

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between bullying and harassment?

Bullying means systematically and chronically, inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or school employees. It is further defined as a pattern of unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, dehumanizing gesture by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliations; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation that includes a noted power differential. Bullying may involve, but is not limited to: teasing, social exclusion, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public humiliation, destruction of property, cyberstalking, cyberbullying

Harassment means any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

1. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school

Bullying and Harassment also encompasses:

1. Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
2. Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying and harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - a. Incitement or coercion
 - b. Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, computer network, electronic or wireless devices on or off school grounds to bully or harass that jeopardizes student or school employee safety or disrupts the learning environment within the scope of the district school system.

What are the procedures for reporting an incident?

At each school, the principal or the principal's designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. Miami Dade County Employees are required to report bullying incidents. Students, parents, bystanders, and visitors are strongly encouraged to report suspected incidents to the principal and/or designee either verbally or in writing. A report may be made anonymously by completing the *Anonymous Bullying Reporting Form* and placing it in the Reporting Box in the main office of your school. The form can be accessed from this website.

What is the investigative process?

The principal/designee will take specific steps to investigate all bullying complaints. The principal or designee will initiate an investigation of all reports of bullying within 2 days and every investigation will be completed within 10 days after its initiation. If a case has been confirmed as a bullying case, both students will receive counseling. Parents will be notified of the outcome upon reaching a resolution.

What are the services/consequences available?

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as an act of bullying or harassment range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. If a case has been confirmed as a bullying case, both victims and perpetrators of bullying or harassment will be referred to the members of the school's Student Services Team for counseling support and interventions. (Parent or legal guardian must be notified). If deemed necessary, outside agency referrals are available.

What can I do if I am being bullied?

If you are being bullied, there is help! Visit the main office at your school and complete the *Bullying and Harassment Anonymous Reporting Form*. Place your completed form in the unmarked reporting box in the main office. Your concern will be addressed in a prompt and confidential manner. You may also tell a Principal, Assistant Principal, School Counselor, Classroom Teacher, or any adult you trust at your school.

Are there other resources I can access in the community?

Yes! If you are a teen, you can call the Teen Hotline by dialing 2-1-1. You may access information on available health and human service programs, referral and crisis intervention 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.