



Education Law Center

*Making sure that all of Pennsylvania's children
have access to quality public schools*

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED AT A PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOL

IMPORTANT: ELC's publications are intended to give you a general idea of the law. However, each situation is different. If, after reading our publications, you have questions about how the law applies to your particular situation, contact us or an attorney of your choice.

If your child is being seriously bullied, threatened, or hurt by another student at school, there are steps that you can take to help your child. First, immediately tell the teacher. If the teacher is unable to fix the problem, tell the principal or vice principal. Put the problem in writing if necessary. However, if school officials do not take the necessary action, listed below are some other places in Philadelphia where you can go for help.

Places to Call for Help

Bully Hotline

215-400-7233

Available 24 hours/7 days a week

Call to report bullying, violence, harassment, and threats. The information is given to a school district investigation team who will contact the school and family to try to correct the situation.

Pennsylvania Safe Schools Advocate

215-644-1277

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday

Jack Stollsteimer, who is the Pennsylvania Safe Schools Advocate, and other staff members will investigate the problem. They can accompany parents of victims to hearings and provide information about getting counseling.

NOTE: If you have tried calling these numbers, and you still don't get any help, you can always sign up to talk to the **School Reform Commission** (which oversees the District) about your child's situation. Call 215-400-4040 to get more information about how to speak to the SRC.

You may be afraid to send your child to school because the bullying is so bad. **However, fear for your child's safety is usually not enough to excuse attendance from school.** All children between the ages of eight and seventeen must be in school (with a few exceptions). If your child is between these ages, and she has more than three unexcused absences in a row, she may have to go through truancy proceedings. To avoid this situation, call the phone numbers listed above to get help.

Ways to Transfer Your Child to a Different School

Extenuating Circumstances: If the bullying is very bad, you can ask that your child be transferred to a different school due to "**extenuating circumstances.**" Ask your school for an **EH-36 form** to fill out. Make sure when you fill out the form that you give specific information about how your child has been bullied or harassed at school and describe how your child has been harmed by the bullying. The Regional Office then decides if your child will be transferred and, if so, to what school. You cannot request a transfer to a specific school.

Victim of a Violent Criminal Offense: If your child is a **victim of a violent criminal offense** (like rape, robbery or aggravated assault) at school, your child has the right to transfer to a safer school in the District. You must report the incident to the police before you can request a transfer. The District must then transfer your child within 10 calendar days of your request. You should call the District's Parent Help Line at 215-400-4000 if you have questions about this process.

Persistently Dangerous School: If your child attends a school in the District that has been identified as a "**persistently dangerous school**," you have the right to request a transfer to a safer school in the District. The list of persistently dangerous schools comes out at the beginning of each school year. You should be notified in writing by your child's school if her school is on the list. To apply for a transfer, you should ask your school for an **EH-36E form** to fill out. Where the form says "Reason for Request," you should write that your child attends a persistently dangerous school.

IEP Process: If your child has an "**Individualized Education Program**" or IEP, you may be able to use the special education laws to get the District to fix the problem. For more information, see the ELC fact sheet, "WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOUR CHILD WITH A DISABILITY IS BEING HARASSED BY OTHER STUDENTS." You can get this document and other ELC publications from www.elc-pa.org or by calling the Philadelphia office at the number listed below.

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