INITIAL NOTIFICATION LETTER  
 FOR STUDENT VICTIM ALLEGING BULLYING/HARASSMENT  
 APPEAL - LEVEL #1, PRINCIPAL  
 (USE LOCATION LETTERHEAD)**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To the Parents of: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This correspondence is provided as formal notice that your appeal regarding the violation of School Board Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9, has been received.

A careful review will be conducted to determine if sufficient factual evidence exists to overturn or amend the decision.

The safety and security of students remains our priority. Please contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, Principal  
 \_\_\_\_\_ School

Cc: \_\_\_\_\_, Office of School Performance & Accountability

Date of mailing: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sign Name Print Name



**SAMPLE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 5.9, FINDINGS NOTIFICATION  
LETTER FOR A STUDENT ACCUSED OF BULLYING/HARASSMENT:  
APPEAL - LEVEL #1, PRINCIPAL  
(USE LOCATION LETTERHEAD)**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To the Parents of:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The appeal investigation of the alleged bullying and/or harassment incident violating School Board Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9, involving your child has been completed.

After careful review, it has been determined that \_\_\_\_\_ **(PICK EITHER: insufficient OR sufficient)** factual evidence exists to overturn or amend the decision previously made. The Code of Student Conduct consequence will \_\_\_\_\_ **(PICK EITHER: be expunged, be amended, OR remain issued)**.

**(IF YOU DETERMINE “INSUFFICIENT” “TO OVERTURN” INCLUDE THIS SECOND PARAGRAPH :)**

You have the right to appeal this decision within 5 school days. The process of appeal for all Code of Student Conduct violations is detailed in Section X, of said policy.

The safety and security of students remains our priority. Please contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, Principal  
\_\_\_\_\_ School

Cc: \_\_\_\_\_, Office of School Performance & Accountability

Date of mailing: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign Name

Print Name

## BULLYING/HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM

To file a complaint relating to an incident of alleged bullying (for the purpose of this form, bullying encompasses bullying, harassment, and discrimination,) please complete this form as fully and accurately as possible and turn it in to the appropriate District Department Administrator or school Principal/Investigative Designee.

If you would like to report this information anonymously, please note so under "COMPLAINANT NAME." Other options are to call the Silence Hurts Tipline at (754) 321-0911, email to school911@browardschools.com, text to CRIMES 274637 (message must begin with SBBC,) fill it in online at [www.broward.k12.fl.us/siu/siunew/tipsemail.asp](http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/siu/siunew/tipsemail.asp).

<b>DATE COMPLAINT MADE:</b>	<b>COMPLAINANT NAME</b> (if ANONYMOUS, write "Anonymous" here):		
<b>VICTIM OF BULLYING NAME:</b>	<b>HOME SCHOOL/DEPT. OF TARGET:</b>	<b>SEX:</b>	<b>GRADE:</b>
<b>ACCUSED NAME:</b>	<b>HOME SCHOOL/DEPT. OF ACCUSED:</b>	<b>SEX:</b>	<b>GRADE:</b>
<b>SCHOOL SITE /DEPARTMENT WHERE INCIDENT OCCURRED:</b>			<b>INCIDENT DATE:</b>
<b>FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:</b>	<b>COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY:</b>		
<b>DATE COMPLAINT RECEIVED:</b>	<b>INVESTIGATIVE DESIGNEE/ADMINISTRATOR COMPLAINT REFERRED TO:</b>		

Where did the incident(s) occur?

When did the incident(s) occur? Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Time(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe, in as much detail as possible, what happened.

Do you know any of the witnesses involved? If so, please provide as much detail as possible about these people.

List evidence of bullying if any and attach if possible (i.e. letters, photos, etc.)

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you. If you fear a student is in IMMEDIATE danger, call 911 immediately.*

## BULLYING/HARASSMENT WITNESS STATEMENT FORM

Use this form when there is a witness to an incident of alleged bullying (for the purpose of this form, bullying encompasses bullying, harassment, and discrimination). One form must be completed for each witness. All witness statements must be uploaded into the Bullying Management System (BMS) and attached to the Bullying Complaint Report Form. Witnesses are to be interviewed separately.

