

Title IX and Bullying

Keeping Students Safe in
Houston County Schools

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- Our Expectation: ALWAYS SAFE
 - One way we keep everyone safe is by being sure that our students do not have to experience harassment or bullying of any kind. This includes bullying and sexual harassment.

All staff members at our school want to do all that we can to keep our students safe.

Sometimes, students are victims of harassment and may not know what to do.

Sometimes those who harass another student may not realize that what they are doing is against the law.

Today we want to let you know about a law (Title IX) that gives victims certain rights especially as it relates to harassment including sexual harassment/bullying.

HISTORY

- Federal law *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972* prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment in education programs and activities.
- Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is the federal agency responsible for the enforcement of Title IX in schools. This agency took on oversight in 1980.

Title IX Facts

Law States:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Title IX protects students from harassment connected to any of the academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic and other programs or activities of the schools regardless of the location.

Title IX protects students (male and female) from sexual harassment by anyone.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual Harassment of a student interferes with a student's right to receive an education free from discrimination.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Harassment Can Be In the Form of:

Verbal Harassment- Inappropriate conversation about body parts (bathing suit areas)

Non Verbal Harassment-showing privates, acting out

Physical Harassment- touching bathing suit areas

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT? (cont.)

Verbal Harassment

- Comments about a person's body
- Spreading rumors that may be considered sexual
- Sexual remarks or accusations
- Telling "dirty jokes" or stories when those who are listening are uncomfortable with what is being told

Non-Verbal Harassment

- Displaying or distributing sexually explicit drawings or pictures
- Writing graffiti of a sexual nature
- Sending crude or sexually descriptive e-mails or letters
- Making obscene gestures

Physical Harassment

- Grabbing or touching oneself or another student in a sexual manner that is unwanted, uncomfortable, embarrassing or offensive
- Sexual assault

What is Bullying...(in Georgia)

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so.
2. Any intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate.

What is Bullying...(continued)

Bullying also involves acts which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such an electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment. The electronic communication can be bullying if it:

- is directed specifically at students or school personnel,
- is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and
- it creates a reasonable fear of harm to the student's or school personnel's person or property, or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

Electronic communication includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic, or photo optical system.

Bullying

- Causes another person substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm.
- Affects the student's education.
- Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment.
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Where Can Bullying Occur?

Bullying may occur...

- On school property, school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions /activities.
- By the use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, a computer system, a computer network, or any other electronic technology.

Cyber-Bullying & Bullying Off-Campus

- Each student Code of Conduct shall also contain provisions that address any off-campus behavior that may result in disciplinary action such as:
 - Inappropriate use of cell phones
 - Inappropriate usage of BOE sites and computer communication

Mandatory Consequences

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process. Such consequences shall include, **at a minimum**, counseling and disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances. However, Georgia law mandates that upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal, a student in **grades 6-12** who has committed the offense of Bullying for the third time in a school year, shall be assigned to an alternative school/program.

Reporting Sexual Harassment & Bullying

Harassment and bullying should be reported to an administrator, teacher, or counselor at each school. Harassment and bullying can also be reported through the Anonymous Alerts app.

If a teacher witnesses sexual harassment occurring, the teacher will immediately report it to a school administrator.

If a student witnesses sexual harassment occurring, that student should report this to the teacher, counselor, or an administrator.

Students are encouraged to report incidents whether they are the victim or they witness this occurring to other students. Our concern is that all students feel safe at school.

A counselor is always available to talk to students about this.

SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITY

When our school receives a complaint, we will

- Promptly investigate, talk to all witnesses, and look at all evidence
- Determine what occurred
- Take appropriate steps to resolve the situation
- Contact parents to let them know about the situation
- Not tolerate any form of retaliation against a student who reports harassment

We will do all that we can to make certain our students feel safe.