

# FY25 Hate-Bias Incidents RESPONDING PROCEDURES

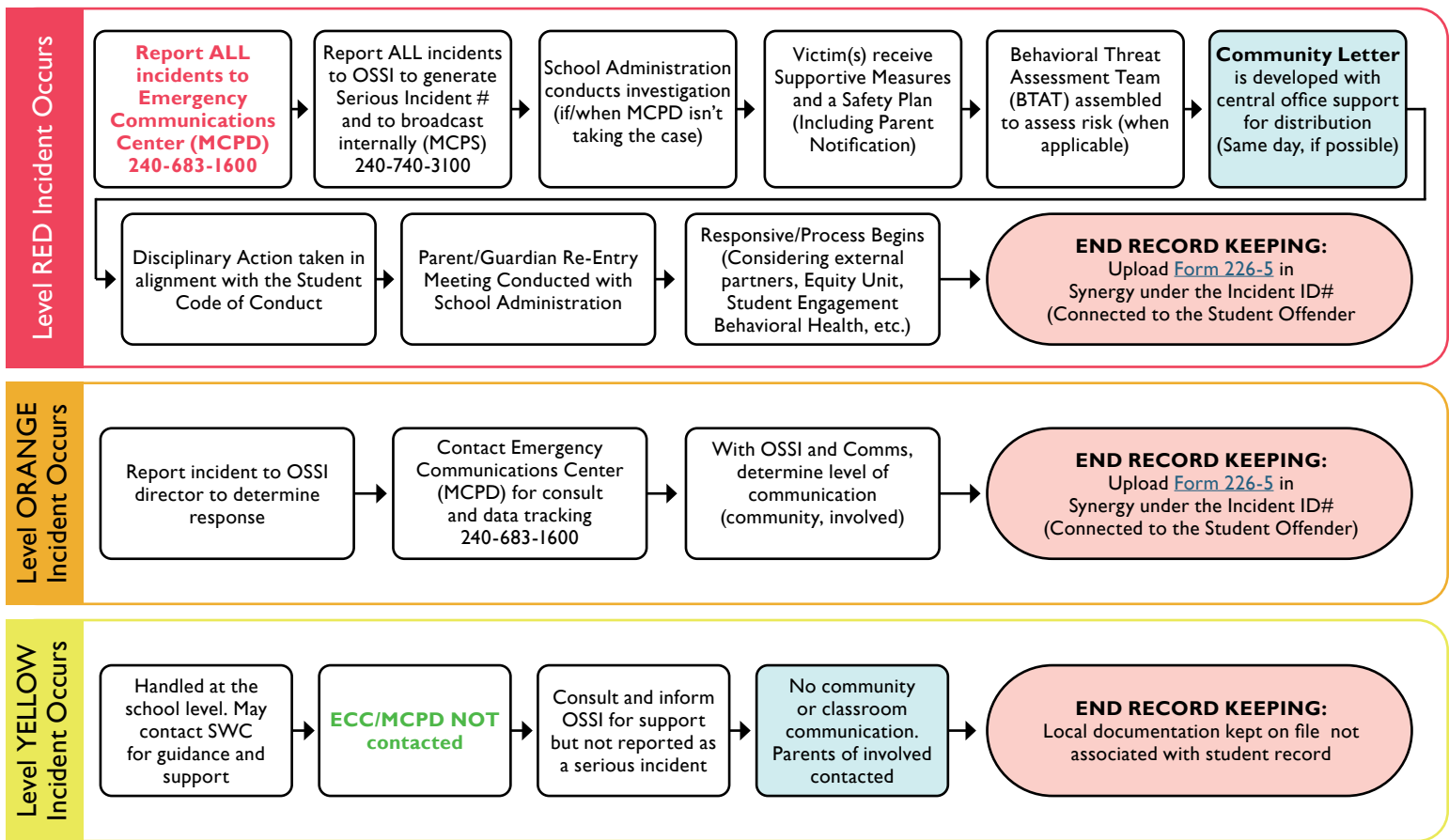
Founded on the principles of Board of Education [Policy ACA: Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency](#), Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) considers a hate or bias-motivated incident to be any disruptive conduct (oral, written, graphic, physical, or electronic communication) that includes **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.

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, but not limited to, 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. [\(Red, Orange, Yellow Tiered System of Response\)](#) 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.**





- 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 INTENT

## TIERED SYSTEM OF RESPONSE

### LEVEL RED

- » Serious incident (per COB-RA)
- » Significant impact on school community
- » Criminal elements likely
- » Police involved in investigation
- » Letter to community (incl. cluster schools) / Parents of students involved contacted

**Ex: vandalism, physical assault, schoolwide disruption**

### LEVEL ORANGE

- » Serious incident (per COB-RA)
- » Potential impact on school community
- » Criminal elements unlikely, police contacted to align data and consult
- » Letter to community possible. Parents of students involved contacted

**Ex: Student fight, verbal altercation, symbol carved in furniture**

### LEVEL YELLOW

- » Not serious incident (per COB-RA) and handled through Student Code of Conduct
- » Not considered an incident of hate-bias
- » Isolated incident
- » No evidence of the impact on community
- » Offender lacks context, awareness, knowledge or intent
- » Police not involved
- » A letter to community not advised /Parents of students involved contacted

**Ex: school drawing in art class, 1st grade name-calling, unintentional act**

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Was there INTENT to be hurtful in a discriminatory manner?

What is the scope of knowledge?

How many people witnessed the act?

Is there a support plan for the offended?

What ages are involved?

