



School Hate Crime Resource Guide: Executive Summary

**Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security**

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SCHOOL HATE CRIME RESOURCE GUIDE

Massachusetts

"...[A]ddressing hate crimes in schools is critical to creating a more inclusive and respectful society that experiences fewer hate crimes and less prejudice overall."

-The Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The goal of this *School Hate Crime Resource Guide* is to provide information to assist elementary, middle, and high schools in Massachusetts in preventing and responding to bias-motivated incidents and hate crimes. Schools, including colleges and universities, are the third most common location of hate crimes reported to law enforcement in Massachusetts.

Research Methodology

The members of the research team from Northeastern University (NEU), American University (AU), and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of New England began the research for this guide by identifying and reviewing websites from more than 60 organizations. As a second phase of the research, the research team interviewed key stakeholders including members of the Massachusetts Hate Crimes Task Force, representatives from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Hate Crime Statistics

According to the 2019 FBI national hate crime data collection, educational institutions are the third most frequent location where hate crime incidents took place (9.6 percent), followed by incidents that occurred in or near residences or homes (24.6 percent) and on highways, roads, alleys, streets, or sidewalks (18.2 percent).

Since 2011, the total number and percentage of hate crimes reported in Massachusetts that took place in educational institutions has continued to increase. By 2017, the percentage of hate crimes increased by more than 10 percent to about 20.6 percent. According to the 2019 Massachusetts hate crime data, about one in every five hate crimes occurred in an educational institution (19.5 percent) making schools in Massachusetts, similar to the national hate crime data, the third most common location for hate crimes following incidents that took place along highways, roads, alleys, streets, or sidewalks (20.7 percent) and in or near residence or homes (19.7 percent).¹

¹ Other location types with more than ten hate crime incidents reported included other/unknown, commercial/office building, government/public building, restaurant, church/synagogue/temple/mosque, convenience store, and park/playground.

Model Policy

While federal and state laws protect against certain crimes motivated by race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and disability, Massachusetts school districts and individual schools should take action to develop a comprehensive hate crime policy that seeks to prevent and reduce hate crimes in their communities. School administrators have an opportunity to ensure that they create a safe school environment for all students, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators.

This *School Hate Crime Resource Guide* is intended to assist schools in developing a hate crime policy that prevents and offers strategies to respond to bias-related incidents and hate crimes. Each school's hate crime policy should include the following elements:

- Outline the range of detrimental effects that bias-motivated behaviors have on students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and the school community.
- Affirm that any form of bias-motivated behavior is unacceptable and should be reported.
- Emphasize that the impact of bias-motivated incidents extends beyond the victims and parties directly involved in the incident and is experienced by the community at large.
- Create clear and safe protocols for reporting bias-motivated incidents and a culture that encourages reporting by students, parents, teachers, staff, school administrators, and the community at large.
- Determining the appropriate personnel to respond and provide support – through intervention or education – to address this type of behavior and its consequences.
- Ensuring that there is no retaliation for reporting. Reporting bias-motivated incidents protects the safety of the those targeted by incidents and reduces the number of incidents within the school and its community.

Explicitly address the role of the internet and cyber hate in encouraging and facilitating bias-motivated incidents and hate crimes.

Prevention Activities

The best way to prevent bias motivated incidents in schools is to teach students, parents, teachers, staff, and school administrators about the impact of these incidents on individuals and the entire community. Providing a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment is key to assisting students in their academic success and future careers. Preventing school violence requires addressing issues at the individual-, family-, and community-levels. Research shows that prevention efforts by fellow students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and community members, can reduce bias – whether violent or not – and improve the school environment.

There are several evidence-based curricula to prevent bias behavior for teachers and school administrators including:

- [Massachusetts Child and Youth Violence Prevention Services](#)
- [Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance](#)
- [Facing History and Ourselves' Back to School 2021 Building Community for Connection and Learning](#)
- [Facing History and Ourselves' Community Matters a Facing History and Ourselves Approach to Advisory](#)

Other national curricula include:

- [Anti-Bias Building Blocks for Grades K-5 \(Anti-Defamation League\)](#)
- [Empowering Students, Challenging Bias for Grades 6-8 \(Anti-Defamation League\)](#)
- [Confronting Bias, Working Towards Equity for Grades 9-12 \(Anti-Defamation League\)](#)

Furthermore, a variety of lesson plans exist that could be implemented in a classroom such as:

- [Bullying Prevention and Intervention \(Department of Secondary and Primary Education\)](#)
- [Nazism and Jim Crow \(United States Holocaust Memorial Museum\)](#)
- [Coronavirus and infectious Racism \(Anti-Defamation League\)](#)
- [What is Racism \(Anti-Defamation League\)](#)
- [Addressing Hate Online: Countering Cyberhate with Counterspeech \(Anti-Defamation League\)](#)

Although some of the curricula have a cost to access, which might be a deterrent to some school districts, there are several available grants from federal and state resources that could help to cover the costs.

Reporting Process

Even though several schools have adopted hate crime policies and programs, bias motivated incidents and hate crimes may still occur. If such incidents occur in a school setting, it is important that schools have an established reporting process.

- As a best practice, impartial persons should be assigned to receive reports of bias-motivated incidents. At least two designated officials—one at the school-level and one at the administrative- or district level—should be available to receive these reports.
- All incidents, whether criminal or not, that include bias-motivated behavior including discrimination, harassment and retaliation should be reported.
- All reports of bias-motivated behaviors and incidents, including discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, should be taken seriously by those receiving the report and those conducting the investigation.
- All school personnel including teachers, staff, and school administrators should be trained to recognize bias-motivated behaviors and incidents in schools to be able to respond to these incidents in the appropriate manner.

- Trained administrators will investigate the incident following the district protocol. Students who are directly involved in bias-motivated incidents, as well as their parent/guardian should be informed of the investigation.
- Anonymous reporting should be offered as an option for students, parents, teachers, staff, school personnel, and members of the greater community to report bias-motivated incidents. Although anonymous reporting poses challenges to investigations, the reporting outlet or designated person receiving the anonymous report should take as much relevant and timely information as possible to conduct an investigation.

This Executive Summary links back to the full Hate Crime Resource Guide which provides more information and tools for preventing and responding to bias motivated incidents and hate crimes in schools.