BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION IN MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A REPORT TO THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON INCIDENTS REPORTED UNDER THE SAFE SCHOOLS REPORTING ACT OF 2005

Presented by the
Maryland State Department of Education

March 31, 2016

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Maryland State Department of Education March 2016
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INTRODUCTION

The Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 became effective on July 1, 2005. Under the law (Education Article §7-424, Annotated Code), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to requires all county boards of education and the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to report incidents of harassment or intimidation against students in public schools under the county board's and commission's jurisdiction to the Maryland General Assembly. Additionally, MSDE was required to create and distribute a “Standard Victim of Harassment or Intimidation Report Form”, and to submit a report to the Maryland General Assembly consisting of a summary of the information included in the victim of harassment and intimidation forms filed with the local boards the previous school year.

To ensure the law was implemented according to reporting requirements, the first reporting period of the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 encompassed the first semester of the 2005-2006 school year. The information contained in the first report to the General Assembly represented this time period. Reports submitted after the 2005-2006 school year included data from both the first and second semesters.

On July 1, 2008 the General Assembly updated the laws with amendments that affected the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005. House Bill (HB) 1209 removed the sunset requirement of the original Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005. Thus, the requirements of that law remain in effect unless changed by future legislation. HB 1158 added a provision to the original law which permitted school staff members to use the same incident reporting form previously available to only students, parents, or close adult relatives of a student. Lastly, HB 199 required the Maryland State Board of Education to develop a model anti-bullying policy in collaboration with school system representatives by March 31, 2009. The model policy was developed according to the requirements of Education Article §7-424.1, Annotated Code of Maryland and was formally adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education on February 24, 2009. The model policy was forwarded to the twenty-four Ss (LSSs) in the State and used as a basis for developing their own anti-bullying policies as required by the law. All LSSs submitted copies of their anti-bullying policies to the State Superintendent of Schools on or before July 1, 2009. The law also kept all requirements of the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 while expanding the definition of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and adding a definition for an electronic communication.

This report describes the process used by MSDE to carry out the mandates of this law. The reporting period for this tenth report encompasses the entire 2014-2015 school year including both the first and second semesters. As stated earlier, this process began including both semesters starting with the 2006-2007 report. The report still
provides additional information gathered as a result of the implementation of the law, including LSS practices and procedures employed in order to meet this requirement. The findings from the LSS reports are detailed, including incident rates, locations and descriptions of the incidents, ages of victims and perpetrators, alleged motives of the perpetrators, investigative methods used, corrective actions taken by schools, number of days missed by victims and perpetrators, and the number of false allegations reported.

PROCESS

In compliance with the law, MSDE was tasked with developing forms that included the elements required by the law. In July 2005, MSDE assembled a group of stakeholders that included representatives from Carroll, Montgomery, Baltimore, Cecil, and Frederick Counties. In addition, representatives from the mental health profession participated. With guidance from the Office of the Attorney General, the group worked to reach consensus on forms and procedures that would fulfill the intent of the legislation. Furthermore, a spreadsheet was developed to ensure the accurate and consistent collection of data from all LSSs.

Once the forms were finalized, they were sent to local superintendents of schools for review and comment. In addition, draft forms were sent to directors of student services, school counseling supervisors, and supervisors of safe and drug-free schools for comment. Where possible, and in keeping with the decision to include only elements mandated by law, comments and suggestions were incorporated into the forms.

The Harassment or Intimidation (Bullying) Reporting Form is a standard form to be used by all public schools, and cannot be modified. Its title was changed to correspond to the requirements of HB 199 and it is now entitled the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form and includes a section for check-off if used by a school staff member. Its components and function remain the same. Similarly, to correspond to HB 199, the investigation form is now entitled the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident School Investigation Form and includes a section for check-off if used by a school staff member. The school system reporting instrument is now entitled the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument.

A major concern not addressed in the law had to do with the retention of the forms once processed. An Advice of Council letter dated December 20, 2005 stated the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) defines student records as records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. The Maryland Student Records System Manual, authorized by COMAR 13A.08.02, essentially mirrors FERPA and states that "Records are information recorded in any way, including but not limited to handwriting, print, computer media, video or audiotape, film, microfilm, or microfiche." Therefore, given the information contained in the harassment and intimidation forms, the Advice of Council was that these forms are student records for both the victim and the perpetrator. School staff had expressed serious concerns regarding this issue.
An amendment to Education Article §7-424, Annotated Code of Maryland was submitted during the 2007 General Assembly session. House Bill 383 sought to amend Education Article §7-424 to preclude these forms from becoming part of a student's record. It was felt the inclusion of these forms in a student's record might be detrimental to a victim, or if a harassment/intimidation accusation was determined to be false or to contain incorrect information, then having these forms on a student's record would be unfair to an alleged offender. House Bill 383 was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor. Therefore, these forms are no longer required to be part of a student's record.

