

FY25 Hate-Bias Incidents RESPONDING PROCEDURES

Founded on the principles of Board of Education [Policy ACA: Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency](#), Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) considers a hate or bias-motivated incident to be any disruptive conduct (oral, written, graphic, physical, or electronic communication) that includes **INTENTIONAL DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOR** based on personal characteristics; race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/parental status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations.

Discrimination in any form will not be tolerated. It hinders the school district's mission to serve all students and staff and to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity. The Board recognizes that equity involves more than legal compliance; it requires proactive efforts to address implicit biases and structural barriers that have led to exclusion. Our classrooms remain spaces where students will learn about diverse perspectives and viewpoints, aligning with our core values of inclusivity and acceptance. Any allegation of hate-bias is unique and will be addressed through the lens of intent and context. Hate bias is different from *hate crimes*. [Hate crimes](#) are addressed as a matter of law outside of the district's jurisdiction.

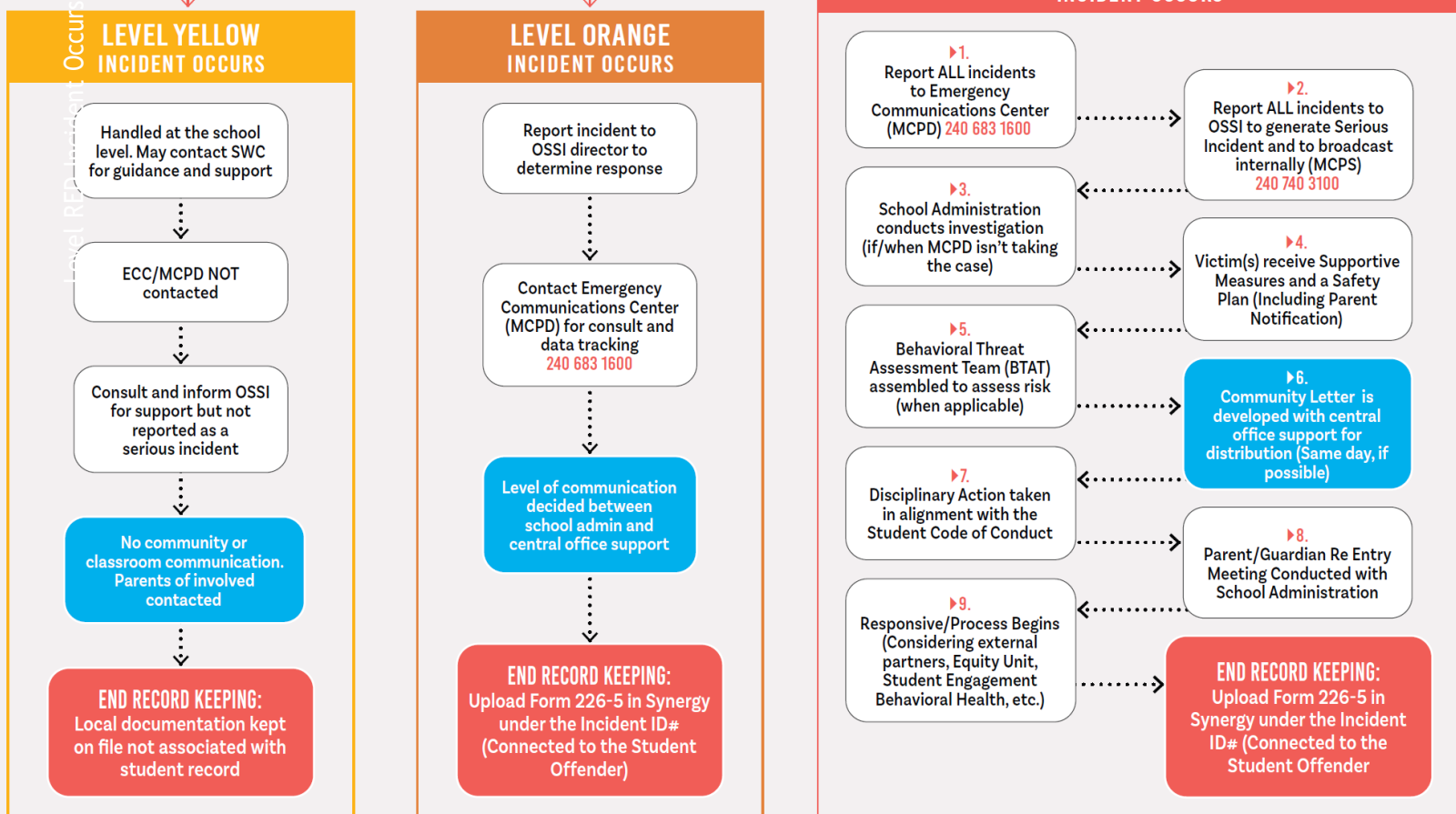
MCPS investigates all allegations of hate-bias that: a) occur on school property (or bus), at a school-sponsored activity or event, or b) substantially disrupt the orderly operation of a school learning environment. Examples include hate speech; using a racial, ethnic, or other slur; displaying hateful or racist symbols, flags, or drawings; mocking a disability; or telling offensive "jokes" about someone's identity.

