
Every Student Belongs

UPDATED GUIDANCE 2.0



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Cover Letter

Dear Superintendents,

I'm writing to you about a significant health and safety rule passed by the State Board of Education: [581-022-2312 Every Student Belongs](https://www.ode.state.or.us/2020/05/05/581-022-2312-Every-Student-Belongs).

ODE recognizes that student health and safety are at the cornerstone of education and that every student is entitled to a high-quality educational experience, free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, and without fear or hatred, racism or violence. Staff and leaders are also entitled to work in environments that are free from discrimination or harassment, and visitors should be able to participate in school activities without fear for their safety.

The **Every Student Belongs** OAR is an important step in creating safe and inclusive school climates where all who participate in our school communities feel welcome.

Background

In July 2020, an Oregon high school student sent a letter to Governor Kate Brown asking for help. In the letter, the student stressed the importance of banning the Confederate flag in Oregon public schools. In the student's words, *"Banning the Confederate flag is far more than just an act to please some people. It shows students and educators that the State of Oregon sees them in their struggles to be considered equal and aiding in the fight against racism... Right now is a great time for Oregon to be a leader for its own citizens and throughout the United States and install this overdue policy."*

This student's experience is not alone. In the last few years alone ODE has received complaints or been made aware of multiple incidents involving hate symbols such as symbols of neo-Nazi ideology or the battle flag of the Confederacy, and nooses. These incidents have disrupted education for students across Oregon.

In response, Governor Brown wrote to the State Board of Education Chair and me urging us "to take immediate action to address and correct the adverse impacts symbols of hate and other manifestations of hate speech have on students in Oregon public schools." She requested that the Board establish rules to ensure that no Oregon student "be subject to actions or expressions of hate, intolerance, marginalization, or racism." The Board received a similar letter from Representatives McKeown and Brock-Smith asking it to take immediate action.

This student and others from across Oregon have come forward to show us the extreme disruption and harm that hate symbols cause. When we hear from students that their safety,

mental health, well-being, and ability to learn are threatened, we must listen, trust, and take immediate action. This policy change begins that action.

In Oregon, we value both freedom and responsibility, and are charged with ensuring that **Every Student Belongs**. This means affording our school communities the freedom of expression while removing barriers to students' educational progress, including the prohibition of display of hate symbols that incite fear and violence, and cause emotional distress and trauma. The presence of symbols of hate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin causes harm, and significantly disrupts the operation of schools. When one person in a school community is treated poorly, everyone suffers.

At the instruction of Governor Brown, the Oregon Board of Education has enacted the **Every Student Belongs** rule, which prohibits hate symbols, including some of the most recognizable symbols of hate—the noose, symbols of neo-Nazi ideology and the battle flag of the Confederacy. The temporary OAR took effect on September 18, 2020, and was made permanent on February 18, 2021. It requires districts to adopt and implement policies and procedures that prohibit the use or display of hate symbols, including the noose, symbols of neo-Nazi ideology, or the battle flag of the Confederacy in any program or school-sponsored activity except where used in teaching curriculum that is aligned with the Oregon State Standards by January 1, 2021. This applies to both in-person and distance learning environments.

Safety and Health

As with all OARs, the safety and health of students is our first priority. Discrimination, exclusion, othering, harassment and the use of hate symbols and hate speech are complex and multifaceted, and often reflect systemic problems rather than individual shortfalls. Swift disciplinary actions, zero-tolerance policies, and other punitive responses frequently ignore this multidimensionality in favor of immediate resolution. These approaches do little to alter the attitudes and biases that resulted in the negative, and often violent, behavior and provide little chance for growth, healing or understanding.

Trauma-informed, healing-centered, and educational approaches will be needed to address the root causes and consequences of these harmful acts, and to create opportunities for education and learning while avoiding blame, punishment, or further exacerbating the attitudes and biases that may have prompted the initial event(s). We will continue to support school districts in developing rules, policies, and procedures by providing guidance and resources to support implementation of these policies over the next several months.

Together, we must protect the health of our school communities by removing any and all barriers that impede a student's ability to thrive. Students have asked that the state as a whole follow their lead. We trust in young people and communities throughout Oregon to lead us into a future where students, staff and families are welcome in our school communities. It is our

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collective responsibility to make certain that **Every Student Belongs**.

Thank you for supporting the health and safety of our students and educators. Please review the guidance we've paired with this letter and submit any questions or suggestions to EveryStudentBelongs@state.or.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Colt Gill", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Colt Gill
Director of the Oregon Department of Education

Context

Oregon school communities are the bedrock of our children’s learning, development, and flourishing. Each district and school is responsible for ensuring that their *students, families, staff members, and leaders belong*. This involves actively adopting and implementing rules, policies, and practices that promote equity and inclusion, and standing up against harmful and racist acts that run counter to these values.

