



Anti-Defamation League®

Imagine a World Without Hate®

Responding to Hate Incidents in Schools

Resources and Best Practices for School Administrators

Remember “RICE” – Ready, Investigate, Communicate, Educate

Ready

Prepare and practice your response to potential bias-motivated incidents.

- **Update policies** on bullying, harassment, vandalism and other in-person and online infractions. Make sure policies explicitly prohibit incidents motivated by bias, clearly outline consequences, and are inclusive of all students.
- **Regularly review policies** with students, staff and families.
- **Establish a reporting protocol** for students to anonymously disclose incidents. Offer in-school and online reporting mechanisms.
- **Develop a data collection protocol** consistent with state standards, so you can track the prevalence and types of incidents.
- **Build relationships** with community partners, law enforcement, media outlets and other local institutions. The relationships can enhance your ability to rapidly and comprehensively respond to an incident.

Investigate

Every report should be swiftly and seriously investigated.

- **Get all the facts** before determining an appropriate response.
- An investigation **reassures the targets** that you are taking the matter seriously, and **sends a message to perpetrators** that such behavior is unacceptable.
- For potential criminal behavior, **contact law enforcement**. Be sure to **preserve evidence** – take photos or screenshots before painting over or deleting anything.
- **Interview all witnesses** separately, and collect written accounts.
- After the investigation concludes, **apply relevant policies in a consistent, fair, and impartial manner**. Involve social services as necessary.



Communicate

Ensure that stakeholders receive regular updates about the school's actions in the wake of an incident.

- **Silence breeds anxiety and rumor.** In today's social media world, incidents cannot be kept under wraps for very long. People need to hear from you immediately and frequently, or they may assume that you are not taking the matter seriously.
- Immediately upon learning about an incident, it is appropriate to **send separate messages** tailored to students, staff, families and the wider community...
 1. **Expressing your concerns** about reported bias-motivated behavior.
 2. Stating that your administration **will not tolerate hate**.
 3. **Announcing an immediate investigation** of the matter.
 4. **Sharing resources** for students affected by the incident, including counseling and plans for an educational response.
- **Send regular updates** to the various stakeholders with investigation and educational response developments.
- **Respect students' privacy** in your outreach – do not disclose personal information for anyone involved in an incident.

Educate

Teach students how to understand and challenge bigotry.

- **Bias-motivated incidents can serve as “teachable moments”** – opportunities to empower students to take action against hate.
- **Discuss incidents with the entire student body**, and allow time for young people to process the event in small groups. Educators should be prepared to have conversations about bias, and may require training in this important skill.
- **Schools have a responsibility to educate perpetrators as well.** Oftentimes, young people who engage in bias-motivated activity do not understand the meaning or impact of their actions. Teachers, counselors and administrators should coordinate disciplinary, behavioral and educational interventions.
- **Anti-bias education cannot be “one-and-done”** – combating prejudice requires an ongoing commitment from educators and community partners. Infuse anti-bias efforts into curriculum, school climate, and family outreach, and sustain this work year after year.



Resources

In order to assist your administration in effectively responding to bias-motivated incidents, we are pleased to offer the following resources:

- [ADL's Model Cyberbullying Policy](#) can be used to guide your development of effective and inclusive behavior policies.
- [ADL's "Zero Indifference" framework](#) can help you design a comprehensive response to bias.
- [ADL's A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute workshops](#) train administrators, teachers, students and parents in anti-bias strategies.
- [Echoes and Reflections](#), the award-winning Holocaust education resource developed by ADL, USC Shoah Foundation and Yad Vashem, teaches about the dangers of leaving hate unchecked.
- **Utilize ADL curricular resources**, including:
 - [Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate](#)
 - [Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment](#)
 - [Race Talk](#) – Engaging Young People in Conversations About Race and Racism
 - [Lesson Plans](#) on Bias, Bullying and Social Justice
 - [Books Matter](#) – Children's Literature on Bias and Diversity
 - [Additional Anti-Bias Resources](#)
- **Help families** continue these important conversations at home. Share ADL's resources:
 - [Table Talk Family Conversation Guides](#)
 - [Additional Resources](#)

More ADL Education resources can be found at
<http://www.adl.org/education>

For more information about any of the best practices, trainings or resources in this document, please contact:

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