<b>DATE WITNESS STATEMENT COMPLETED:</b>	<b>NAME &amp; TITLE OF PERSON TAKING STATEMENT:</b>
<b>WITNESS NAME</b> (last, first, middle):	<b>WITNESS TITLE/ROLE</b> (ex. Parent, Student, or Teacher):
<b>TARGET NAME</b> (last, first):	<b>ACCUSED NAME</b> (last, first):
<b>SCHOOL SITE /DEPARTMENT WHERE INCIDENT OCCURRED:</b>	<b>INCIDENT DATE:</b>

Describe where the incident took place:

Describe when the incident occurred:

Describe, in as much detail as possible, the incident witnessed including any affects the incident had on the parties involved:

List any other witness names and grades:

List evidence of bullying (i.e. letters, photos, etc. – attach evidence if possible):

*I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.*

Signature of witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Sample Scenario RIP Worksheet

**Statements are taken, here is the consolidated version:** Jim (a preschool boy) goes over to the corner where Sally and Melanie are playing with a group of girls on a pile of pillows. He growls at them, puts his face very close to theirs and grimaces. They scream and grab the pillows around them. Jim tells them to share the pillows. He then lies down on top all the pillows while the girls say, “we had them first”. Jim does not respond, and the girls move

away. Jim then moves from the pillows and gets a piece of string. He follows the girls, grabs Sally and puts the string around her neck and pulls it tight. Sally cries. A member of staff comes over and tells Jim, “I told you yesterday to leave the girls alone, go play with Ian”. Jim turns to Sally and says, “cry baby”. As he leaves, Jim pulls Melanie’s hair.

Parties Involved/Statements	R	I	P
<b>Complainant:</b> C1= Joe Smith (Target’s father) (complainant and target’s statements match)			
<b>Target:</b> T1= Sally T2 = Melanie	✓ T1 and T2: 5/4/18 And 5/3/18	✓ T1 “I’m afraid of him”, unable to defend self physically  ✓ T2 “he won’t leave me alone”	✓ T1 “I said stop” 5/3, Cried 5/4  ✓ T2 “it hurts when he pulls my hair so hard”
<b>Accused:</b> A1 = Jim			
<b>Witness:</b> W1 = Ian W2 = Jane W3 = Mrs. Woodruff (teacher)	✓ W2 “Jim called Sally a cry baby when she started crying”  ✓ W3 “I corrected him before and he continues to do it”	✓ W2 “he calls us names (ugly, stupid)”  ✓ W3 “I corrected him before and he continues to do it”	✓ W1 “I heard the girls scream and saw them crying”  ✓ W3 “I corrected him before and he continues to do it”
<b>Other:</b>		✓ Even after corrected by staff on 5/4, pulled hair of child.	✓ String left a mark around neck  ✓ Girls moved away, but he continues to pursue.

# RIP Worksheet

Parties Involved/Statements	R Repeated, more than 1x	I Imbalance of Power	P Purposeful, intend harm
<b>Complainant:</b>			
<b>Target:</b>			
<b>Accused:</b>			
<b>Witness:</b>			
<b>Other:</b>			



# Bullying/Harassment Complaint Investigation Checklist

This form is an optional tool to be used by Investigative Designees (who are administrators) during the bullying/harassment investigation process. It is not to be used in place of the Bullying Management System (BMS) where all documentation must be entered and uploaded.

Name of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

## Complaint Received

Date complaint received: \_\_\_\_\_ Determination deadline date (15 work/school days from receipt): \_\_\_\_\_

Format of complaint (written, telephone, e-mail): \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Complainant(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Target(s): \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Accused: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of allegations: \_\_\_\_\_

## Check all that apply:

Determination was made if the complaint warranted immediate action, such as police contact, parent contact, website contact to disable online post, crisis counselor intervention, Child Abuse Hotline, or other intervention. List any action(s) taken and person(s) contacted (include date, time and contact information): \_\_\_\_\_

Within 24 hours of complaint receipt, each party (alleged target and accused) was notified in writing of the complaint using the notification forms found in the [DMS SharePoint](#).

## Investigation Completed

Within 48 hours of receipt of the complaint, the target(s) and accused were interviewed separately using open-ended questions to enable students/employees to describe what happened in their own words. Bystanders were interviewed within 15 days of receipt of the complaint.

During the interviews, were all parties instructed not to post or speak about the other parties and/or this complaint?