On July 7, 2008, a memorandum was sent by the State Superintendent of Schools to local superintendents of the 24 s describing the changes to the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 now required by HB 1158 and HB 1209. On August 13, 2008, information about the changes to the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 and copies of the updated forms were provided electronically to the school system personnel responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the Safe Schools Reporting Act in the 24 s. This same information and forms were shared with the Directors of Student Services from the 24 LSSs at an administrative meeting on October 15, 2008 and has been shared annually every October since that time.

The reporting and investigative forms have been updated (2014 & 2015) in order to keep up with modern times, technology, and to track more data fields which we have learned include bullying, harassment and intimidation behaviors.

In June of each year, copies of all updated forms and directions pertaining to the Safe Schools Reporting Act are sent electronically to the school system personnel responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the Safe Schools Reporting Act in the 24 s. In July of each year, a memorandum is sent by the State Superintendent of Schools to local superintendents reminding them of the requirements of the Safe Schools Reporting Act. The data is usually received by MSDE in December of that year.

Please note that data from the SEED School of Maryland are included in this report. The SEED School, which opened in August, 2009, is a college preparatory public boarding school that serves students state-wide.
FINDINGS

Implementation of the Law by LSS (LSS)

The 24 LSS reported data for the entire 2014-2015 school year. In this report, the accompanying graphs (Figures 1-11), Tables 1 and 2, and narrative provide a comparison of the reported information for three complete school years. On the graphs, the 2012-2013 school year information is presented in grey, the 2013-2014 school year information is presented in light blue, and the 2014-2015 school year information is presented in purple.

Incident Rates

A total of 4,154 incidents were reported for the 2014-2015 school year. This represents a statewide decrease of 433 reported incidents from the 2013-2014 school year, and a statewide decrease of 1,101 reported incidents in the 2012-2013 school year. The number of reported incidents in each LSS is presented in Figure 1; the rate of reported incidents per 1,000 students relative to 2014-2015 enrollments is shown in Table 1. Sixteen (16) LSS indicated a decrease in the number of reported incidents while eight (8) LSS indicated an increase. Several LSS reported relatively significant decreases in the number of incidents. Prince George’s County decreased by 171 reported incidents, Baltimore City decreased by 156 reported incidents, Calvert County decreased by 97 reported incidents, and Frederick County decreased by 71 reported incidents. The only district that saw a significant increase in the amount of reported incidents was Baltimore County with 170 more than the previous year.

The larger systems had the most reports of incidents filed. Baltimore County reported the most incidents with a total of 751 and a rate of 6.8 incidents per 1,000 enrolled students. Following Baltimore County was Montgomery County (439, 2.8), Baltimore City (316, 3.7), Ann Arundel County (307, 3.9), Howard County (277, 5.2) and Frederick County (252, 6.2). Dorchester (92, 19.2), Kent (38, 18.0), and Talbot (64, 13.8) Counties reported the most incidents relative to enrollment.

It should be noted that three school systems (Dorchester, Kent, and Talbot) with a higher number of reported incidents relative to enrollment (Table 1) are smaller school systems – that is, school systems with a smaller overall student enrollment. These systems have reported more incidents per 1,000 students. Kent County declined in the 2014-2015 school year, going from (63) or 29.8 incidents per 1,000 to (38) or 18.0 per 1,000. Talbot County declined in the 2014-2015 school year, going from (79) or 17.4 incidents per 1,000 to (64) or 13.8 per 1,000.

Based on the methods of reporting and the varied means of distributing the reporting form in LSS, it is speculated that the decrease in reported incidents may be attributed to improved prevention strategies, holding students accountable for their actions, as well as an increase in awareness of bullying and harassment on the part of students, staff, and parents.
The 2014-2015 school year marks the sixth year during which bullying prevention programming was required to be presented by the LSSs to students, staff, and volunteers. Bullying prevention models and frameworks such as PBIS, Olweus, Character Counts, Restorative Practices, and Two Way texting are used throughout the LSS. It is speculated that the programming further heightened awareness of the issue among the school communities, which initially increased reported numbers for several years.

