

ENUMERATION OF STATEWIDE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS AND LOCAL POLICIES

Anti-bullying and harassment laws are designed to address the needs of students who experience victimization in their schools. The most effective policies require protections for all students and also specify, or enumerate, categories of students who are particularly vulnerable due to bias and who research shows experience the highest rates of victimization. Anti-bullying laws, and school district policies, should specifically protect students based on their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion.

Enumeration is necessary to protect all students as research has consistently shown that students experience less bullying, feel safer overall, and that teachers are more likely to intervene to prevent incidents of bullying in schools with enumerated policies. Research conducted by GLSEN on anti-bullying policy efforts found that students who attended schools with an enumerated policy heard homophobic and racist remarks less often compared to students with no anti-bullying policy. They were less likely to feel unsafe in school compared to students in schools with generic or no policies. These students were also less likely to perceive bullying, name-calling, or harassment as a problem at their school compared to students in schools with a generic policy or with no policy.¹ Additional findings:

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ) students from schools with an enumerated policy hear less often the expressions “that’s so gay” or “you’re so gay” (47.2% vs. 63.3%), and sexist remarks (49.4% v. 64.9%) than students attending schools with a generic policy, and hear less often racist remarks (33.7% v. 44.1%) than students attending schools without any policy.¹
- LGBTQ students who attend schools with an enumerated policy experience less victimization in school based on their sexual orientation (17.5% v. 30.8%) or gender expression (22.6% v. 31.6%) than students who attend a school with a generic policy.²
- Educators in schools with enumerated anti-bullying policies reported higher levels of comfort addressing bullying based on sexual orientation (77.7% v. 53.9%) and gender expression (72.3% v. 52.2%) than educators in schools with no anti-bullying policy.¹
- Educators report feeling “somewhat” or “very comfortable” intervening in bias-based bullying behavior based on sexual orientation (77.7%), gender expression (72.3%), and race (80.5%) in schools with an enumerated anti-bullying policy.¹

References

1. Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C., & Giga, N. M. (2016). From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary Students and Teachers. New York: GLSEN.
2. Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Zongrone, A. D., Clark, C. M., & Truong, N. L. (2018). The 2017 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation’s schools. New York: GLSEN.

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