Oregon’s youth and their families entrust the adults in their schools with students’ health and well-being, and rely on school communities to be welcoming and inclusive. Acts such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, dismissal, using hate speech and symbols, and creating environments where some are excluded, marginalized, or discounted give students the message that they are not welcomed, valued, or important. These communications, whether intentional or unintentional, can, and do, cause immediate, and sometimes irreparable harm. No student is immune from being a recipient of these acts, and most will be physically, mentally, or emotionally injured by them in some way.

School districts and the adults within them have the responsibility to make sure that this does not occur, and that students are safe, included, and free from harm. When students or members of a school community experience hate or racism, whether directly through words, actions, or symbols, or indirectly through exclusion or inequitable access to resources, their safety, health, well-being, and ability to learn and thrive are compromised. These experiences cause stress, which puts everyone involved; those who are harmed, those who cause suffering, and those charged with responding, at elevated risk for physical, emotional, and social illness. In other words, when one person in a school community is treated poorly, everyone is affected.

Discrimination, exclusion, othering, harassment, and the use of hate symbols and hate speech are complex and multifaceted, and often reflect systemic problems rather than individual shortfalls. Swift disciplinary actions, zero-tolerance policies, and other punitive responses frequently ignore this multidimensionality in favor of immediate resolution. They do little to alter the attitudes and biases that resulted in the negative, and often violent behavior, and provide little chance for growth, healing, or understanding.

[Trauma-informed, healing centered](#) approaches that address the root causes and consequences of these harmful acts need to account for these systemic factors by creating opportunities for education and learning while avoiding blame, punishment, and disciplinary strategies that can further exacerbate the attitudes and biases that may have prompted the event(s).

State Law

The Oregon Legislature has determined that a person may not be subjected to discrimination in any public elementary, secondary, or community college education program or service, school or interschool activity or in any higher education program or service, school or interschool activity where the program, service, school or activity is financed in whole or in part by moneys appropriated by the Legislative Assembly.

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that students, employees, and visitors in public schools are entitled to learn, work, and participate in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination, harassment, and intimidation.

Every Student Belongs Rule

The presence of symbols of hate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, including the noose, symbols of neo-Nazi ideology or the battle flag of the Confederacy, create a material and substantial disruption in school activities and the learning environment by creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation and interfere with the rights of students by denying them full access to the services, activities, and opportunities offered by a school.

First, school districts, public charter schools, the Oregon School for the Deaf, Education Service Districts, Youth Corrections Education Program providers under contract with the Oregon Department of Education, Juvenile Detention Education Program providers under contract with the Oregon Department of Education, or a program that receives money pursuant to ORS 343.243, must prohibit the use or display of any noose, symbols of neo-Nazi ideology or the battle flag of the Confederacy on school grounds or in any program, service, school, or activity where the program, service, school, or activity is financed in whole or in part by moneys appropriated by the Legislative Assembly except where used in teaching curriculum that is aligned the Oregon State Standards. This applies to both in-person and distance learning environments.

Second, the rule requires districts to adopt policies and procedures for dealing with bias incidents. A sample policy is available upon request from the [Oregon School Boards Association](#).

Implementation Framework

This guidance document provides districts with resources to support their development and implementation of policies and procedures in response to this administrative rule. The six sections below are designed to support schools and districts in recognizing symbols of hate; acknowledging harm, harm reduction, and response; developing policy; developing procedures; implementing a complaint process as well as resources to assist with implementation.

1) Symbols of Hate

A symbol is a visual image or sign representing an idea¹. Symbols are powerful because within a cultural context they convey complex messages, ideologies, and history in a compact, recognizable form. Symbols help people make sense of the world around them. Throughout the world, symbols hold significant value for human cultures as evidenced in the reverence held for national flags, heroic figures, significant texts, or religious symbols. Symbols can help to unify and celebrate cultural heritage.

Symbols can also be used to send messages of hate, division, derision, and intimidation. The presence of symbols of hate on school grounds or during school-sponsored activities must be addressed by school communities. Failure to condemn symbols of hate potentially normalizes or affirms the intended message and ideology of the symbol. The [Every Student Belongs OAR](#) requires school staff and students to be educated about the impacts and consequences of symbols of hate.

Neo-Nazi and other hate groups use symbols to intimidate individuals and communities. Hate symbols are more than "signs" demonstrating racist, anti-Semitic and anti-LGBTQ2IA+ attitudes and beliefs -- these symbols are meant to instill a sense of fear and insecurity within particular communities and simultaneously establish a broader culture of hate and domination.

In schools, these symbols may be found in graffiti, flyers, pamphlets, flags, banners, clothing, bumper stickers, and on digital avatars or backgrounds. These symbols give extremists a sense of power and belonging, and a quick way of identifying with others who share their ideology. It is important to note that symbols carry different meanings depending upon the cultural background from which they originate or are used. For example, many people with knowledge of the history of WWII view the Hakenkreuz (commonly referred to as the Nazi Swastika) as synonymous with the Nazis and the Nazi party, their extreme racist and anti-Semitic ideology, and the crimes they committed against Jews, Roma, and LGBTQ2IA+ individuals and groups.