The variation in numbers of reported incidents may reflect the differences among school systems in levels of awareness of staff, parents, and students. School staff with greater understanding of the problems of bullying, and the importance of reporting and investigating incidents, are more likely to be pro-active in disseminating forms and making parents and students aware of the resources available to them. In turn, parents and students who are more aware of the need to report bullying incidents and the assistance that school staff can provide are more likely to report such incidents.

All school systems have implemented system-wide and school-wide programs about bullying awareness and prevention programs. All twenty-four LSSs have their Bullying and Harassment form online, which can now be filled out and submitted electronically; thus making it easier to report incidents.
Figure 1: Number of Reported Incidents, by Local Education Agency
Table 1: Number of Reported Incidents Relative to Enrollment, by Local Education Agency

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Locations of the Incidents

The majority of the incidents occurred on school property (84.2%). The second largest number of incidents occurred on school buses (12.9%), followed by on the way to/from school (8.7%). It should be noted that each incident report could identify more than one location therefore; the percentages do not total 100%.

Figure 2: Locations of Reported Incidents, Statewide

* Note: "Via internet" is a new category added in SY 2014-2015.
Descriptions of the Incidents

To describe the incident, those who completed the investigation form were asked to choose from a list of descriptions which was created from research of the most prevalent forms of bullying (see Victim of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form). The largest number of incidents involved teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks or threatening (68.3%). In other words, direct verbal bullying/harassment is experienced more than other forms, such as physical bullying, exclusion, gestures, extorting, or spreading rumors. Fifty point four percent (50.4%) of the incidents involved some form of physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair-pulling or throwing an object (see Figure 3). These percentages remain consistent with those from the previous two reports (2012-2013 and 2013-2014).

Figure 3: Descriptions of Reported Incidents, Statewide

*New description category added in SY 2013-2014
** New description category added in SY 2014-2015

Note: Each incident report could identify more than one description; therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.
Ages of Victims

According to the submitted reports, students twelve years of age were the most frequent victims of incidents of bullying and harassment (n=640, 16.0%, see Figure 4). This represents the same age-group as the March 31, 2014 report (n=688, 15.07%). The number of victims of bullying and harassment decreased for each age 12 and 13. There was an increase for age 14 (n=480, up 37 from 2014) and 17 (n=173, up 10 from 2014). Ages birth to 13 has been largely consistent during the 10 years that these data have been collected. The majority of victims were between the ages of 9 and 15 (n=3289, 82.0%). This is consistent with research that indicates that more bullying and harassment occurs in middle school than in elementary or high schools. The ages of victims range from 4 to 19 or older. LSS have slightly improved in the manner in which some cases did not report the age of the victim. In 2012-2013, there were 48 cases with ages unknown, in 2013-2014 there were 43 cases with ages unknown and in 2014-2015 there are 38 cases with ages unknown.

Figure 4: Ages of Victims, Statewide
Ages of Alleged Offenders

The greatest number of incidents were committed by 13-year-olds (n=802, 15.01%) according to the submitted reports (see Figure 5). This is consistent with the 2013-2014 school year’s data (n=843, 15.04%) from the March 31, 2014 report. Data in the March 31, 2014, and 2015 reports indicated that the greatest number of incidents had also been committed by 13-year-olds. Data in the March 31, 2012 report indicated that the greatest number of incidents were committed by 12 year olds. The number of offenders for each age group decreases from age 13 through age 19 and older. This is a similar pattern indicated in the 8 previous reports. The majority of offenders were between the ages of 10 and 15 (n=3819, 72.0%). This age bracket indicates that the majority of bullying occurs at middle school age. The ages of offenders ranged from 4 to age 19 and older.

Figure 5: Ages of Alleged Offenders, Statewide
Alleged Offender’s Motives

The Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form listed motives that were specified in the law and others that were gathered from research as to the reasons why students bully other students. The motives reported are presented in Figure 6. The motive most frequently cited was “Just to Be Mean” (33.4%). Thirty-one point eight percent of the incidents were allegedly perpetrated for “Unknown” (31.8%) Reasons, Another Reason (19.0%), “To Impress Others” (16.0%) “Physical Appearance” (7.2%); “Sex” (2.7%), and “Race” (2.5%) were next, although with much smaller percentages. The remaining incidents were allegedly perpetrated due to National Origin, Gender Identity, disability, and Religion. These factors reportedly made up less than 4% of motives for bullying, respectively.

