

# TATUM ISD

## Anti-Bullying and Harassment

Policies & Procedures Manual



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## Introduction

TATUM ISD strives to provide all students, faculty, and staff with a safe and orderly working and learning environment. TISD is aware that bullying is a problem in our society and TATUM ISD is not immune to this problem. We are committed to prohibiting bullying to the best of our ability and teaching our students to be resilient in situations involving bullying and/or harassment.

The Tatum Independent School District Board of Trustees has adopted a district policy prohibiting “harassment,” which typically addresses many of the behaviors that also constitute bullying. The district’s discrimination, harassment, and retaliation policy is FFH (LOCAL). A bullying policy was also adopted, as demonstrated within this manual and board policy FFI (LOCAL). These policies and administrative procedures: (1) prohibit bullying; (2) prohibit retaliation against any person, witness, or another person who in good faith provides information regarding bullying; (3) establish a procedure for providing notice of an incident of bullying to parent or guardian within a reasonable period; (4) establish the actions a student should take to obtain assistance and intervention in response to bullying; (5) set out available counseling options for a student who is a victim of, is witness to, or engages in bullying; (6) establish reporting and investigation procedures; (7) prohibits school officials from disciplining a student who is the victim of bullying, for the student’s use of reasonable self-defense in response to bullying; and (8) require that the discipline of a student with disabilities for bullying complies with federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Both policies are accessible at [www.tatumisd.org](http://www.tatumisd.org).

TISD recognizes that it takes the combined efforts of the faculty, staff, administration, parents, students, and community to significantly reduce the instances of bullying and harassment. Please share with your student the importance of notifying an adult at school if they are being bullied. Too often, schools are notified about a bullying situation after it is too late. By letting the school know early we can work together to resolve the situation. We also strongly encourage you to let your children know that you will not tolerate any type of bullying behavior from them. Parents and students can report bullying and harassment on the “Crime Stoppers” link on our TISD homepage or by notifying a TISD employee.

## **Bullying Defined**

“Bullying” means engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the District and that:

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or of damage to the student’s property; or
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

This conduct is considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
2. Interferes with a student’s education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

## **What is Cyber-Bullying?**

Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. “Cyber-bullying” is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to have a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor. Once adults become involved, it is plain and simple cyber-harassment or cyber-stalking. Adult cyber -harassment or cyber-stalking is never called cyber -bullying. Frequently internet social media sites are utilized for bullying. Please remind your children that there are consequences for the words they write and the images they post. We have provided a link below that is a great resource for teaching your children about the proper use of social media and networking sites.

<http://onguardonline.gov/>

## **Bullying Prohibited**

TISD policy prohibits bullying and promotes a bully/harassment free learning environment. TISD students and parents are provided with a pledge to not bully in the student handbooks. TISD has a multifaceted approach to preventing bullying through education, training, and counseling efforts. The district anti-bully plan will continually be evaluated at the district level.

## **Retaliation Prohibited**

Tatum ISD prohibits retaliation against any person, witness, or another person who in good faith provides information regarding bullying. Teachers, counselors, and campus administrators will explain the consequences of retaliation, as outlined in TISD board policy, the faculty and staff handbook, and the student handbook. The faculty and staff address any instances of possible retaliation and will notify campus administration and counselors of these situations.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions.  
*Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.*

## **Timely Reporting**

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

## **Reporting Procedures**

**Student Report:** To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee. Anonymous reporting of a bullying incident can be reported on the "Crime Stoppers" link on our TISD homepage or by notifying a TISD employee.

**False claim:** A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

**Employee Report:** Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

## **Report Format**

A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

## **Investigation of Report**

The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

## **Concluding the Investigation**

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

## **Notice to Parents**

If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying. Campus administrators will notify parents within a timely manner of determining a case of bullying.

## **District Action**

**Bullying:** If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

**Discipline:** A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action. As stated in Board Policy FFI (Local) under the sub title of "Discipline", campus and district personnel will take into consideration if reasonable self-defense by a victim in response to bullying prior to determining discipline.

Self-Defense would be defined as:

1. The student must not have been involved in provoking the situation
2. The student must be in a situation that the danger is imminent, meaning there is no convenient or reasonable mode of escape

The student must use only the force necessary to protect themselves against the aggressive student. The force must be reasonable and in proportion to the force being used. Reasonable force is defined as the degree of force which is not excessive and is appropriate in protecting oneself.

*The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.*

## **Corrective Action**

Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.

## **Transfers**

Students who are Victims of Bullying

On the request of a parent or other person with authority to act on behalf of a student who is a victim of bullying, the Board or its designee shall transfer the victim to:

1. Another classroom at the campus to which the victim was assigned at the time the bullying occurred; or
2. A campus in the District other than the campus to which the victim was assigned at the time the bullying occurred.

