



The
Legal Aid Society
— of Cleveland
Since 1905

This brochure was prepared by Legal Aid which serves low-income residents of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake and Lorain Counties in Northeast Ohio.

New Client Intake
Toll Free: 888.817.3777
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Learn more about Legal Aid and upcoming brief advice clinics:

www.lasclev.org

Legal Aid Offices:

Cleveland & Administrative Offices
1223 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, OH 44113

Elyria Office
1530 West River Road, Suite 301, Elyria, OH 44035

Jefferson Office
121 East Walnut Street, Jefferson, OH 44047

Painesville Office
8 North State Street, Suite 300, Painesville, OH 44077

If you have a communications limitation, contact Legal Aid through the Ohio Relay Service at 800.750.0750.

Legal Aid offers interpretation and translation services so those with limited English proficiency can communicate with Legal Aid staff in their dominant and/or preferred language.

The information in this brochure cannot take the place of advice from a lawyer. Each case is different and needs individual legal advice. You should contact a lawyer if you need representation or if you have questions.



Bullying in Ohio Schools

Know Your Rights and Your Public School's Obligations



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Does Ohio Have An Anti-Bullying Law?

Yes. Ohio has an anti-bullying law that applies to all public school districts in Ohio, including charter schools. It does not apply to private schools.

What Is The Definition Of “Bullying”?

Ohio law defines bullying broadly to include any written, verbal, electronic (cyberbullying), or physical act, done on purpose, that a student does to another student that:

- causes mental or physical harm,
- happens repeatedly in a school environment, and
- is so harsh, constant, and far-reaching that it creates a threatening or abusive educational environment.

Bullying in Ohio includes violence within a dating relationship and bullying by an electronic act. An “electronic act” means an act done through the use of a cell phone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication device.

What Does The Law Require Schools To Do?

All schools must have a policy that:

- bans the bullying of students on school property, on school buses, or at school-sponsored events;
- allows schools to discipline students who violate the policy;
- allows anonymous reporting of bullying; and
- protects students from new or additional bullying.

Schools must also:

- make the policy available to all students and their parents or guardians;
- give all students a written or verbal explanation of the penalty for violating the policy;
- send a written explanation of the policy and the consequences, if violated, to each student’s parent or guardian at least once per school year; and
- require each Board of Education to train all members on its harassment, intimidation, and bullying policy.

How Can I Protect My Child?

Know your rights. Parents should make sure they have a copy of the policy before problems happen. Read it carefully and ask the school to follow the policy. Even if a school does not discipline the bully, it must still protect the victim from future bullying and retaliation.

Report abuse. If you find out that your child is a victim of bullying, the incident should be immediately reported to the school. Ask the school to investigate the incident and to report its findings to you. Keep records of your communication with the school, and be sure to follow up on all complaints.

Communicate with your child. Discuss the school policy and the seriousness of bullying with your child throughout the year. These conversations may encourage your child to report bullying incidents and may discourage your child from bullying other students.

Seek legal advice. If you feel the school has failed to protect your child, failed to comply with the law, or violated your child’s rights, contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights at 216.522.4970.