Figure 6: Description of Alleged Motives as Reported by Investigator, Statewide

Note: Each school investigation form could identify more than one alleged motive; therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.
Description of the Investigations

Investigative methods were developed from a variety of techniques utilized by school administrators investigating any behavioral infraction. The most frequent investigative methods were Interviews of Student Victims (89.7%), Interviews of Alleged Offenders (84.9%), Interviews of Witnesses (53.1%), Interviews of Student Victims, Interviewed Alleged Offender’s Parent/Guardian (43.1%), Interviews of The Teachers or School Staff (37.8%), Parent/Guardian (31.7%), and Witness Statements collected in writing (32.9%). Other means were also used when necessary (see Figure 7).

Investigative methods varied and most categories showed increases in the percentages in their use from 2013-2014 school year. This would suggest that school administrators are devoting more time to investigate the details of reported incidents.

Figure 7: Methods Used to Investigate Incident as Reported by Investigator, Statewide

Note: Each school investigation form could identify more than one alleged motive; therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.
Corrective Actions Taken

Corrective action was taken in the vast majority of reported incidents that were not False Allegations. Student Conferences (64.4%), Parent Phone Call (51.6%) Student Warnings (41.5%) and Parent Conferences (27.3%) were among the most frequently used corrective actions (see Figure 8). Counseling was also offered in more than nineteen percent of the incidents (19.8%). As schools work toward reducing suspensions and providing positive behavioral interventions, student and parent interactions are considered as more effective ways to change behaviors. Out-of-school suspensions or expulsion accounted for ten percent (10.7%). There was also an increase in the amount of in-school suspensions (5.6% to 6.9%) compared to last year.

Figure 8: Corrective Actions Taken as Reported by Investigator, Statewide

Note: Each school investigation form could identify more than one alleged motive; therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.
**Number of Days Victims Missed From School by Incidents**

As a group, victims did not miss many school days as a result of the incidents in the majority of cases. Victims missed school in 10.4% of cases; this is an increase of one percent compared to last year (see figure 9). It is unknown from the data whether victims missed school due to injury, fear of attending or other reasons. In comparison to similar data from the previous report, 89.6% of the incidents did not result in missed days. This represents a slight decrease of 0.5% of victim’s not missing time from school when compared to the information in the March 31, 2015 report.

**Figure 9: Absences as a Result of Incidents for Victims, Statewide.**

![Bar chart showing percentage of reported incidents by number of days missed.](chart.png)
Number of Days Missed From School by Alleged Offenders

Alleged offenders missed more school than victims as a result of the incidents in the majority of cases. Offenders were absent in 9.7% of the cases. (See Figure 10) It is unknown from the data whether the offenders missed school due to suspensions, injury or other reasons. This is a decrease of 3.9% of incidents in which offenders did miss school when compared to the information in the March 31, 2015 report. Last year (2015 report), there was a higher percentage (5.9%) of offenders who missed 6 or more days. This percentage has been improved to 1.3% percent in the 2014-2015 school year.

Figure 10: Absences as a Result of Incident for Alleged Offender, Statewide
Number of False Allegations Reported

Investigations into some incident reports found them to be false allegations (see Figure 11 and Table 2). A total of 329 false allegations were reported in 23 school systems, representing 8.0% of the total number of incidents reported statewide. This is an increase of 1.7% from last school year. The largest number of false allegations per reported incidents was in Howard County (42.6%), followed by Kent County (21.1%), Prince George's County (13.9%) and Queen Anne's County (12.9%). Worcester County and the SEED School reported zero number of false allegations.

Figure 11: Number of False Allegations, by Local Education Agency
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<td>St. Mary's</td>
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<td>1.9%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talbot</td>
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<td>1.3%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
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<td>Wicomico</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEED School</td>
<td>50.0%*</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY

During the 2014-2015 school year, 4,154 incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation were reported in Maryland’s public schools using the reporting system mandated by the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005. All school systems reported incidents. Consistent with previous reports, most incidents occurred at the middle-school age. The majority of victims, 68.3%, reported being teased, called names, or threatened while 50.4% of the reported incidents involved a physical attack. The most frequently reported motives behind these incidents included, just to be mean, 33.4%, to impress others, 16.0%, and physical appearance, 7.2%. It was also noted that there was a large amount of alleged motives captured under the categories titled unknown, 31.8% and another reason, 19.0%. MSDE is consistently improving methods to improve the description of data falling into these categories.

