

Revised model bullying and cyberbullying prevention policy and procedures

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The model bullying and cyberbullying prevention policy, first adopted in 2013 as a result of **An Act to Prohibit Bullying and Cyberbullying in Schools (PL 659)**, has been revised to include comprehensive, detailed, and user-friendly procedural forms as well as an administrative procedure.

All school administrative units' school boards are to ensure that their policies and procedures are consistent with the **revised model policy and procedures**.

In addition, each SAU must file its policies to address bullying and cyberbullying to the Department (**20-A MRSA §6554, sub-§8**). Districts are further notified that beginning in the 2016-17 school year, substantiated incidents of bullying are no longer reported in Infinite Campus State Edition. Instead, these incidents are to be reported in NEO's Bullying Reporting System on a quarterly basis. Superintendents will need to request staff access to this form by using the **NEO access request form**. Additional resources for monitoring and compliance with the law will become available this fall.

More information regarding bullying prevention can be found at www.maine.gov/doe/bullying or contact the Department's Student Assistance Coordinator, Sarah H. Ricker at 624-6685 or sarah.ricker@maine.gov with any questions.

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Model Procedures

It is required by law that all schools must respond to, investigate, and document all alleged incidents of bullying and cyberbullying. These procedures must include written documentation of reported incidents, outcomes of the investigation and/or how the incident was remediated.

School administrative units must report substantiated incidents of bullying and cyberbullying to the Maine Department of Education on an annual basis.

Provided here are the model procedures that align with the revised model bullying policy. These procedures are illustrated in a [flow chart](#).

Reporting

Bullying or suspected bullying is reportable in person or in writing to school personnel.

Bullying Reporting Form (JICK-E1). (RTF, 67KB) This is the commissioner's model procedure for students, school staff members, parents/guardians and others to report alleged incidents of bullying or to report that bullying was believed to have happened.

Reporting forms can be handwritten or electronic but also reporting can be done in person without the use of a form. All SAUs must establish procedures for students, school staff members, parents and others to report incidents of bullying, either in writing, in person, and with the option of being anonymous.

Responding/Investigating

The school principal or a superintendent's designee will promptly investigate and respond to allegations of bullying behavior.

Bullying Responding Form (JICK-E2). (RTF, 114KB) This is the commissioner's model procedure for school principals or superintendents' designees to complete throughout the investigation process.

All alleged reports of bullying are to be responded to and investigated promptly, and written documentation of alleged reports and outcomes of the investigation is to be included in the procedural process of responding and investigating.

The principal or superintendent's designee must communicate to the parent or guardian of the student who was believed to have been bullied the measures being taken to ensure the safety of the student who has been bullied and to prevent further acts of bullying. Here is an example of a [Student Safety Plan](#).

It is also encouraged that the principal or superintendent's designee communicate with the parent or guardian of the alleged bully the positive and restorative interventions and other appropriate discipline measures being taken throughout the investigation.

Remediation

If it is determined that there was a substantiated incident of bullying, the school principal or superintendent's designee will identify the specific nature(s) of the incident, apply disciplinary actions, and consequences.

Bullying Remediation Form (JICK-E3). (RTF, 165KB) This is the commissioner's model procedure for school principals or superintendents' designees to complete when it's been determined that the alleged incident is a substantiated incident of bullying.

If it was not determined to have been a substantiated incident of bullying, the principal or superintendent's designee is to refer to the district-wide code of conduct and disciplinary policies for student behavior.

This form should be used when the substantiated incident of bullying is entered into the Report of Substantiated Incident of Bullying in the Department's NEO data reporting system.

Administrative Procedure

Guidance is provided for the principal or superintendent's designee in addressing an alleged bullying incident.

Bullying Administrative Procedure (JICK-R). (RTF, 104KB) This is the commissioner's model procedure for school principals or superintendents' designees to use as guidance in responding to alleged incidents of bullying, including the reporting procedure that students, school staff members, parents/guardians and others utilize, and remedial steps needed after an alleged incident has been determined to be substantiated.

Resources

Here are resources to support school administration in understanding varying bullying behaviors and best approaches to applying disciplinary actions, and guidance on how to communicate with all parties involved, as well as the perpetrator, in order to counter the negative impact of bullying and reduce the risk of future harm.

- [Maine's Best Practices in Bullying and Harassment Prevention: A Guide for Schools and Communities](#). Created in 2006 in response to the amendment that required all Maine schools to establish policies and procedures to address bullying, harassment, bias-based harassment, and sexual harassment. While this document still contains beneficial suggestions and practices to approach bullying and cyberbullying prevention, it does contain outdated information. Specially, on the first page of Chapter 2, last paragraph, it states "Maine law does not specifically define bullying." In PL 659, bullying is defined, so please refer to the law for a definition of bullying.
- [K-12 Restorative School Practices - The Restorative Approach & Restorative Practices](#). The Restorative Approach is a philosophy or guiding principle (not a program or specific activity) that sees relationships as central to learning, growth and a healthy school climate for students and adults. Restorative Practices enable us to integrate and normalize this approach within a school culture. Restorative practices focus on building, maintaining and, when necessary, repairing relationships among all members of a school community.
- [How Staff Should Respond to Bullying](#). School staff can learn to structure in-the-moment interventions so learning and change are likely. Creating a staff-wide consensus about which behaviors to report to the principal, which behaviors staff will deal with themselves, and which behaviors are seen as acceptable even if the targets of those behaviors do not enjoy them will help the school react consistently to reports of aggressive behavior (Stan Davis).

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