List the names of all parties present during the alleged event and dates interviewed:

• Target Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

• Accused Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

• Witness #1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

• Witness #2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

• Witness #3 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

For this complaint, was there any evidence available – direct or indirect? \_\_\_\_\_

- List any similar incidents chronologically, related to the same target and/or accused. Ensure each person present was interviewed.

Incident #1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident #2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

- Put the complaint incident, along with any other events, into a timeline.

- Determined the impact of alleged bullying actions on the target’s feelings, physical well-being, and ability to receive an education. Evidence of impact (injury, changes in behavior like route to and from school, stated feelings during interview, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

- Kept all parties (accused, target and their parents) informed at least every other day on the investigation progress.
- Confirmed and spoke to any teachers who were witnesses, ensuring they took any necessary steps to intervene.
- Collected and attached any written and/or technological evidence related to the complaint. (Be mindful of student privacy rights in collecting and contact general counsel and/or SIU to determine whether a search and seizure of student property is warranted under the circumstances. Never collect/possess sexting images of minors.)

### Determination Made and Interventions Provided

List the factors below that can be reviewed if appealed, to show how your determination was made. Detail how the evidence shows the criteria did or did not meet the R (Repeated), I (Imbalance of Power), and P (Purposeful – intent to do harm) criteria for bullying. List why or why not below along with sources of determination (statement, photo, etc.):

Repeated (dates, actions): \_\_\_\_\_

Imbalance of Power (statements, facts, perceptions, limitations, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Purposeful (any reasonable person, directive to stop, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

If incident was off-campus - did the off-campus conduct cause any disruption on campus?      YES      NO      N/A

If yes, describe the level of disruption, was it substantial? \_\_\_\_\_

Determination made:

- “Substantiated”: All 3 RIP criteria were met and entered into BMS. Completed the discipline in DMS.
- “Unsubstantiated”: At least 1 of the 3 RIP criteria were not met.
- "Off Campus Founded, But Not Sanctionable": Met the RIP criteria, but occurred off school grounds and did not reach the threshold of substantially disrupting the education process of a student or the orderly operation of a school.
- Determination not made – both parties requested in writing that the complaint be handled “Informally”.
- Within 15 days of receipt of complaint, the parent(s) of the target and the accused were notified in writing as to the determination, along with their right to appeal.
- All complaint information, any applicable documents, determination, as well as any interventions were entered, scanned and uploaded into the BMS.



## Effective Interviewing During Bullying/Harassment Investigations

### Prior to Interviewing

- Plan the order of interviews, generally interviewing the target first, then witness, then the offender.
- Our goal will be go interview them to gain answers to the questions, Who? What? When? Where? and Why? These questions will assist in determining whether the incident(s) meet the RIP (repeated, imbalance of power, and purposeful intent to do harm) bullying criteria. Design the interviews to collect and evaluate the facts including the:
  - Description of incident(s) including nature of the behavior (physical hurt or psychological distress), context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred, etc.;
  - How often the conduct occurred and whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
  - The relationship between the parties involved;
  - The characteristics of parties involved (i.e., grade, age, etc.);
  - The identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying and/or harassing behavior;
  - Where the alleged incident(s) occurred;
  - Whether and how the conduct adversely affected the student including the student's education or educational environment;
  - Whether the alleged victim felt or perceived an imbalance of power because of the reported incident and/or his/her ability to stop the abuse.
- Always conduct interviews individually and as privately as possible. Students often fear retaliation.
- Always get written and signed statements from all parties.
- Every allegation is to be entered into the BMS (Bullying Management System) whether it is founded or not. Upload all documentation into the system where you will find the notification letters. Only staff on staff complaints are not to be entered into the BMS and those forms are in Diversity, Prevention & Intervention's (DPI) SharePoint.

### During interview with all parties

Use open ended questions where "yes" or "no" answers are not possible. Those more direct questions are used for elaboration or confirmation. Open ended questions will encourage a narrative response by starting questions with "What...?" "What about...?" "How...?"