These bullying acts were most likely to have occurred on school property, 84.2%, and investigation of incidents primarily involved interviewing the victim, offender, witnesses, victim’s parent/guardian, or teachers and/or other school staff. The data shows that 10.7% of incidents resulted in an out-of-school suspension or expulsion while 6.9% of incidents resulted in in-school suspensions. Ten percent of victims, reportedly missed school as a result of the bullying incident compared roughly twelve percent of alleged offenders.

The number of incidents reported in Maryland represents about 4.7 reports filed per 1,000 enrolled students; (decrease of 0.6% compared to March 31, 2015 report). As bullying prevention programs continue to be implemented in the LSSs and awareness is raised, the number of reported incidents may continue to decrease in coming school years.

The 2013 Maryland Youth Tobacco Risk Behavior Survey (YTRBS) surveyed 80,752 students in grades 6 through 12 during the 2012-13 school year in randomly selected Maryland public high & middle schools. The survey revealed that 19.6% of Maryland’s school students reported that they had been harassed or bullied on school property during the past 12 months of the survey’s administration. This is a downward trend of 1.6% from the 2011 survey’s results. The survey also revealed a downward trend of 0.2% reporting to have been bullied electronically (14.2% in 2011 and 14.0% in 2013). However, there was an upward trend, +1.4% (7.4% in 2011 to 8.8% in 2013) of those students that did not go to school because they felt unsafe in the last 30 days.

The Indicators of School Crime and Safety (ISCS) is annually produced by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), in the U.S. Department of Education, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), in the U.S. Department of Justice. It presents the most recent data available on school crime and safety which are based on information drawn from a variety of sources, including national surveys of students, teachers, and principals.¹

To compare and gain a national perspective of the bullying, findings from the national publication, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety (2014)* has been included. The ISCS report shows the percentage of students who reported being bullied was lower in 2013 (22%) than in every prior survey year (28% each in 2005, 2009, 2011 and 32% in 2007).

**Considerations:**

There are several areas where improvements in the prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation can be made.

- While the State policy calls for immediate notification of parents for students involved in bullying, harassment or intimidation, the state average for “Corrective actions Taken” shows that 51.6% of the reported 4,154 incidents parents were called, with another 6.3% notified via parent letter. By following the policy, schools could improve their percentage of parent notification.

- With 84.2% of the Bullying occurring on school property, schools could improve the manner in which they identify and staff those common problem areas.

- The use and review of school building level on a quarterly basis to project bullying patterns and locations could assist in the identification and prevention of incidents.

- Training should be included for new administrators on how to handle bullying, harassment and intimidation issues should be included as a part of their preparation and evaluation.

- Training for parents could be provided through parent/teacher organizations.

MSDE is submitting this report in order to provide the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly with the information requested by Education Articles §7-424 and §7-424.1, Annotated Code of Maryland. Incidents for the entire 2015-2016 school year will be reported in the next report, to be submitted on March 31, 2017. MSDE will continue to assist LSS as they develop and implement system-wide and school-wide programs of prevention and intervention to address bullying, harassment, or intimidation. It is important that school systems continue to educate staff, students, and parents about bullying, harassment, and intimidation and to provide resources for bullying prevention, encourage victims to report incidents when they occur, and notify parents immediately when incidents occur, follow up with thorough investigations.
Appendices - Forms
Appendix A – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form

BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR INTIMIDATION REPORTING FORM

Directions: Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are serious and will not be tolerated. This is a form to report alleged bullying harassment, or intimidation that occurred during the current school year on school property, at a school-sponsored activity or event off school property, on a school bus, on the way to and/or from school*, or on the internet sent on or off school property; or that substantially disrupted the orderly operation of the school. Bullying, harassment and intimidation mean any intentional conduct, including verbal, physical or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being. The conduct must (1) be motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability, or (2) be threatening or seriously intimidating. Electronic communication means communication transmitted by means of electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer and pager. Conduct that is of a sexual nature is the most commonly reported form of sexual harassment. This term is generally thought to mean actions, language or visual materials which specifically refer to, portray or involve sexual activity or language. Conduct of a sexual nature may include overt sexual solicitations, inappropriate touching, sexual jokes and inquiries about a person’s sex life. Sexual harassment is the broader term that encompasses conducts of a sexual nature such as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment also includes acts that are not overtly sexual but rather are directed at individuals based on their gender such as profanity or rude behavior that is gender-specific.

