



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

ABOUT SCHOOL BULLYING

What Sikhs Should Know about Harassment and Bullying in New York City Public Schools

On September 3, 2008, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein announced Chancellor's Regulation A-832, which established a procedure for addressing bias-based harassment, intimidation, and bullying in schools.

What does "bias-based harassment" mean?

Bias-based harassment is an intentional act of bullying or intimidation that negatively affects a student's ability to learn or participate in school activities. The harassment can be based on a student's race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or disability. Bias-based harassment can be physical, verbal, or written actions. These acts could include stalking, physical violence, threats and teasing, use of derogatory language, or unwanted touching.

Examples of bias-based harassment include calling a turban-wearing Sikh student "Osama bin Laden" or "tomato head"; making fun of or threatening to cut a Sikh student's hair; or any unwanted touching of or attempts to take off a Sikh student's turban or patka



Where can a person report bias-based harassment?

Reports can be made to:

- 1) a designated staff person who is selected by the principal (their name should be listed on the Respect For All poster in your school);
- 2) any school employee; or
- 3) the Office of School and Youth Development by sending an email to: RespectforAll@schools.nyc.gov.

Who can file a report of bias-based harassment?

Reports can be filed by:

- 1) any student who has experienced harassment;
- 2) anyone who witnesses or knows about the harassment, such as a parent or other students; and
- 3) staff members who know about or witness harassment or bullying.

What happens after a report is submitted?

- 1) In the first 24 hours, the school has to enter the incident into the school system database.
- 2) Within 5 days, an investigation of the complaint filed must be completed.
- 3) Within 10 days, the findings of the report must be released to the students involved.

If a school fails to address a report of harassment and the student continues to be harassed, the

student should file a complaint directly to the Office of School and Youth Development by emailing respectforall@schools.nyc.gov or calling (212) 374-6834. You should also contact the Sikh Coalition so we ensure that the school is responsive.

What will happen to the student accused of harassment?

If the student is found to be in violation of the regulation, the student will be subjected to disciplinary action based on the Department of Education's Discipline Code (<http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/DisciplineCode>). Where appropriate, the student will receive counseling services and resources by the school.

What support will students who experience

The privacy of all individuals and witnesses will be respected by the Department of Education (DOE). Only when necessary, in cases like a police investigation, will the DOE disclose any information to resolve the issue. In addition, retaliation against students or staff who report or assist in the investigation of harassment, bullying, or intimidation is prohibited under this regulation.

Will parent/caregivers be automatically notified?

Parent/caregivers of both the accused student and the alleged victim will be notified by the school. The alleged victim can ask the school to refrain from telling the parents if worried about personal safety.

What are schools supposed to be doing to prevent harassment?



- 1) Every student's family should receive a "Respect for All" brochure at their home at the start of the school year.
- 2) Students should visibly see "Respect for All" posters in their schools with the name of the person responsible for receiving and investigating reports of harassment at their school.
- 3) All students and school staff should receive training on "Respect for All" and the new regulation on bias-based harassment.
- 4) All schools are required to create a plan for how they will create a safe and respectful environment for all students.



Where can I go to find more information about this regulation?

The regulation can be downloaded from the DOE's website:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/ChancellorsRegulations>

Or you can call the Dept. of Education for a hard copy at (212) 374-6834.

Where can I go to find out how to deal with bullying and teach others about Sikhs and Sikhism?



The Sikh Coalition created a website for Sikh youth and their parents and teachers for this exact purpose. Visit www.khalsakids.org today! If you or your children are having problems at school, get in touch with the Sikh Coalition. We can help to set up workshops and presentations at schools and work with teachers and school staff to help end bullying. Contact sonny@sikhcoalition.org or call 212-655-3095 x86.

**If your school is not abiding by the guidelines listed here, your rights are being violated.
Contact The Sikh Coalition so we can help address the problem.**



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