



# Hate in High School

## HOW TO REPORT ANTISEMITIC BIAS AND HARASSMENT TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

StandWithUs SAID OFF  
**LAW**

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## HOW TO REPORT ANTISEMITIC BIAS AND HARASSMENT TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS



When you are harassed or discriminated against by a classmate, teacher or administrator—or if you witness someone else facing mistreatment because they are Jewish, Israeli or Zionist—you should immediately report the incident.

### The following steps will help you seek protection and support at your school

**Safety first.** Before anything else, make sure you and those around you are safe. If you need immediate assistance or if someone has been injured or is being threatened with immediate injury, contact 9-1-1 and/or your school's security personnel. For more information on reporting **antisemitic hate crimes**, please view our [fact sheet](#).

#### **Document the offensive behavior.**

Please document within the bounds of relevant school policies and state rules by taking a screenshot of any offensive text messages, taking a picture of property that was damaged or graffitied, videotaping threatening behavior, language, signage or clothing, etc.

» If you cannot document the incident in the moment for any reason, make sure to write up detailed notes as soon as you can.

**Respond appropriately.** Do not escalate a threatening situation by responding with counter-threats or other harassment. Stay calm and respectful. Follow all student conduct rules. This will protect you from being disciplined yourself, and/or from being accused of contributing to the incident.





## Report!

**Report criminal activity if applicable.** If you feel physically unsafe or there has been criminal activity—such as an assault, theft or direct threat of violence—immediately report it to your local law enforcement or school security.

- » It is important to report to both local police and your school's security to ensure you get as much protection and enforcement as possible.
- » Indicate that the criminal activity is based on your ethnicity or shared ancestry, like being Jewish or Israeli [or a Zionist](#). For example, do not assume that an officer will understand why it is antisemitic for a classmate to steal your backpack from your locker and to graffiti "Globalize the Intifada" onto your locker door. (\*More on this below.)
- » Make sure to request the claim/report number from the officer so you can follow up.



\*Important note regarding reporting identity-based antisemitism. **Do not assume that your local authorities, administrators or investigators know about antisemitism and will understand why the incident you are reporting was antisemitic.** Many people may assume that antizionist attacks are political speech. Antisemitism that targets Jews because of their Zionism is not legitimate criticism of Israel, even if the word "Israel" is used.

State in your report filing that the incident was *Jewish identity-based* and explain why. For instance, antisemitic incidents can fall under several identity-based categories: one can be targeted for their religious Jewish identity when wearing a yarmulka/kippa or a Star of David necklace; one can also be targeted for their ethnic/shared ancestry Jewish identity; or one can be targeted for their national-origin identity if Israeli.

StandWithUs can help you figure out which applies and how to explain this in the report. See this fact sheet on [Zionist Identity](#) for further information.

**Report through your district's complaint process.** Find a link on your school or district's website about reporting harassment, intimidation, bullying and/or discrimination and find any specified contact person. Each district's website will look different; see examples to the right.

1. File a formal complaint about the incident(s) either through the district's online form or by sending an email to the appropriate contact person.

Your complaint should include as many details as possible—where the incident happened, who was involved, who was a witness, what exactly happened—and attach all evidence you have. Clearly articulate the conduct which violates the “prohibited conduct” under the relevant policy. It is helpful to specifically note the violation. For example, Student A's repeated name calling and use of historically derogatory Jewish slang violates Section 5 of the District's Anti-Bullying Policy.

