

# School Bullying: My Child is Being Bullied at School What Are My Rights? What Steps Should I Take?



## What is School Bullying?

Bullying is when one child in school causes mental or physical harm to another child in school from more than one incident, and the incidents create a threatening or abusive school environment. Bullying can be physical, verbal or online.

Bullying based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sex, LGBTQIA status, or English learner status may only need to happen one time to be considered bullying or harassment.

## What Steps Should I Take to Stop the Bullying?

- **TELL** your child's teacher and principal right away. **Write down** who you spoke to. Be sure to include the date, the time and a short summary of your conversation in your notes.
- Ask for a copy of the school's anti-bullying policy.
- **WRITE** a letter to your child's teacher, principal and the school superintendent. **Keep a copy** for your records. (Consider using: *'Bullying of my child' Letter and Instructions for Completion* or if your child has disabilities the *'Request for Meeting related to Bullying and my child's IEP/504 Plan' Letter*) Your letter should **include** the following:
  - **Ask** for an investigation. Give as many specific details as you can to help with the investigation.
  - **Ask** for a written response directly to you.
  - **Tell** your child's teacher, principal and school superintendent what you think will help resolve the situation.
- Meet with your child's teacher, principal, school superintendent to discuss findings of the investigation
- **MAKE** an individual Student Safety Plan (Consider giving your child's school the *Anti-Bullying Student Safety Plan*)
- If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan due to disabilities, ask for a meeting to determine whether your child's needs have changed as a result of the bullying.
  - **Request** an IEP or 504 meeting.
  - **Go** to the meeting and discuss whether additional or different services are needed with your child's IEP team.

## What is the Public School Supposed to Do if my Child is Being Bullied by Other Children?

Schools must, by Ohio law:

- have procedures for parents or students to report incidents
- require teachers and school staff to report incidents to the principal
- have procedures to investigate and respond to incidents
- take steps to protect a child from future bullying and retaliation

- have disciplinary procedures for the child doing the bullying behavior, although this does not require suspension or expulsion
- give notification to custodial parent of a victim
- post numbers of reported incidents on their website
- put procedures in the student handbook and Board policy

### **What if the Bullying doesn't Stop?**

- **ASK** to meet with your school district's Board of Education members individually.
- **SPEAK** at your school district's Board of Education meeting.
- **CONSIDER** talking to an attorney about a court order that would require the other child to stay away from your child.
- **If a teacher or principal or other school administrator** isn't supervising students to remedy the bullying, you may wish to file a license complaint.
  - **Find the Form at:**  
<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Conduct/Educator-Professional-Conduct-Forms/Citizen-Reporting-Form.pdf.aspx>
- **If the bullying is based on** race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sex, LGBTQIA status, English learner status, you may wish to file a complaint with the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.
  - **Find the Form at:** <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto>

### **What if my Child is Harmed by School Staff?**

Bullying, for the purposes of this information sheet, does not include physical or emotional harm to your child by a school staff person such as a teacher, aide, bus driver, or school security officer. That is different. If your child is harmed by school staff, you may wish to contact your local Bar Association for a referral to an attorney.

### **Resources**

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Anti-Harassment-Intimidation-and-Bullying-Resource>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/bullying-prevention>

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/>

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