#### Students who Engages in Bullying

The Board may transfer the student who engaged in bullying to:

1. Another classroom at the campus to which the victim was assigned at the time the bullying occurred; or
2. A campus in the District other than the campus to which the victim was assigned at the time the bullying occurred, in consultation with a parent or other person with authority to act on behalf of the student who engaged in bullying.

*The transfer of a student with a disability who receives special education services and who engaged in bullying may be made only by a duly constituted ARD committee under Education Code 37.004.*

### **Counseling**

The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options. Counseling options for students involved in a bully incident include:

#### Campus Counselors:

Primary: Jessica Nelson

Elementary: Raishunda Smith

Junior High School: Jo Miller

High School: Debranda Bradford

District Special Education Counselor: Terri Dickson

Other, as deemed appropriate by the campus administration



## **Improper Conduct**

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

## **Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

## **Appeal**

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

## **Records Retention**

Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).

## **Access to Policy and Procedures**

This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's Web site, [www.tatumisd.org](http://www.tatumisd.org), to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

## **Additional Resources for Parents, Students, Community Members & Teachers**

The following websites provide resources for parents and community members about bullying and online safety:

High School - [Sop Bullying](#)

Middle School - [Stop Bullying](#)

[Online Privacy and Security](#)

## APPENDIX

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**Note:** For the transfer of a student who is the victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, or who engaged in bullying, including a student who receives special education services, see FDB. For school safety transfers, see FDE. For bullying rising to the level of prohibited harassment, see FFH.

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### Exhibit A—Incident Report Form (Student)

Student's name *(optional)*: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of the incident(s)**

Name of student(s) the incident happened to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of student(s) alleged to have caused the incident(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

If the incident is alleged to have occurred on District property, identify the facility or campus:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of anyone else who knows about what happened:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe what happened: *(Attach additional pages if needed)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student's signature *(optional)*: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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***For District's Internal Use Only***

**Confirmation of parent notification regarding allegation**

***Note to administrator:*** Notice to the parent or guardian of the alleged victim is required within three business days of the reporting of the incident.

- Notification provided to the parent or guardian of alleged victim:

Parent's or guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

***Note to administrator:*** Notice to the parent or guardian of the student(s) alleged to have engaged in bullying is required within a reasonable time after the incident is reported.

- Notification provided to the parent or guardian of student(s) who allegedly engaged in bullying:

Parent's or guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

## Exhibit B—Incident Report Form (Adult)

### Contact information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Work address (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Details of the incident(s)

Name(s) of alleged offender(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of alleged victim(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe your relationship to  
alleged victim(s)/offender(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

If the incident is alleged to have occurred on District property, identify the facility or campus:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of anyone else who knows about what happened:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the alleged incident(s) as clearly as possible, including what force or physical contact, if any, was used; any verbal statements such as threats, requests, or demands; and any electronic methods used, including email, social media, and the like. *(Attach additional pages if more space is needed.)*

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I hereby certify that the information I have provided is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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***For District's Internal Use Only***

**Confirmation of parent notification regarding allegation:**

***Note to the administrator:*** Notice to the parent or guardian of the alleged victim is required within three business days of the reporting of the incident.

- Notification provided to parent/guardian of alleged victim(s):

Parent's or guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

***Note to administrator:*** Notice to the parent or guardian of the student(s) alleged to have engaged in bullying is required within a reasonable time after the incident is reported.

- Notification provided to parent/guardian of student(s) who allegedly engaged in bullying:

Parent's or guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of notification: \_\_\_\_\_

### Exhibit C—Investigation Report

**Note to administrator:** This form should be used to assist the investigator while conducting an investigation. It may also be used to document an oral report of an alleged bullying, including cyberbullying, incident.

Name of person investigating alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of person(s) reporting alleged incident(s) *(if not the alleged victim)*:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student reporting wants to remain anonymous.

Date alleged incident(s) *(was) (were)* reported: \_\_\_\_\_

Date investigation started: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of alleged victim(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of alleged bully(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) and time(s) of alleged incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Check as applicable:

Alleged bullying

Alleged cyberbullying

Did the alleged incident(s) occur: *(check all appropriate boxes)*

• On school property?

Yes

No

*(If yes, name of District facility or campus: \_\_\_\_\_)*

• At a school-sponsored or school-related activity, on or off school property?

Yes

No

• In a vehicle being used for transporting students to or from school, school-sponsored, or school-related activity?

Yes

No



Did the alleged incident(s) involve written or verbal expression, including electronic expression, which was delivered to school property or the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity?