- Start with broad questions: Are you happy with the atmosphere in your class? Who are your friends? How do students in your class get along? How do they treat each other? Who is the most popular student? Who is the least popular? How do you know? Have you ever seen people treated in ways that are unkind? Who? How? What did that look like?
- Then move into specific allegation questions: Are you being treated unkindly/bullied in any way? (If the answer is yes, gather details and reassure the pupil that the problem will be addressed.) Is there anyone in the class being picked on or having a hard time? Is anyone being left out, or ignored? Is there anyone spreading rumors or gossip, or using notes, phone calls or text messages to make others feel bad about themselves? Is anyone being unfair to others? Is there a group of pupils making life difficult for others? Are pupils from other classes giving anyone in this class a hard time? Can you give examples? Who do you think is causing the problem? What can you do to help students who are having a hard time? Have you been bullying anyone? Did anything unusual happen on Monday?
- Continue to focus questions until the interviewee hones in on the specifics of the incident and can fill in details. Work toward a chronological timeline of events from the interviewee's perspective.
- Focus on the senses – what did it look like, sound like, feel like?
- Repeat the same questions with each student to help confirm accounts and/or find discrepancies.
- Use leading questions if a student is uncooperative and to confirm facts that already known. By answering a well-designed leading question, the subject is confirming by answering the question. Example: "When you confronted Lisa in the bathroom, what did she say?"
- The goal of each interview is to reconstruct the circumstances of the events alleged. Ask details such as room positioning, condition of the area, and tell them to not leave out any details regardless of how small they may seem.
- Have the student recall the events in a different order. Have each subject describe event backward or from a point in the middle. This is a useful tool in determining subject's truthfulness or if the subject is exaggerating since it is almost impossible to tell stories repeatedly out of sequence.
- Use change of perspective by asking subjects to change roles with another person in the incident, consider what he or she might have seen.



## Interviewing complainant and/or target

Safety is the priority and all threat assessment protocols and mandated reporting procedures remain in place and are to be followed.

- Begin with the broad questions listed above and then become more specific:
  - What occurred?
  - When (include the date, appropriate time period involved)?
  - Where did it happen?
  - How did it happen?
  - Who did or said what? In what order? Was anything else said or done?
  - If there was physical contact, describe the contact in detail. Demonstrate the physical contact.
  - How did you respond?
  - Have you ever reported this incident before? If so, to whom? When? Response?
  - Did you discuss the incident(s) with anyone? If so, who? Where? When? What was said?
  - Are you aware of any other incident(s) involving this person? If so, who? What? Where? When?
  - Do you know why it happened?
  - What is your relationship with the respondent?
  - Why are you coming forward now?
  - Are there any notes, documents or other evidence to support your claims?
  - Were there any witnesses? Who was nearby? Within earshot?
  - Who else may have relevant information?
  - Was your school work affected? How?
  - How did the situation make you feel? How do you feel toward the target now?
  - What outcome would you like to see from this process?
- End by asking if there is any other information that we should be aware of. This is an opportunity for the interviewee to provide relevant information that you may have missed.
- Conclude by reminding all pupils about the school's anti-bullying policy. Thank them for their co-operation, and mention that you will be acting on the information you have received. Clearly explain that retaliation is not allowed against anyone. Tell them you are to be told of ANY further acts of aggression and that you (or assign another staff member) will act as their safe person they can go to whenever they are concerned or fearful.
- State they are not to discuss with other students or post about online at home anything related to this interview or investigation. Write this mandate at the bottom of their statement, have them review the statement for accuracy, and then sign it. If they are younger, have them review and sign your statement notes.

## Interviewing witnesses

Witness interviews should be non-accusatory, though some witnesses may eventually become offenders. If the witness gives short answers or lacks description, ask follow-up questions, Who? What? When? Where? and Why? Witnesses are key to successful investigations and can be used as objective confirmation when parties lie or it's a "he said, she said".

- Sample questions in addition to the broad ones listed above include: I am going to ask you some questions about a reported\_ (identify the kind of)\_\_ incident. Please answer the questions the best you can. We will keep your answers anonymous as much as possible.
  - Briefly, what happened?
  - Who was involved? Who was the aggressor? Who was targeted? What is the relationship between the parties involved?
  - What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel (physically)? (If applicable, what did you smell / taste?)
  - What did each person do and say?
  - Who was hurt? How was that person hurt? (Physically? Feelings? Something broken or damaged?) Was anyone else hurt in any way? Was anything else damaged or broken? Missing? Did you or anyone else miss school, classes or school work because of what happened?
  - What did you do after witnessing the incident or behavior? Did you say anything to the parties involved in response to what you witnessed? After the event, did you tell anyone about it?
  - How do you feel now?
  - Has this happened before?
  - Why do you think this happened?

