

Strategies for Preventing Harassment (page 1 of 2)

Prepared by Ruth Durkee, Esq., Randolph Technical Career Center

These strategies and others can be found in many of the resources cited in this notebook, including: *Harassment Free Hallways* and *The Respectful School: How Educators and Students Can Conquer Hate and Harassment*.

Cultivate a school environment that is committed to respect for all people.

Be clear that bias, bullying, and harassment have no place anywhere in your school community -- including classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, gymnasiums, locker rooms, school buses, and athletic fields. Send the clear message that harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Make it equally clear that retaliation against those who report harassment will not be tolerated.

Create a climate where every school employee intervenes when they observe harassment or hear degrading language or slurs. Ensure that all school employees fully understand their obligation to report any harassment that they observe or learn about. If an employee fails to intervene, address that failure and set expectations for the future.

Engage teachers, staff, and students in creating a harassment-free school.

Provide anti-harassment/anti-bias/anti-bullying training to students each year.

Integrate bias, bullying, and harassment awareness and prevention in your school's curriculum (see the "Resources" section of this notebook for some great materials that can help you do this).

Cultivate student leaders and enlist their help in creating a bias and harassment-free school environment.

Provide regular training for your staff.

Be informed, be aware, and be diligent.

Conduct an anonymous school climate or harassment survey to determine your school's strengths and weaknesses. Act on what you learn.

Conduct meetings with parents to talk about your school's policy and to learn about their perceptions and concerns.

Ask questions. Often schools overlook behaviors that signal that a student is being harassed (i.e. poor attendance, a sudden drop in grades, the decision to drop a class or an extracurricular activity).

Be diligent. School staff should be especially present and aware in the areas where the risk is high: locker rooms, hallways, school buses, etc.

Be especially vigilant when it comes to populations of students who are known to be vulnerable to harassment (due to race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability, etc.)

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Be a good role model.

Model the use of appropriate language and behavior at all times.

Refuse to laugh at biased, derogatory, or demeaning jokes.

Use language that is inclusive of both genders and avoids stereotyping individuals based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, or other characteristics.

Enforce your school's anti-harassment policy -- firmly, fairly, and consistently.

Address problems when they first occur; don't give them a chance to grow and to escalate.

Be aware that harassment often occurs in current, past, or perceived dating relationships. Do not discount or minimize behavior because it occurs in a dating relationship.

If harassment has occurred, watch for potential retaliation and respond swiftly and firmly if retaliation does occur.

Train staff to work with those who have been the targets of harassment as well as with harassers and bystanders.