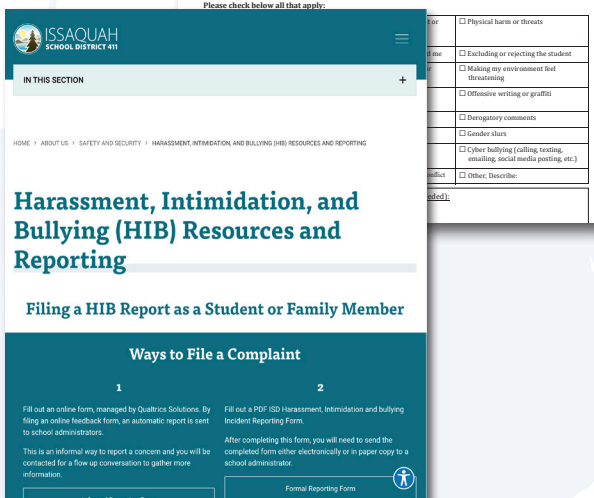
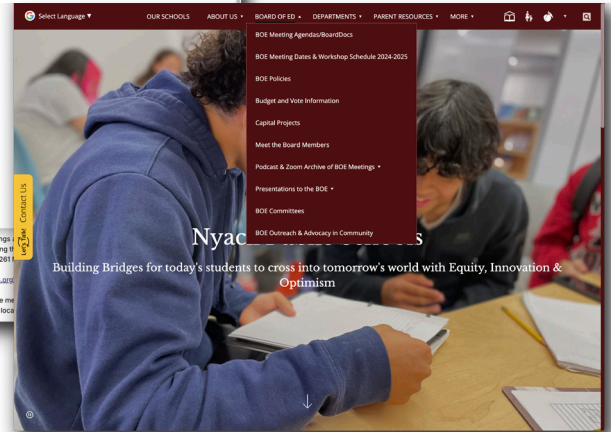
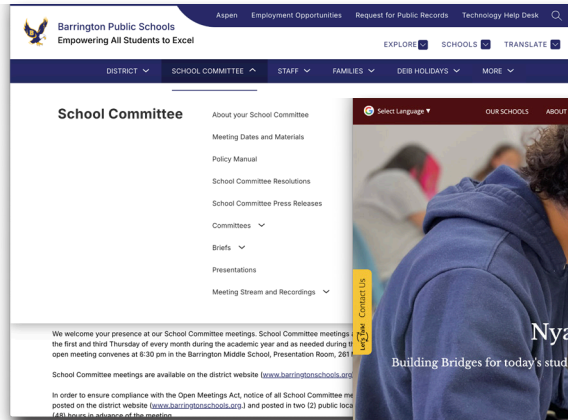
You will almost always be able to add more details or evidence later, but the more you can give right away, the better.

Each district will have its own process to report incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying and/or discrimination, but see above for examples of what the forms or websites look like.

2. Check your school district's policies to determine how long the school district has to respond to your complaint. It is usually about 1-2 weeks. If you have not heard back from the district after the required time, reach back out in writing.

You can find your school district's policies about the complaint procedure on the district's website, or by googling the name of your district and “Board Policies.” To the left are some examples.

**If your district fails to follow the timeline required or does not adequately respond, you may be able to escalate the matter to your state.** Each state has its own process for appealing a school district decision or failure to act. StandWithUs can help you figure this out. In general, there will be a **state-level** superintendent or Board of Education that is tasked with reviewing local school district decisions, and you may be able to appeal your matter to that entity.





## To Learn More About

THE STANDWITHUS HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT,  
visit [www.standwithus.com/highschool](http://www.standwithus.com/highschool)

THE STANDWITHUS MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM,  
visit [www.israelink.org](http://www.israelink.org)

## Watch Out for Retaliation

If you feel you have been treated differently or harassed further after filing your complaint, this might be retaliation. Teachers, school district staff, and other students are prohibited from retaliating against someone who brings a complaint about harassment, bullying, intimidation or discrimination.

- » If this happens, immediately document as much evidence of the mistreatment as possible. It is extremely important to show that there is a connection between the mistreatment and the filing.
- » For example, if you get a bad grade on a test after you filed a complaint, but the teacher has no idea that you complained, that would not be considered retaliatory behavior. However, if an administrator walks past you in the hallway, disciplines you for something very minor that other students are doing at the same time, and quietly calls you a "snitch," that is an indication of unlawful retaliation.

## Public Records Request

In addition to filing a complaint/report, you also have the right as a student or parent to submit a public records request to your school district. This can be helpful when you are trying to learn more about or uncover the school or district's responses to antisemitic incidents at the school. For example, many school districts will receive reports of antisemitism but mislabel these incidents as "bullying" without noting that it was identity based. A public records request will shed light on this.

There is a federal Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), which you can learn about [here](#). Each state also has its own public records law that is similar to FOIA. Your school district or your state's department of education can provide information about how to make a request under the relevant public records laws. If you cannot find the appropriate contact information from your district or state, you can submit your request for public records directly to your Superintendent's office and ask that they forward it to the appropriate person.



### REPORT AN ANTISEMITIC INCIDENT

[www.standwithus.com/report-an-antisemitic-incident](http://www.standwithus.com/report-an-antisemitic-incident)

### ADDITIONAL FACTSHEETS

[www.standwithus.com/legal-factsheets](http://www.standwithus.com/legal-factsheets)