- Do you have anything you can show or give to me about this incident? Any evidence? a. Examples: Notes, bruises, URL's, pictures, screen shots, etc.
- Who else should I talk to about this incident? Did anyone else see it happen? Who? Ask for the names of any other witnesses who could corroborate their version of events. Is there any tangible evidence that the witnesses could provide, such as notes or documents?
- Is there anything else you can or want to say about this incident?
- End by asking if there is any other information that we should be aware of. This is an opportunity for the interviewee to provide relevant information that you may have missed.
- Conclude by reminding all pupils about the school's anti-bullying policy. Thank them for their co-operation, and mention that you will be acting on the information you have received. Clearly explain that retaliation is not allowed against anyone, including those who may cooperate with the investigation.
- State they are not to discuss with other students or post about online at home anything related to this interview or investigation. Write this mandate at the bottom of their statement, have them review the statement for accuracy, and then sign it. If they are younger, have them review and sign your statement notes.

### Interviewing accused

Avoid labelling of the young person as a "Bully". Refer to the behavior rather than the person. Be calm, constructive, adopt a problem-solving approach, and allow enough time for the interview. Most young people respond to patience, and the opportunity to talk, rather than to pressure, anger, or impatience. Remain objective so the subject feels comfortable providing as much information as possible.

- Begin with the broad questions listed above and then become more specific.
  - There seems to be some difficulty between yourself and Mary. I am here to help resolve the situation. I need your co-operation to get it sorted out, and your contribution to the solution is going to be extremely important.
  - How do you get along with the other student/s?
  - Did you know one another before this incident took place? How long do you know one-another?
  - Is there a history to what happened, or did it come out of the blue?
  - Let's take a look at the incident, I need to understand your involvement. Can you help me fill in the details from your point of view? What happened?
  - When and where did it take place?
  - Who was involved? Was there more than one person involved on either side?
  - Who did or said what? In what order?
  - Were there any witnesses?
  - Did this take place more than once? Have you been involved in anything like this before? If so, who? What? Where? When?
  - Did you discuss the incident(s) with anyone prior to this interview? If so, who?
  - Are there any notes, documents, or other evidence to support your version of the facts?
- Encourage the young person to focus on taking responsibility for their own actions, rather than attributing blame to others or the group. Don't accept standard techniques for saving face such as "I was only messing", or "We were all doing it". Bypass these comments and ask the young person to talk about their specific role at the time. For example, ask: What did you actually say or do? How would someone else who witnessed the incident describe your actions? Would you do the same thing again, or act differently? What did you do wrong? Do you understand what was wrong about it? What is the problem about what you did? How do you feel about the situation?
- If allegations are denied, what motive would anyone have to make these allegations up? Where were you at the time alleged incidents occurred? Who witnessed your presence? Ask, is there any way someone may have gotten a false impression that they behaved improperly?
- Ask the tougher questions at the end of the interview. Once the accused is on the defensive it may limit their cooperation. You should also make sure they're fully aware of the allegation(s) against them and allow them an opportunity to respond.
- If needed, can begin using soft accusations where you don't ask if the subject did something, rather ask a broad question about the incident that assumes the subject's involvement. Example: "Sue, when was the first time you stole food from the cafeteria." Then follow up with a choice question, or some sort of "yes-no" question such as: "Have you been taking food from the cafeteria for a long time?"

- End by asking if there is any other information that we should be aware of. This is an opportunity for the interviewee to provide relevant information that you may have missed.
- Conclude by reminding all pupils about the school's anti-bullying policy. Thank them for their co-operation, and mention that you will be acting on the information you have received. Clearly explain that retaliation is not allowed against anyone, including those who may cooperate with the investigation.
- State they are not to discuss with other students or post about online at home anything related to this interview or investigation. Write this mandate at the bottom of their statement, have them review the statement for accuracy, and then sign it. If they are younger, have them review and sign your statement notes.

## Sample Student Safety Plan Ideas for Allegations of Bullying or Harassment

Our schools are dedicated to providing safe and secure learning environments that are free from harassment or bullying. Especially vulnerable students who have been the alleged targets of bullying or harassment may need special protection to ensure their emotional and physical safety is secure during investigations and/or after sanctions have been imposed on accused student(s).