- 1. INCIDENT / COMPLAINT:** Student, staff member, parent/guardian, or bystander makes verbal or written report to any staff member/administrator. Complete [MCPS Form 226-5, Hate Bias Incident Reporting Form](#) and submit to principal/designee. *(Staff members will assist the student/parent/guardian if they cannot complete the form.)*
- 2. INQUIRY / FACT-FINDING:** School principal/designee conducts an initial assessment of allegation/incident to determine context; the degree (scope and scale) of intent, risk, threat, or targeted violence posed by an individual or group. Consultation with central support team is recommended to determine incident level. *(Yellow, Orange, Red)* The Behavioral Threat Assessment Team may be implemented based on the situation.
- 3. MCPD POLICE CONTACTED:** Incidents determined to be hate-bias (Levels Red and Orange) must be reported to the Emergency Communications Center (MCPD) at **240-683-1600** per the MOU. **Call 911 if imminent danger exists.**



START

FORM 226-5 OR COMPLAINT RECEIVED. DETERMINE LEVEL OF INCIDENT



- 4. INCIDENT REPORTED TO OSSI:** Once the incident has been assessed and level determined, the principal/designee will call the Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI) to report incident. OSSI will record the serious incident in Synergy per regulation [COB-RA](#). (Only Level Red and Level Orange incidents of hate-bias will be recorded as serious incidents.)
- 5. INVESTIGATION BY PRINCIPAL/DESIGNEE:** Within two days of a filed complaint ([MCPS Form 226-5](#)), the principal/designee must investigate. If police are involved, school admin should hold until the evidence-gathering portion of the MCPD investigation is complete before finalizing the school investigation.
- 6. SUPPORTIVE MEASURES PLAN:** As soon as students have been identified (alleged victims and/or offenders), a [safety/well-being plan](#) should be developed and implemented, and may include schedule changes, contact restrictions, counseling services, medical support, community resources, etc.
- 7. PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT:** After consulting with *central support team*, the school principal/designee will determine next steps for outreach and potential notification and report the any findings. The level of threat and risk of the incident will determine the need/type of communication.
 - a. If victim/offender is identified, the school principal and/or designee will contact the parents/guardians involved within 24 hours of completing the investigation.
 - b. PTA President, cluster feeder schools, and the community will be informed of all **Level Red** incidents, providing details in a timely, transparent manner, while maintaining confidentiality of those involved. Suggested resources will also be included when possible. *Level Orange incidents may also include a letter to the community as appropriate.*
 - c. If/When offender(s) have been identified, disciplinary measures will be imposed per the *Student Code of Conduct* and a meeting will be scheduled with the student and parent/guardian to discuss future behavioral expectations.

- 8. RECORD KEEPING: PRINCIPAL/DESIGNEE** will update the incident in Synergy.
 - a. Return “Hate-Bias Response Form” to Student Welfare and Compliance at swc@mcpsmd.org
 - b. Upload [MCPS Form 226-5](#)
 - c. Enter all information including investigative findings and disciplinary actions.

- 9. HATE-BIAS RESPONSIVE, RESTORATIVE, & PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS:**
 - a. *The Equity Unit* will assist school leadership in determining next steps with staff and student professional development and training options.
 - b. *The Office of Well-Being and Student Services (WBSS)* will assess the situation to determine support needed and the timeline for such supports. (PPWs, Counseling Services, School Psychologists, Restorative Approaches Specialists, Social Workers).
 - c. *Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement (OSFSE)* will assess the situation to determine supports needed and the timeline for such supports. (PPW, Counseling, School Psychologists, Restorative Justice).
 - d. *MCPS Student Code of Conduct* will assist school administration in determining student discipline measures.
 - e. Special interest and external support groups should be considered to assist in the planning of school/ community education, response, reflection where appropriate.