- Yes
- No

Specific location of alleged incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Is the alleged incident(s) recurring or first-time incident(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the alleged incident(s) as reported. (*Attach separate sheets if necessary.*)

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Did the alleged incident(s) occur in the presence of any witnesses?

- Yes
- No

If yes, name(s) of witness or witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

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***[Attach any documents obtained during the course of the investigation (such as interview notes, witness statements, class schedules, materials to support cyberbullying, and the like).]***

Does the alleged incident(s) meet the definition of discrimination, prohibited harassment, dating violence, or retaliation as defined in FFH(LOCAL)?

- Yes
- No

If yes, refer to proper administrator under FFH(LOCAL).

Referred to \_\_\_\_\_ (*administrator's name*) on \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*).

***If the alleged incident was referred under FFH(LOCAL), no further action is needed on this form.***

Does the alleged incident(s) meet the definition of bullying in FFI(LEGAL)?

- Yes
- No

If yes, did the victim(s) use reasonable self-defense?

- Yes
- No

If the alleged incident(s) was not discrimination, prohibited harassment, dating violence, or retaliation and/or bullying, was it other improper conduct as defined by the Student Code of Conduct?

- Yes
- No

If yes, referred for disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action to \_\_\_\_\_ (administrator's name) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

***If alleged incident is considered other improper conduct, no further action is needed on this form.***

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***For District's Internal Use Only***

If bullying has been confirmed:

- Notification provided to the parent or guardian of victim(s):  
Parent's or guardian's name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Date notification made: \_\_\_\_\_
- Notification provided to the parent or guardian of student(s) who engaged in bullying:  
Parent's or guardian's name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Date notification made: \_\_\_\_\_

***If notice of available counseling options was not provided at the time a student was interviewed, the District must still do so in accordance with local policy FFI.***

**Notification of available counseling options provided to:**

- Victim(s)  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Student(s) who engaged in bullying

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Witness(es):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**District action:**

- Referred for discipline?

Yes

No

If yes, disciplinary action recommended:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Eligible for transfer?

Yes

No

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_ (*victim or student who engaged in bullying*)

- Recommendation for corrective action?

Yes

No

If yes, corrective action recommended:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date investigation completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date investigation report submitted to Superintendent or designee: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's name (*if not the principal*)(*print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's name (*print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Exhibit D—Notice of Available Counseling Options to Students Involved in Bullying Incidents

**Note to administrator:** The District is required by law to set out the available counseling options for a student who is a victim of or a witness to bullying or who engaged in bullying. [See FFI(LEGAL)] The principal or designee will notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options. [See FFI(LOCAL)]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You have been identified as a student who is a victim of bullying, a student who is a witness to bullying, or a student who engages in bullying.

***[List as many District and/or non-District counseling options as needed.]***

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Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal or designee)

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1. Counseling Options for Bully
  - a. Teach difference between aggression vs assertion
  - b. Create opportunities for positive power
  - c. Teach impulse control
  - d. Rituals of Respect
  - e. Weekly Contracts/Tier of Consequences
2. Counseling Options for Victim
  - a. Group Therapy
  - b. Small Friendship Groups
  - c. Encourage involvement in non-competitive recreation
  - d. Design Safety Plan/Check-In System
  - e. Cognitive Solution- Focused Approaches
3. Counseling Options for Witness/Bystander
  - a. Rituals of Respect
  - b. Create Pledges
  - c. Teach Group Peer Interventions
  - d. Incentives for Outstanding Bystander Interventions

## Exhibit E—Web Text for Posting Procedures for Reporting Allegations of Bullying

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**Note:** The following statement is intended to assist the District in meeting the legal requirement to post the District's bullying reporting procedures.

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The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying:

- On school property;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities on or off school property; or
- In any vehicle being used for transporting students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Bullying may include physical conduct or verbal or written expression, including electronic expression, that was delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Bullying is not tolerated by the District, and any student or parent of a student who believes that the student or another student has experienced bullying or that a student has engaged in bullying is encouraged to immediately report the incident. Retaliation against anyone involved in the reporting process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Students or parents may report an alleged incident of bullying, orally or in writing, to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other District employee. Students or parents may contact the District to obtain an Incident Report Form that may be used to submit the report. A student may report the incident anonymously.

Please note that after submission of the report to the District employee, the District will notify the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the alleged bully. The District may assign the report to a campus administrator to follow up on the submitted report and any other important matters pertaining to the report. We encourage you to communicate with your designated campus administrator during this time.

More information about the District's bullying policy can be found at *[insert the link to your District's FFI]* or the campus main office.