

Information to include in notification letters and investigative reports

Pre-investigation notification letters to parents/guardians of the complainant and the accused:

- Notice that a complaint of bullying/harassment has been received (do not include names of students)
- Notice that an investigation will commence immediately and finished within 5 school days (assuming that informal or formal¹ alternative dispute resolution/mediation was not appropriate or successful)
- Reminder about the prohibition against retaliation and making false complaints
- Enclose a copy of bullying/harassment policy and investigation procedures
- HARASSMENT ONLY: Information to the parents/guardians of the complainant about the right to request an independent review (refer to your harassment policy which should include an explanation about the three circumstances under which a parent/guardian may request an independent review) and the right to file a complaint with an alternative agency (the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights)
- NOTE: If an informal resolution process or a formal alternative dispute resolution/mediation program is utilized and is successful, the school still needs to send a notice letter to the parents/guardians of the complainant and alleged bully(ies)/harasser(s) stating that a complaint was

¹ Please note that a distinction must be made between informal resolution methods (e.g., teachable moments) and formal alternative dispute resolution methods (e.g. mediation or alternative dispute resolution programs with trained staff). The latter would require parental consent before minors could participate in the program.

filed and that it was successfully resolved through an informal or formal resolution process; also enclose a copy of the bullying/harassment policy and remind the parents of the complainant of their right to an independent review.

Post-investigation notification letter:

- Notice that the investigation has been completed and that bullying/harassment has been/has not been substantiated
- If bullying/harassment or some other misconduct was substantiated, notify parents that the school has taken appropriate action which may include discipline and/or remedial action. NOTE: You may not specifically disclose to the parents/guardians of complainant that disciplinary action was taken against the perpetrator unless a FERPA waiver has been obtained from the parents/guardians of perpetrator(s).
- Inform the parents/guardians of student(s) found to have engaged in bullying/harassment or some other form of misconduct that they may have a right to appeal the discipline decision in accordance with the school's discipline policy.
- HARASSMENT ONLY: Reminder to parents/guardians of complainant about the independent review process.

Investigative report:

- Names of complainant, alleged bully(ies)/harasser(s), witnesses, and any other interviewees; name of investigator
- Date, time, and description of the incident(s)
- Dates and summaries of interviews
- Summary of findings and recommendation(s)