If you are a student, the parent/guardian of a student, a close adult relative of a student, or a school staff member and wish to report an incident of alleged bullying harassment, or intimidation, complete this form and return it to the Principal at the student victim’s school. You may contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time.

(PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)

Today’s date: __________ / _________ / ____________

School: ______________________________________________

School System: ________________________________________

PERSON REPORTING INCIDENT

Name: ___________________________________________________

Telephone: ___________________________ E-mail: ___________________________________________________

Place an X in the appropriate box: ☐ Student ☐ Parent/guardian of a student ☐ Close adult relative of a student ☐ School Staff

☐ Bystander

1. Name of student victim(s): ________________________________________________ Age: _________ School _________
   ________________________________________________ Age: _________ School _________
   ________________________________________________ Age: _________ School _________

2. Name of alleged witness(es) (if known):
   ________________________________________________ Age: _________ School _________
   ________________________________________________ Age: _________ School _________
   ________________________________________________ Age: _________ School _________

3. Name(s) of alleged offender(s) (if known): Age School Is he/she a student?
   ________________________________________________ _______ ____________ ☐ Yes ☐ No
   ________________________________________________ _______ ____________ ☐ Yes ☐ No
   ________________________________________________ _______ ____________ ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. On what date(s) did the incident happen?:
   _______ / _______ / _________ _______ / _______ / _________ _______ / _______ / _________
5. Place an X next to the statement(s) that best describes what happened (choose all that apply):

- Any bullying, harassment, or intimidation that involves physical aggression
- Getting another person to hit or harm the student
- Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks, or threatening, in person or by other means
- Demeaning and making the victim of jokes
- Making rude and/or threatening gestures
- Excluding or rejecting the student
- Intimidating (bullying), extorting, or exploiting
- Spreading harmful rumors or gossip
- Related to the student’s disability
- Related to the student’s perceived sexual orientation
- Cyber bullying (e.g. social media including Facebook, Twitter, Vine, Instagram, etc.)
- Electronic communication (e.g. email, text, sexting, etc.)
- Gang related
- Gang recruitment
- Human trafficking/Prostitution recruitment
- Racial Harassment
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual in nature
- Other (specify) ____________________________

6. Where did the incident happen (choose all that apply)?

- On school property
- At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property
- On a school bus
- On the way to/from school*
- Via Internet- sent on or off school property

*Will be collected unless specifically excluded by local board policy

7. Describe the incident(s), including what the alleged offender(s) said or did. ___________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

8. Why did the bullying, harassment or intimidation occur? ___________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

9. Did a physical injury result from this incident? Place an X next to one of the following:

- No
- Yes, but it did not require medical attention
- Yes, and it required medical attention

10. If there was a physical injury, do you think there will be permanent effects?  Yes  No

11. Was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident?  Yes  No
   If yes, how many days was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident? __________

12. Did a psychological injury result from this incident? Place an X next to one of the following:

- No
- Yes, but psychological services have not been sought
- Yes, and psychological services have been sought

13. Is there any additional information you would like to provide? _______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: ___________________
Appendix B – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident School Investigation Form

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION INCIDENT SCHOOL INVESTIGATION FORM

School Personnel Completing Form: ________________________________ Position: ____________________________________

Today's date: _________ / _________ / ___________ School: ________________________________

School System: ____________________________________

Person Reporting Incident (From reporting form) Name: ____________________________________________

Telephone: ___________________________ E-mail: ____________________________________________

Place an X in the appropriate box: ☐ Student ☐ Parent/guardian ☐ Close adult relative
☐ School Staff ☐ Bystander

1. Name of student victim(s): ____________________________________ Age: ______ Days absent as a result of the incident: ______

__________________________________ Age: ______ Days absent as a result of the incident: ______

__________________________________ Age: ______ Days absent as a result of the incident: ______

2. Name(s) of alleged witness(es) (If known): Age School

_______________________________ ___________ ________________________________ ___________

_______________________________ ___________ ________________________________ ___________

_______________________________ ___________ ________________________________ ___________

3. Name(s) of alleged offender(s) (If known): Age School Is he/she a student? Days absent due to incident

_______________________________ ___________ ________________________________ ___________ ☐ Yes ☐ No _________

_______________________________ ___________ ________________________________ ___________ ☐ Yes ☐ No _________

_______________________________ ___________ ________________________________ ___________ ☐ Yes ☐ No _________

(Please print)

