

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Students
BULLYINGExamples of Prohibited Conduct

Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power between individuals with the intent to cause emotional or physical harm. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social/relational and may involve a single severe act or repetition or potential repetition of a deliberate act. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, any act described in Education Code 48900(r).

Cyberbullying includes the electronic creation or transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images, which may be shared, sent, or posted publicly. Cyberbullying may include, but is not limited to, personal or private information that causes humiliation, false or negative information to discredit or disparage, or threats of physical harm. Cyberbullying may also include breaking into another person's electronic account or assuming that person's online identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Examples of the types of conduct that may constitute bullying and are prohibited by the County Superintendent include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical bullying: An act that inflicts harm upon a person's body or possessions, such as hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone's possessions, or making cruel or rude hand gestures
2. Verbal bullying: An act that includes saying or writing hurtful things, such as teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threats to cause harm
3. Social/relational bullying: An act that harms a person's reputation or relationships, such as leaving a person out of an activity on purpose, influencing others not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors, or embarrassing someone in public
4. Cyberbullying: An act that occurs on electronic devices such as computers, tablets, or cell phones, such as sending demeaning or hateful text messages, direct messages or public posts on social media apps, gaming forums, or emails, spreading rumors by email or by posting on social networking sites, shaming or humiliating by allowing others to view, participate in, or share disparaging or harmful content, or posting or sharing embarrassing photos, videos, website, or fake profiles

Measures to Prevent Bullying

The County Superintendent or designee shall implement measures to prevent bullying in County Superintendent/County Board schools, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Developing a plan for school connectedness and social skills, which may include providing regular opportunities and spaces for students to develop social skills and strengthen relationships and promoting adult support from family and school staff,

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peer-led programs, and partnerships with key community groups, implementing socially based educational techniques such as cooperative learning projects that can improve educational outcomes as well as peer relations, creating a supportive school environment that fosters belonging through equitable classroom management, mentoring, and peer support groups that allow students to lean on each other and learn from each other's experiences, and building social connection into health education courses including information on the consequences of social connection on physical and mental health, key risk and protective factors, and strategies for increasing social connection.

2. Ensuring that each school establishes clear rules for student conduct and implements strategies to promote a positive, collaborative school climate.
3. Providing information to students, through student handbooks, County Superintendent and school websites and social media, and other age-appropriate means, about rules related to bullying and harassment prevention, mechanisms available for reporting incidents or threats, and the consequences for engaging in bullying, as required by law.
4. Encouraging students to notify County Superintendent staff when they are being bullied or when they suspect that another student is being bullied, and providing means by which students may report threats or incidents confidentially and anonymously.
5. Conducting an assessment of bullying incidents at each school site and, if necessary, increasing supervision and security in areas where bullying most often occurs, such as playgrounds, hallways, restrooms, and cafeterias.
6. Annually notifying County Superintendent employees that, pursuant to Education Code 234.1, any staff who witnesses an act of bullying against a student has a responsibility to immediately intervene to stop the incident when it is safe to do so.

Staff Development

The County Superintendent or designee shall annually make available to all certificated staff and to other employees who have regular interaction with students the California Department of Education (CDE) online training module on the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the identification of bullying and cyberbullying and the implementation of strategies to address bullying. (Education Code 32283.5)

The County Superintendent or designee shall provide training to teachers and other school staff to raise their awareness about the legal obligation of County Superintendent and County Superintendent employees to prevent discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students. Such training shall be designed to provide staff with the skills to:

1. Discuss the diversity of the student body and school community, including their varying immigration experiences.

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2. Discuss bullying prevention strategies with students, and teach students to recognize the behavior and characteristics of bullying perpetrators and victims.
3. Identify the signs of bullying or harassing behavior.
4. Take immediate corrective action when bullying is observed.
5. Report incidents to the appropriate authorities, including law enforcement, in instances of criminal behavior.

Information and Resources

The County Superintendent or designee shall post on the County Superintendent website, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to students and parents/guardians, information on bullying and harassment prevention which includes the following: (Education Code 234.6)

1. The County Superintendent's policy on student suicide prevention, including a reference to the policy's age appropriateness for students in grades K-6.
2. The definition of sex discrimination and harassment as described in Education Code 230, including the rights set forth in Education Code 221.8.
3. Title IX information included on the County Superintendent's website pursuant to Education Code 221.61, and a link to the Title IX information included on CDE's web site pursuant to Education Code 221.6.
4. County Superintendent/County Board policies on student sexual harassment, prevention and response to hate violence, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyberbullying.
5. A section on social media bullying that includes all of the references described in Education Code 234.6 as possible forums for social media.
6. A link to statewide resources, including community-based organizations, compiled by CDE pursuant to Education Code 234.5.
7. Any additional information the County Superintendent or designee deems important for preventing bullying and harassment.

Student Instruction

As appropriate, the County Superintendent shall provide students with instruction, in the classroom or other educational settings, that promotes social-emotional learning, effective communication and conflict resolution skills, character development, respect for cultural and individual differences, self-esteem development, assertiveness skills, digital and media literacy skills, and appropriate online behavior.

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The County Superintendent shall also educate students about the negative impact of bullying, discrimination, intimidation, and harassment based on actual or perceived immigration status, religious beliefs and customs, or any other individual bias or prejudice.

Students should be taught the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, how to advocate for themselves, how to help another student who is being bullied, and when to seek assistance from a trusted adult. As role models for students, staff are responsible for teaching and modeling respectful behavior and building safe and supportive learning environments, and are expected to demonstrate effective problem-solving and anger management skills.

To discourage cyberbullying, teachers may advise students to be cautious about sharing passwords, personal data, or private photos online and to consider the consequences of making negative comments about others online.

Reporting and Filing of Complaints

Any student, parent/guardian, or other individual who believes that a student has been subjected to bullying or who has witnessed bullying may report the incident to a teacher, the lead site administrator, a compliance officer, or any other available County Superintendent employee.

When a report of bullying is submitted, the lead site administrator or County Superintendent compliance officer shall inform the student or parent/guardian of the right to file a formal written complaint in accordance with Administrative Regulation 1312.3 – Uniform Complaint Procedures. The student who is the alleged victim of the bullying shall be given an opportunity to describe the incident, identify witnesses who may have relevant information, and provide other evidence of bullying.

Any individuals with information about cyberbullying activity shall be encouraged to save and print any electronic or digital messages that they feel constitute cyberbullying and to notify a teacher, the lead site administrator, or other employee so that the matter may be investigated. When an investigation concludes that a student used a social networking site or service to bully or harass another student, the County Superintendent or designee may report the cyberbullying to the social media platform and may request the material be removed.

Discipline/Corrective Actions

Corrective actions for a student who commits an act of bullying of any type may include counseling, behavioral intervention, and education, and, if the behavior is severe or pervasive as defined in Education Code 48900, may include suspension or expulsion in accordance with County Superintendent policies and regulations.

When appropriate based on the severity or pervasiveness of the bullying, the County Superintendent or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators and may contact law enforcement.

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The County Superintendent or designee may refer a victim, witness, perpetrator, or other student affected by an act of bullying to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school or program support service personnel for case management, counseling, and/or participation in a restorative justice program as appropriate. (Education Code 48900.9)

If any student involved in bullying exhibits warning signs of suicidal thought or intention or of intent to harm another person, the County Superintendent or designee shall, as appropriate, implement intervention protocols which may include, but are not limited to, referral to County Superintendent or community mental health services, other health professionals, and/or law enforcement, in accordance with Superintendent/Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 5141.52 – Suicide Prevention.

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