These below sample intervention ideas are not intended to be exclusive or all-inclusive. Schools should design a Student Safety Plan that reflects their unique circumstances and resources. Plans do NOT replace, but can supplement threat assessment procedures, Code of Student Conduct consequences, IEPs, and/or Behavior Support Plans.

It is recommended that this Student Safety Plan be completed by the school's Principal or Investigative Designee (who must be an administrator) in partnership with the existing safety, discipline or student support team. The targeted student and a member of the targeted student's family should also be involved in the development of the plan. Once the plan has been developed by the team, the Principal or Investigative Designee will see that it is implemented with fidelity and shared with the student, family, and necessary school staff. The classroom teachers will leave a copy of the plan for any substitute teachers who visit.

All plans should involve some key components, 1) the actions school staff will engage in and the actions the student/family will engage in, 2) start and a proposed end dates, 3) a Safe Person who will be the targeted student's primary staff contact, and 4) content that covers the entire school day, from the time a student boards a bus in the morning until he/she departs the bus at the end of the day. Finally, the best Safety Plans are adaptable and carried out in a way which is minimally intrusive and does not violate the victim's privacy more than necessary with other staff or students.

### SAMPLE SAFETY PLAN

This plan is in place from \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, at which time it will be reviewed, revised or continued, if necessary.

#### School Staff:

- The administration will work collaboratively with the counselors, school resource officers, and student's teachers to increase monitoring.
- All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the students are not in classes together and do not come into contact with each other.
- If classes or seats need to be changed, aggressors who have had the allegations of bullying/harassment substantiated will be the ones to change.
- The student's Safe Person (the trusted staff member designated as the student 's primary point of contact) will be: \_\_\_\_\_.
- The methods and frequency of Safe Person contact are: \_\_\_\_\_.  
For example, the student will visit the school counselor (nurse/Principal/AP) each morning and at the end of the day on a daily basis (at an agreed upon time) for the first week to ensure that the plan is working. If the student does not visit this person at that time, the designated person will locate and check with the student. After the first week if the student agrees, the visits will become once a day, at the end of the school day. Visits will then be checked weekly and modified as the student and his/her family wishes.

- The administration will work collaboratively with the counselors, school resource officers, and student's teachers to increase monitoring. Necessary school staff to be appraised of the plan to ensure safety and compliance are: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Problematic school classroom, lunchroom, and/or passing times needing protection plans are: \_\_\_\_\_.

For example:

- Classroom teachers will keep the student and his/her aggressor separated in the classroom and during class activities.
- Our school security officer (or other appropriate staff member) will be visible in the hall and will monitor the student during all passing and lunch times.
- The bus driver will be instructed to intervene immediately and to report any bus incidents immediately to the Principal or Investigative Designee.
- The school will immediately report any harassing, intimidating or bullying behavior which it is made aware of to the student 's parents.
- In the classrooms in which the student comes into contact with the aggressor, the student will be provided a "seat buddy" to sit with them and support them during class. The student will be asked who they would like to sit next to and if unsure, the class's most kind and popular student who agrees will be assigned.
- The student has a "free pass" to leave class at any time to see his/her safe person for any concerns, assistance, or support.

#### **Targeted Student:**

- The student will not have face to face contact or online contact with the aggressor while this plan is in effect.
- The school counselor and the student will identify a friend or friends with whom he/she feels safe to sit next to or to be with during passing times.
- The student will report any breach of this plan to his/her parents, designated trusted adult, teacher, or other staff person immediately
- The student will also report any such behavior which occurs as a result of this plan off campus and/or outside of the regular school day.

#### **Parents/Family:**

- Parents and other family members agree to monitor and support the student and this Safety Plan, monitor the student's use of technologies, and contact the school if problems arise.
- Parents are welcome to contact the school at any time to check on the effectiveness of the plan.
- If the student or family request it, additional support can be provided by the Family Counseling Program and their trained trauma counselors.

#### **Student Found to have Bullied:**

- The accused will not approach or engage the student for any reason. If she/he approaches, the student is to go to the teacher and/or the closest adult immediately. This includes online contact.
- Intensive interventions, assessments, and behavior modification plans will be provided as requested needed.

**All Parties:** Will maintain confidentiality and not share any identifying information regarding the other students related to this incident. This includes discussing, posting or sharing confidential information about other students.