Total number of alleged offenders: _________________________

INVESTIGATION

4. What actions were taken to investigate this incident? (choose all that apply)

☐ Interviewed student victim ☐ Interviewed alleged offender’s parent/guardian
☐ Interviewed alleged offender(s) ☐ Examined physical evidence
☐ Interviewed witnesses ☐ Obtained copy of police report
☐ Witness statements collected in writing ☐ Conducted student record review
☐ Interviewed school nurse ☐ Examined video evidence
☐ Reviewed any medical information available ☐ Conducted meeting with Resource Officer
☐ Interviewed teachers and/or school staff ☐ Contacted social media site
☐ Interviewed student victim’s parent/guardian ☐ Other (specify) ______________________________

5. Why did the harassment or intimidation (bullying) occur (alleged motives)? (choose all that apply)
6. Where did the incident happen (choose all that apply)?

- On school property
- At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property
- On a school bus
- On the way to/from school*
- Via Internet- sent on or off school property

*Will be collected unless specifically excluded by local board policy

7. What corrective actions were taken in this case (choose all that apply)?

- None were required, this was a false allegation
- None, the incident did not warrant any corrective action
- Student conference
- Student warning
- Letter of apology
- Mediation
- Counseling
- Parent letter
- Parent phone call
- Parent conference
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension/expulsion
- Behavior contract
- Alternative placement/setting
- Plan of Support to include a “go to” adult in the school
- Community Service
- Separation from other student to include transfer or change in schedule
- Meeting with Resource Officer
- Referral to Counselor or Therapist
- Other (specify) ______________________________

8. Did a physical injury result from this incident? Place an X next to one of the following:

- No
- Yes, but it did not require medical attention
- Yes, and it required medical attention

9. If there was a physical injury, do you think there will be permanent effects?  

- Yes
- No
10. Was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
   If yes, how many days was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident?  ______

11. Did a psychological injury result from this incident?  Place an X next to one of the following:
   ☐ No  ☐ Yes, but psychological services have not been sought  ☐ Yes, and psychological services have been sought

12. Additional pertinent information gained during the interview:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

13. Investigator notes:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: _______________________________
### Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument

**Reporting Period: 2014-2015 School Year**

Due to MSDE by December 4, 2015

Instructions: Enter the total number of responses in each category. Because some items are "mark all that apply," totals may exceed the total number of reports filed. Enter responses in bordered, highlighted cells.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local School System:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicate the number of persons of each age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Ages:
- Age birth to 4
- Age 5
- Age 6
- Age 7
- Age 8
- Age 9
- Age 10
- Age 11
- Age 12
- Age 13
- Age 14
- Age 15
- Age 16
- Age 17
- Age 18
- Age 19 and older

#### Location of the Incident:
- On school property
- At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property
- On a school bus
- On the way to/from school**
- Via Internet-on or off school property

**Will be collected unless specifically excluded by local board policy**

#### Description of the Incident:
- Any bullying, harassment, or intimidation that involves physical aggression
- Getting another person to hit or harm the student
- Teasing, name calling, making critical remarks, or threatening, in person or by other means
- Demeaning and making the victim of jokes
- Making rude and/or threatening gestures.
- Excluding or rejecting the student
- Intimidating (bullying), extorting, or exploiting
- Spreading harmful rumors or gossip
- Related to the student’s disability
- Related to the student’s perceived sexual orientation
- Cyber bullying (e.g. social media including Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Electronic communication (email, text, sexting, etc.)
- Gang related
- Gang Recruitment
- Human trafficking/prostitution recruitment
- Racial harassment
- Sexual harassment
- **Other**

*Other- Include bulleted comments in one cell*
## Alleged Motives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alleged Motives</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender identity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical appearance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To impress others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just to be mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang related</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human trafficking/Prostitution recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another reason*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Another Reason-Comments (include bulleted comments in one cell)

