



Federal, State, and Local Policy Related to Bullying

Competency

Educator applies federal, state, and local bullying laws and policies to professional practice.

Key Method

The educator examines federal protections, state requirements, and local bullying policies to understand responsibilities for prevention, reporting, and intervention.

Method Components

Social justice includes a vision of a society where resources are distributed equitably, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Preventing bullying and addressing it when it occurs is essential to achieving social justice for all our students.

Federal Protections and Responsibilities

No single federal law specifically addresses bullying. However, bullying may overlap with discriminatory harassment when it is based on a characteristic protected under federal law. For example, race, color, or national origin (Title VI); sex (Title IX); or disability (Section 504 and Title II of the ADA). When this overlap occurs, schools that receive federal funding have civil rights obligations that exist independently of their own anti-bullying policy.

For students with disabilities, bullying that interferes with a free appropriate public education can also raise obligations under IDEA. Because federal guidance interpreting these laws can change, educators should confirm current guidance directly through the U.S. Department of Education rather than relying on any single past letter or resource as a permanent statement of federal policy.

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State and Local Requirements

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have laws or policies addressing bullying, but requirements vary widely in how bullying is defined, which characteristics are protected, and what reporting, training, or intervention procedures are required. School districts then develop local policies and procedures to implement and sometimes exceed their state's requirements.

Core Elements of Anti-Bullying Policy

Policies addressing student bullying may include:

- Statement of purpose for the district's position against bullying
- Clear definition of bullying
- Responsibilities of school personnel; instructions for reporting bullying incidents
- Description of the support(s) for targeted students
- Procedures and strategies for behavior reform, including consequences for bullying behavior
- Procedures and expectations for bullying prevention and intervention
- Provisions addressing cyberbullying or bullying that occurs electronically

Examples of Protected Characteristics Include:

Federal, state, and local protections vary. Depending on the applicable law or policy, protected characteristics may include:

- Race
- National origin
- Marital status
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Religion
- Ancestry
- Physical attribute
- Socioeconomic status
- Familial status
- Physical or mental ability or disability

Educators should consult current federal, state, and local guidance to determine which protections apply in their setting.

Model Policy

Model policies provide guidance, direction, and recommended standards to help local school systems develop district and school policies or administrative regulations. Model policies may reflect requirements of state or federal law as well as recommended practices.

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Supporting Rationale and Research

White, D. A., Miller, G. F., Rosenblum, K., Dunphy, C., Wagner, R., & Merrill-Francis, M. (2025). An analysis of anti-bullying laws in the United States. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 53(3), 467–472.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/jme.2025.10115>

Ramirez, M. R., Ryan, A., Lymn, K., Burris, S., Cook, A., Cloud, L. K., & Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2024). Building a comprehensive, longitudinal dataset to advance research on the efficacy of state-level anti-bullying legislation: 1999 to 2017. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25(4), 2598–2608.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231219256>

Resources

[Common Components in State Anti-Bullying Laws, Policies and Regulations | StopBullying.gov](#)

[Davis v. Monroe County Bd. of Ed. | 526 U.S. 629 \(1999\)](#)

[Federal Laws | StopBullying.gov](#)

[Harassment, Bullying, and Retaliation | U.S. Department of Education](#)

[Importance of Anti-Bullying Laws | StopBullying.gov](#)

[Laws, Policies & Regulations | StopBullying.gov](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and be proficient in all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

Suggested word count: 150–250 words

Please do not include any information that could identify you, your students, school, or district to reviewers.

1. What is your general educational setting and professional role?
 - Briefly describe your role, grade band or student population served, and type of educational setting.
2. What responsibilities do you currently have related to bullying prevention, reporting, or intervention?

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Passing: The response addresses both questions and provides enough context for the reviewer to understand the educator's role, educational setting, and responsibilities related to bullying prevention, reporting, or intervention.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **two** artifacts to demonstrate your learning.

**Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Bullying Law and Policy Review

Using the resources provided in this micro-credential, review information about federal protections related to bullying, your state's bullying law or requirements, and your school or district's bullying policy.

Submit a comparison that addresses:

- **Bullying:** How is bullying defined or described in your state requirements and local policy?
- **Online behavior:** How do your state requirements and local policy address cyberbullying or bullying that occurs electronically?
- **Responsibilities:** What are educators, including teachers and education support professionals (ESPs), expected to do if they become aware of possible bullying? Identify the reporting procedures or responsibilities that apply to your role, and note whether any federal civil rights protections (e.g., Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504) could apply.
- **Response and support:** What does your local policy say should happen after bullying is reported, including supports or protections for students?
- **Prevention:** What responsibilities or expectations does your state or local policy identify for preventing bullying?
- **Your analysis:** Identify one strength and one area that could be clarified, strengthened, or better implemented in your school or district's approach to bullying.

Identify or link to the federal, state, and local sources you used.

Artifact 2: Policy-to-Practice Resource

Using what you learned from your law and policy review, create or adapt a practical resource that helps educators understand and carry out their responsibilities related to bullying prevention, reporting, or intervention.

Identify the intended audience for your resource. The audience may include

teachers, education support professionals (ESPs), other school staff, or a combination of these groups.

The resource must:

- Clearly identify the bullying-related responsibility, procedure, or practice it addresses
- Provide accurate, practical guidance about what the intended audience should do
- Include information about when and how bullying concerns should be reported or referred for additional support, when applicable
- Align with applicable federal protections and the relevant state requirements and local policy reviewed in Artifact 1.

The resource may take an appropriate format for the intended audience, such as a quick-reference guide, flowchart, infographic, presentation, staff handout, training resource, or other practical tool.

Identify the sources used to develop or adapt your resource.

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Bullying Law and Policy Review	The comparison addresses all required areas: how bullying is defined, how online behavior is addressed, responsibilities and reporting procedures relevant to the educator's role, applicable federal civil rights protections, response and support after bullying is reported, and prevention responsibilities or expectations. The analysis identifies one strength and one area that could be clarified, strengthened, or better implemented. Federal, state, and local sources are identified.	The comparison addresses the required areas, but one or more are incomplete or unclear. The connection to the educator's role or applicable federal civil rights protections is limited, or the analysis does not fully identify both a strength and an area that could be clarified, strengthened, or better implemented. Required sources are identified but may be incomplete.	The comparison is missing multiple required areas or does not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the federal protections, state requirements, local policy, or responsibilities relevant to the educator's role. The required analysis or sources are missing or insufficient.
Artifact 2: Policy-to- Practice Resource	Resource is appropriate for the intended audience. Resource provides practical guidance for carrying out bullying-related responsibilities and aligns with	Resource is appropriate for the intended audience, but guidance is limited, unclear, or does not fully reflect one or more relevant requirements or procedures identified in Artifact 1.	Resource does not provide sufficient practical guidance for the intended audience, does not adequately align with applicable requirements or procedures, or is missing multiple required components.

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	the federal protections, state requirements, and local policy relevant to the resource. Reporting or referral information is included when applicable. Sources are identified.		
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Part 3 Reflection

200-350 words

For tips on writing a strong reflection, review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please do not include any information that could identify you, your students, school, or district to reviewers.

1. What did you learn about how federal protections, state requirements, and local policy relate to your responsibilities for preventing, reporting, or responding to bullying?
2. What steps will you take based on what you learned by completing this micro-credential?

Passing: Reflection addresses all guiding questions and demonstrates understanding of how bullying laws and policies relate to the educator's professional responsibilities and practice. The response identifies a relevant next step based on what you learned from the micro-credential.