REFERENCES: MCPS Regulation JHF-RA, Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation; Board Policy ACA, Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency; MCPS Regulation JFA-RA, Student Rights and Responsibilities, MCPS Regulation COB-RA, Reporting a Serious Incident

THE SCHOOL CHECKLIST

- » Upon received allegation, be sure to collect/complete [MCPS Form 226-5](#).
- » Conduct inquiry/fact-finding process to determine hate-bias incident level, based on tiered level of response.
- » Report Level Red and Level Orange incidents to Emergency Communications Center (MCPD) **240-683-1600**
- » Report Level Red and Level Orange incidents to Office of Student Support and Improvement (OSSI) at 240-740-3100 to generate a Serious Incident in Synergy.
- » Conduct investigation (if/when MCPD is completed or not taking the case)
- » Develop and Implement a [Supportive Measures Plan](#) for identified victims and offenders (including parent involvement)
- » Draft community letter (Level Red) with central support team for distribution.
- » Implement disciplinary action in alignment with the Student Code of Conduct.
- » Schedule and conduct meeting with student and parent/guardian to discuss implications and future expectations.
- » Return “Hate-Bias Response Form” to swc@mcpsmd.org, upload [MCPS Form 226-5](#) in Synergy under the Incident # (connected to the student offender).
- » Begin Responsive/Healing Process, considering support from Equity Unit, Office of Well-Being and Student Services, Behavioral Health Team, and external partners.

HATE BIAS INCIDENT TIERED SYSTEM

While MCPS strives to ensure all environments are full of the five essential elements, harmful and hurtful incidents still happen. These situations can range from behaviors that are unwelcoming and unkind to actions that feel hostile to behaviors that communicate hate and bias. **ALL** inappropriate conduct is unacceptable in MCPS spaces. A tiered response system, that uses context and the nuances of each incident, ensuring that responses are appropriate and effective, was established in the Spring of 2024. By categorizing incidents into levels, a more tailored response is allowed; one that considers the intent and impact of the actions. An outline of what occurs when hate bias incident has happened and been reported is below. Once the school team has conducted the [fact finding processes](#) and made a tiered determination in collaboration with various members of the central office support team, the following occurs:

YELLOW

Fact Finding: Fact finding steps are taken and it is determined that the actions are hurtful, unwelcoming and/or harmful, but not motivated by hate or bias.

Communication: No communication is made to the larger community, but parents of those involved are contacted.

Record Keeping: The school uses the Code of Conduct to determine any disciplinary actions. Local documentation is kept on file.

Response: All individuals harmed by the incident will receive supports to help heal and reengage in learning. This includes, but is not limited to counseling, peer support, mediation, and restorative approaches.

ORANGE

Fact Finding: Fact finding steps are taken and it is determined that the actions are motivated by hate/bias but is not criminal.

Communication: Schools report the incident to MCPD, Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI) and other central offices. Consultation occurs with Hate Bias Coordinator. A communication to the larger community is not likely, but could be possible based on the situation. Parents are contacted.

Record Keeping: Disciplinary action is taken in alignment with the Student Code of Conduct and form 226-5 is uploaded in Synergy.

Response: The Hate Bias Crisis Team and the School Support Team may be launched. All those impacted will receive supportive measures including, but not limited to a safety plan, counseling, peer support, mediation, and restorative approaches.

RED

Fact Finding: Fact finding steps are taken in collaboration with MCPD. It is determined that the actions are motivated by hate/bias and potentially are criminal in nature. This incident has a large scope of impact.

Communication: Schools report the incident to MCPD, Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI), Behavioral Threat Assessment Team (BTAT), and other central offices. Consultation occurs with Hate Bias Coordinator. A community letter is developed with central office support for distribution. Parents are contacted.

Record Keeping: Disciplinary action is taken in alignment with the Student Code of Conduct after MCPD has completed their investigation. Form 226-5 is uploaded in Synergy.

Response: The Hate Bias Crisis Team and the School Support Team are launched. All those impacted will receive supportive measures including, but not limited to a safety plan, counseling, peer support, mediation, restorative approaches.