## Days Student Victim Was Absent As a Result of the Incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days Student Victim Was Absent As a Result of the Incident</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 day</td>
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<td>2 days</td>
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<td>3 days</td>
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<td>4 days</td>
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<td>8 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Days Alleged Student Offender Was Absent As a Result of the Incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days Alleged Student Offender Was Absent As a Result of the Incident</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 day</td>
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<td>2 days</td>
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<td>3 days</td>
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<td>4 days</td>
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<td>9 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 10 days</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Investigative Methods: Number of Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed student victim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed alleged offender(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed witnesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness statements collected in writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed school nurse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed any medical information available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed alleged offender's parent/guardian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed teachers and/or school staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted student record review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed student victim's parent/guardian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examined physical evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtained copy of police report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed video evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed Resource Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted social media site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Other- Include bulleted comments in one cell

### Corrective Actions: Number of Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None required; this was a false allegation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None, the incident did not warrant any corrective action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student conference</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of apology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent letter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent phone call</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent conference</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Detention</td>
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<td>In-school suspension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out-of-school suspension/expulsion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Contract</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative placement/setting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan of Support to include a &quot;go to&quot; adult in the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation from other student to include transfer or change in schedule</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting with Resource Officer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Referral to counselor or therapist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other- Include bulleted comments in one cell

**Total Local School System Number of Incident Reports Filed without multiple victims:**

**Total Local School System Number of Reports Filed with multiple victims:**

Thank you for your assistance in submitting this data.
The Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 mandates the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to require county boards of education to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation against students attending a public school under the jurisdiction of the county board. The law further specifies procedures for reporting these acts, including specific guidelines for a Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form. Additionally, the law requires MSDE to report to the Maryland General Assembly the following:

- A description of the act constituting the harassment or intimidation (bullying);
- The age of the victim and alleged perpetrator;
- The allegation of the alleged perpetrator’s motive;
- A description of the investigation of the complaint and any corrective action taken by the appropriate school authorities;
- The number of days a student is absent from school, if any, as a result of the incident; and
- The number of false allegations reported.

Each local school system (LSS) is required to designate a staff person who will be responsible for implementing this law within the system. LSSs will establish procedures for collecting, compiling and reporting information to MSDE. The following procedures are defined by the law:

- MSDE is providing a copy of the standard Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form to LSSs. Each LSS will make this form available to students, parents or guardians of students, close relatives of students, and school staff members.
- Students, parents or guardians of students, and close relatives of students will return the completed Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Form to the principal of the student victim’s school.
- An investigation of the alleged incident will occur in accordance with LSS policies.
- A sample Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Investigation Form is being provided. LSSs may modify this form, however, the elements on this form are required to complete the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument.
- LSSs will need information from the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form as well as information obtained from the investigation in order to complete the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument (Excel spreadsheet). The Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument must be submitted to Dr. Michael Ford at MSDE michael.ford1@maryland.gov as an attachment by email by December 5, 2015.
- A hard copy of the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument must be mailed by December 2, 2015 with the “Certification of Superintendent’s Signature” to:

Dr. Michael Ford
Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Student and School Services
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD  21201
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is Responsible</th>
<th>What is Needed</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reporting Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LSS</td>
<td>Make <em>Harassment and Intimidation (Bullying)</em> forms available to students and parents/guardians and close adult relatives</td>
<td>Starting September, 2005</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TBD by LSS</strong></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Schools</td>
<td>Report alleged incidents and results of investigation to LSS</td>
<td><strong>December 5, of each year.</strong></td>
<td><strong>September, through January</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSS</td>
<td>Submit <em>Harassment and Intimidation (Bullying)</em> Incident Reporting Instrument to MSDE (Dr. Michael Ford- see first page for directions)</td>
<td><strong>March 31, of each year.</strong></td>
<td><strong>September, through January</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSDE</td>
<td>Submit report to Maryland General Assembly</td>
<td><strong>March 31, of each year.</strong></td>
<td><strong>September, through January</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This law will remain in effect unless changed by legislation. Subsequent reporting periods will be for entire school years. Reports to the General Assembly will be submitted by March 31 of each calendar year.*

The following definition of bullying, harassment, or intimidation is included on the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form* to guide students, parents, adult relatives, and school staff when completing this form, and to guide LSS staff when investigating incidents.

*Bullying, harassment, or intimidation means conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication, that (I) creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being, and is: 1. motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion ancestry, physical attribute, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or 2. threatening or seriously intimidating; and (II) 1. occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or 2. substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school. Electronic communication means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.*

If you need additional information, please contact Dr. Michael Ford, Safety Specialist, at (410) 767-0031, or email michael.ford1@maryland.gov.