

Bullying Compliance Report

R.S. 17:416.14

September 2024

Overview

As required by R.S. 17:416.14, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) shall provide a report to the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) on the number of reports of failures to report bullying received by the LDOE from school governing authorities. This report shall be submitted by September first annually.

Background

What is Bullying?

R.S. 17:416.14 defines bullying as a pattern of any one or more of the following behaviors:

- Gestures, including but not limited to obscene gestures; written, electronic, or verbal communications, including but not limited to calling names, threatening harm, taunting, malicious teasing, or spreading untrue rumors. Electronic communication includes but is not limited to a communication or image transmitted by email, instant message, text message, blog, or social networking website through the use of a telephone, mobile phone, pager, computer, or other electronic device.
- Physical acts, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, choking, damaging personal property, or unauthorized use of personal property.
- Repeatedly and purposefully shunning from activities.

The pattern of behavior, as defined above, is exhibited toward a student, more than once, by another student or a group of students and occurs, or is received by, a student while on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related function or activity, at any designated school bus stop, in any school bus or any school or private vehicle used to transport students to and from school or any school-sponsored activity or event.

The pattern of behavior shall have the effect of physically harming a student, placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm, damaging a student's property, placing the student in reasonable fear of damage to the student's property, or shall be sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough to either create an intimidating or threatening educational environment, substantially interfering with a student's performance in school, or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Why Is Addressing Bullying Important in Schools?

Children who are bullied can experience negative health issues. The [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#) found that children who are frequently bullied are nearly twice as likely to regularly skip school and are more likely to want to leave school after finishing secondary education when compared with those who are not bullied. This study is reinforced in findings by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), which states that bullying can result in physical injury, social and emotional distress, self-harm, and even death. It also increases the risk of depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, and dropping out of school.

Per the CDC, youth who bully others are at increased risk for substance misuse, academic problems, and experiencing violence later in adolescence and adulthood. Youth who bully others and are bullied themselves suffer the most serious consequences and are at high risk for mental health and behavioral problems.

Bullying Reporting

R.S. 17:416.14 requires that any teacher, counselor, bus operator, administrator, or other school employee, whether full- or part-time, who witnesses bullying or who receives a report of bullying from an alleged victim, and who fails to report the incident to a school official be investigated by the school governing authority. Upon finding a reasonable expectation that the individual failed to act, the school governing authority shall suspend the individual without pay. The school governing authority shall report each finding of a failure to report and the length of suspension for each employee who failed to report to the LDOE.

Any school administrator or official who fails to notify a parent or legal guardian of a report of bullying, investigate a report of bullying in a timely manner, take prompt and appropriate disciplinary action against a student who was determined to have engaged in bullying, or report criminal conduct to the appropriate law enforcement official shall be investigated by the school governing authority. The LDOE shall report to BESE the number of reports of failures to report bullying from school governing authorities by September 1 annually.

The LDOE created a [form](#) to capture this information from school systems. A notice was placed in the System Leader newsletter in April 2024 and the System Leader call in May 2024 directing school systems to report this information.

Findings

Failure to Act

As of August 31, 2024, the LDOE has not received any reports of failure to act.

For additional information, please contact terran.perry@la.gov.