

# 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.

## THE NEW ANTI-BULLYING BILL

“David’s Law”—S.B. 179—is one of the new laws that will have a major impact on the day-to-day operation of your school. The bill has been passed by both houses and sent to the Governor, who is expected to sign it. Here are several things you need to know about this new law, which will go into effect on September 1, 2017.

1. Bullying does not have to involve a pattern of repeated behavior. “A single significant act” might be sufficient to meet the definition of “bullying.”
2. The definition of bullying has always required that there be an effect on the target. That effect could be physical harm, or the threat of it; or damage to property; or an “intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.” The new law adds to this, by stating that it is “bullying” if the behavior “materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school.”
3. Cyberbullying off campus is expressly included in the definition of bullying if it “interferes with a student’s educational opportunities” or “substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.”
4. Notice of alleged bullying must be given to the parent of the target on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The alleged bully’s parent is to be notified within a “reasonable time.”
5. Tatum ISD policy must include a method for students to report bullying anonymously.
6. Chapter 37 is amended to allow for expulsion or DAEP for a student who 1) engages in bullying that encourages suicide; 2) incites violence through group bullying; or 3) releases or threatens to release “intimate visual material” of a minor or an adult student without consent.
7. After an investigation is completed, the principal may report to law enforcement if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has engaged in assault or harassment.

## **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 of 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: Mrs. Sabrena Socha  
Elementary: Mrs. Elanna Hylander  
Junior High School: Mrs. Angela Garcia  
High School: Mrs. Jo Miller

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 <http://lflweb.org/hbc/?4lVtvakl>

Middle School <http://lflweb.org/hbc/?h3wMIY TZ>

<http://onguardonline.gov/>

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/>

[https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/cyberbullying-toolkit?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=edu](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/cyberbullying-toolkit?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=edu)



STUDENT WELFARE  
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING

**See the following forms that may be used by the District regarding bullying:**

- Exhibit A: Incident Report Form (Student) - 1 page
- Exhibit B: Incident Report Form (Adult) - 2 pages
- Exhibit C: Investigation Report - 4 pages
- Exhibit D: Available Counseling Options -1 page
- Exhibit E: Pledge to End Bullying and Harassment – 1 page

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**Note:** For the transfer of a student who is the victim of bullying 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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STUDENT WELFARE  
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING

**EXHIBIT A**

INCIDENT REPORT FORM (STUDENT)

Student name (if you wish to provide it): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Details of the incident(s):

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

Name(s) of student(s) causing the problem(s):

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Date the incident happened: \_\_\_\_\_

Time the incident happened: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident happen: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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What happened? (Attach additional pages if needed)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature (*optional*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**EXHIBIT B**

INCIDENT REPORT FORM (ADULT)

Contact Information

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

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

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

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

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Time(s) of alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location(s) of alleged incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

List any witness(es): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT WELFARE  
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING



**EXBIBIT B**

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



**EXHIBIT C**

INVESTIGATION REPORT

***(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 incident.)***

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

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

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):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did the alleged incident(s) occur:

On school property?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

At a school-sponsored or school-related activity?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

In a vehicle operated by the District?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

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

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

STUDENT WELFARE  
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING



**EXHIBIT C**

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 a witness or 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 (e.g., interview notes, witness statements, class schedules, materials to support cyber bullying, and the like.)]*

Do(es) 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 name*) on \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*).

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

Do(es) the alleged incident(s) meet the definition of bullying?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, did the victim(s) use reasonable self-defense? ☐ Yes   ☐ No



STUDENT WELFARE  
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING



**EXHIBIT C**

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 name) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

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

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If bullying has been confirmed:

- ☐ Notification provided to parents of victim(s):

Parent Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date Notification Made: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Notification provided to parents of student(s) who engaged in bullying:

Parent 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: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT WELFARE  
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING



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

**EXHIBIT C**

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*): \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Principal's name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



STUDENT WELFARE  
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING

**EXHIBIT D**

AVAILABLE COUNSELING OPTIONS

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

In accordance with Texas Education Code Section 37.0832(c)(5), the following is a list of counseling options:

- I. 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
- II. 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
- III. Counseling Options for Witness/Bystander
  - a. Rituals of Respect
  - b. Create Pledges
  - c. Teach Group Peer Interventions
  - d. Incentives for Outstanding Bystander Interventions

***(List as many District and/or non-District counseling options as needed.)***



## EXHIBIT E

### PLEDGE TO END BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Everyone has the right to feel physically and emotionally safe at school. As members of the Tatum ISD community, we must do everything we can to treat others with respect and to accept everyone regardless of our differences.

Bullying happens when, at school, at a school-related or -sponsored activity, or in a District-operated vehicle, a student or group of students engage in intentional behavior meant to harm another student or place a student in fear of harm. It can take many forms, such as verbal or physical aggression, and can even occur electronically, which is called cyber-bullying. It involves an imbalance of power between the students and disrupts the school environment.

Examples of bullying and other harassment include threats, taunting, teasing, assault, demands for money, stealing someone's property, name-calling, rumor spreading, and isolating a student from others and could be based on a person's race, gender, color, disability, or other factors.

The District will discipline any student who engages in bullying, harassment, or other related misconduct. Consequences of this behavior may include removal from the classroom to a disciplinary placement, a change in classroom, or even a change in campus. Severe behavior may result in expulsion, and law enforcement will be contacted if a student is thought to have engaged in illegal conduct.

It is important to review the District's policies at FFH and FFI that address prohibited conduct and bullying.

#### **Student's responsibility:**

"I commit that I will not bully or harass my peers and understand that, if I do engage in this behavior, I will be subject to consequences. If I witness bullying or any other type of harassment, I will report it to my parent, a teacher, or another school employee."

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Parent/Guardian's responsibility:**

"I will encourage my child to report any instances of bullying to school personnel, and, as a partner with the District in the safety and acceptance of all students, will report any concerns I have with the way my child is being treated or if my child reports to me possible bullying and harassment of other students."

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_