

## **RECOMMENDED EDUCATOR STEPS for COMMUNICATING with Parents / Guardians whose Child is involved in a Harassment Complaint** (page 1 of 2)

*(prepared by Kathy Johnson, Vermont Equity Training & Consulting  
& Ruth Durkee, Esq., Randolph Technical Career Center)*

The steps below apply to parents/guardians of both harassed and harassing children.

1. DO PROVIDE **written copies** of the school harassment policy to parent(s) / guardian(s) of both the alleged perpetrator and target, including the school's harassment investigation procedure. The law requires copies to be distributed once the school "has notice" of alleged conduct.  
It is also good practice to verbally tell the adult(s) (i.e. an advance telephone call prior to mailing out a policy) about the alleged incident and what the school policy and procedure is.
2. DO TELL the parent(s) / guardian(s) of the complainant and the alleged perpetrator the school's **timeline** for conducting an investigation (schools must begin investigation within 1 day of receiving notice, complete within 5 days, etc.).
3. DO TELL the parent(s) / guardian(s) of the complainant and the alleged perpetrator that they will be **informed, in writing**, of the outcome of the investigation (subject to confidentiality laws and waiver of these laws)\*.
4. DO INFORM the parent(s) / guardian(s) of both the alleged perpetrator and target that they may request **alternative dispute resolution** at any time in the process.
5. DO INFORM the parent(s) / guardian(s) of both the alleged perpetrator and target that that **retaliation is prohibited**.
6. DO VERBALLY EXPRESS Care and Concern for the Children involved, ASK for the adult(s)' perspectives on their child's incident(s) and LISTEN.
7. DO ASK the adult(s) what they think would help their child, and what they would like the school to do. LISTEN and TAKE NOTES.

*NOTE: Educators must stay within FERPA (Federal Educational Records Protection Act) guidelines– but can still communicate MANY things to parents. While you must not reveal protected student educational record information, you CAN inform parents about school policies, procedures, and generic information that is not within an individual's protected student record. Additionally, you can request a release from a parent to share information with another parent.*

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8. DO TELL steps the school HAS taken and IS taking to protect the child who is being harassed, subject to confidentiality laws and waivers of these laws \*.
9. DO TELL steps the school takes to educate children who harass, to work toward acceptable behaviors at school \*.
10. DO APPLY policies and procedures consistently with all students and parents / guardians.
11. DO FOLLOW-UP with the adults periodically thereafter to assess progress, concerns, etc.
12. DO INFORM the parent(s) / guardian(s) of the complainant that they may request an **independent review** if they are not satisfied with the final determination, or if they believe the school's response was inadequate to address the problem. The request must be **in writing** to the principal or superintendent.
13. DO INFORM parent(s) / guardian(s) of accused that they may request **an appeal**.
14. **DON'T claim to be unable to share any information because of FERPA\***.

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