

Ensuring Students Learn in Schools Free from Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Based on Race, Religion, National Origin, Gender, Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation

Resources for Schools, Educators, Students, Families and Community Members

Events in the news locally, nationally and internationally can contribute to an environment that may expose students to disturbing or hateful messages in their everyday lives and at school. It can also result in increased bullying, harassment and discrimination of students based on their actual or perceived religion, race, national origin, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Preventing Bullying Based on Race, Religion or National Origin

On December 31, 2015, the U.S. Department of Education issued a [Dear Colleague letter](#) asking educational leaders throughout the nation to ensure that their schools are learning environments where students are free from discrimination and harassment based on their race, religion or national origin.

A focus on these protections, while always essential, is particularly important amid international and domestic events that create an urgent need for safe spaces for students,” wrote former Education Secretary Arne Duncan and Acting Education Secretary John B. King in the letter. Duncan and King also urged school leaders to “anticipate the potential challenges that may be faced by students who are especially at risk of harassment—including those who are, or are perceived to be, Syrian, Muslim, Middle Eastern, or Arab, as well as those who are Sikh, Jewish, or students of color.

There are many resources available to help school leaders, educators, students, families and community members promote a more positive school climate and to prevent and address bullying, harassment and discrimination. A list of resources and links to resources that educators, students, families and community members may find helpful follows.

Bullying and Muslim Youth

Educators Have an Important Role to Play

In the blog “[Protecting Our Muslim Youth from Bullying: The Role of the Educator](#)” on [stopbullying.gov](#), the authors outline what has led to an increase in bullying and harassment of Muslim students and highlight resources to help educators to: [create an anti-bias learning environment](#); teach students about stereotypes, bias, and discrimination; use [current events](#) to help students understand real world incidents [and develop students’ ability to challenge biased language](#), especially jokes and slurs.

Council on American-Islamic Relations Offers Guides and Help

The Minnesota chapter of the [Council on American-Islamic Relations \(CAIR-MN\)](#) has many helpful resources and information available to educators and the public, including “[An Educator’s Guide to Understanding Islamic Religious Practices](#)” and several “[Know Your Rights](#)” guides. CAIR-MN’s pocket guides are designed specifically for Muslim students help them

understand their rights at school and where to go for help if they experience bullying or harassment. For more information, visit [CAIR-MN](#) or call (612) 206-3360.

Bullying and LGBT Youth

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth and those perceived as LGBT are at an increased risk of being bullied. Stopbullying.gov has [resources on ensuring safe and supportive learning environments for LGBT students](#). Other resources include:

- [GLSEN](#), the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, a national education organization offers several resources focused on ensuring safe schools for LGBT students and all students. Resources include [Ready, Set, Respect!](#) It is a toolkit GLSEN developed in partnership with the [National Association of Elementary School Principals](#) (NAESP).
- [“Schools In Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools”](#) is a resource that can serve as a roadmap for educators and parents on providing safe and supportive environments for all transgender students. Produced by the National Education Association, the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and Gender Spectrum, along with HRC Foundation and the American Civil Liberties Union, the resource offers practical advice, field-tested tips and narratives of real experiences from students and educators.
- [“Transgender Students in Schools: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Public School Boards and Staff”](#) is a resource developed by the National School Boards Association (NSBA). NSBA says the guide answers many of questions about what is needed to support safe learning environments for all students, including transgender students.
- [“Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students in Schools: Key Recommendations for School Administrators”](#) is a guide from the American Psychological Association.

How to Respond to Prejudice, Bias and Stereotypes

[Teaching Tolerance](#), which focuses on reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equitable school experiences for children, provides resources to educators and others, including:

[Speak Up at School: How to Respond to Everyday Prejudice, Bias and Stereotypes](#), a guide for teachers, and [Responding to Hate and Bias at School](#), which shows educators how to respond to a hate-related incident in their school or community, guiding them through crisis-management and post-crisis efforts. It also provides research-based strategies for reducing bullying and creating a welcoming school climate. The booklet is written primarily for school administrators but provides valuable information for counselors and teachers as well.

Developing an Inclusive Cultural and Respectful School Climate

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) offers a variety of training programs for pre-K through 12th-grade school communities—educators, administrators, youth and families—which focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias

and bullying. You can find these training programs and other helpful resources on [ADL's Education and Outreach Anti-Bias Education page](#). In ADL's "[Current Events Classroom](#)," teachers can find timely and brief lesson plans that can help them teach current news and topics, including the lesson plan "[Terrorist Attack in Paris and Scapegoating](#)."