Every Student Belongs prohibit the use or display of **Neo-Nazi** hate symbols, including the Hakenkreuz (known to some as the "Nazi Swastika"). However, educators and the community should understand that the origins of the Swastika pre-date the Nazi party and neo-Nazi use. Variations of the Swastika or similar imagery were used in many ancient cultures and they remain in use today, particularly within the cultural and religious displays of the Navajo nation and Hopi tribe, and practitioners of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Neo-Nazi symbols may also include lightning bolts of the SS, the imperial Reich flag, the fascist salute, or a combination of letters and numbers conveying allegiance to racist and anti-Semitic ideology. The symbols

¹ Adapted from North West Counter Terrorism Report on "Extreme Right Wing symbols, numbers and acronyms." Last accessed February 23, 2021
<https://www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/community/community-safety/docs/extreme-right-wing-symbols.pdf>

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and ideology of the Nazi party and Nazi era are used by Neo-Nazi individuals and groups, and those trafficking in antisemitism, racism, anti-LGBTQ2IA+, and so called white power.

The Battle Flag of the Confederacy is the most commonly displayed symbol addressed by the Every Student Belongs rule. Although individuals and groups may seek to defend the display of this symbol as “Heritage, not Hate” or as a symbol of rebellion, the Every Student Belongs rule recognizes the racialized history and harm of the flag.

Recognizing the history of this flag is essential for understanding the rationale for prohibiting its display at school-sponsored events. During the Civil War, when southern states seceded from the Union in the name of “State’s Rights”, it was the right to maintain the institution of slavery with which they were most concerned². The Confederacy and its armies designed several flags throughout the Civil War. The red flag with blue St. Andrew’s cross and thirteen stars was one such battle flag. After the war, the flags of the Confederacy were typically only displayed during commemorations of the war. Throughout the early 1900s, the display of the flag became more popular as white people claimed it as part of southern heritage, or regional pride.

Over time, the flag became associated with anti-Civil Rights policy when it was adopted by the Dixiecrat party in 1948 in opposition to the Democratic Party’s desegregation platform. The flag that had represented the maintenance of slavery in the 1860s, became a symbol for the maintenance of racial segregation.

The use of the flag expanded in response to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to desegregate schools. Many southern states incorporated the Battle Flag into their state flags. As of January 2021, Mississippi became the final southern state to remove the image of the Confederate Battle flag from its flag (Alabama and Florida continue to display a red St. Andrew’s cross).

Every Student Belongs prohibiting the display of the Battle Flag of the Confederacy because of its long association with violent anti-Black beliefs and actions. The voters of Oregon rejected secession in 1861 and remained loyal to the Union during the U.S. Civil War. The Confederate Flag has no legitimate connection to Oregon’s history. The display of the Confederate Battle flag conveys a message of the rejection of democratic government and racial equality and has no place in our schools.

The noose, also known as the “hangman’s noose,” has re-emerged as a symbol of hate, causing harm to students and community members³. Recently nooses have been found on school

² Alexander Stephens, Confederate Vice President, Cornerstone speech. (2020, July 11). Retrieved March 16, 2021, from <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/cornerstone-speech>

³ Adapted from Anti-Defamation League, “Noose Incidents and Their Historical Context.” Retrieved February 24, 2021, <https://www.adl.org/media/10204/download>

grounds, at universities and colleges, in and around U.S. government buildings, at an exhibit on segregation at the National Museum of African American History & Culture, at worksites, and sporting events.

As the NAACP stated in its 2007 "State of Emergency" report: "The hangman's noose is a symbol of the racist, segregation-era violence enacted on blacks. ... [It is] an unmistakable symbol of violence and terror that whites used to demonstrate their hatred for blacks." The history of lynching and terror targeted at Black Americans is only now receiving careful and widespread. During the period between the Civil War and World War II, over four-thousand African Americans were lynched in the United States. Lynchings are violent and public acts of torture, traumatizing Black people throughout the country largely tolerated, and sometimes perpetuated, by state and federal officials. These lynchings are terrorism. "Terror lynchings" peaked between 1880 and 1940 and claimed the lives of African American men, women, and children who were forced to endure the fear, humiliation, and barbarity of this widespread phenomenon⁴.

The origins of the noose and its symbolism are connected to the violence of the post-reconstruction era throughout the United States, including Oregon⁵, and have become one of the most powerful symbols of intimidation and hate directed at Black people. The recent increase in reported incidents of noose displays on school grounds in Oregon and around the country creates a hostile environment for learning. *Every Student Belongs* prohibits the display of the noose in any form except where used in the teaching of curriculum aligned to Oregon State Standards.

2) Acknowledging Harm, Harm Reduction, and Response

(a) Acknowledging Harm

Although not all incidents of discrimination, exclusion, displaying hate symbols, or using hate speech may be intended to cause harm, their impact is hostile and detrimental nonetheless. Viewing symbols such as symbols of neo-Nazi ideology or the battle flag of the Confederacy, and hearing hate speech and racial slurs can cause [physiological and psychological stress](#) and emotional pain. In addition, they serve as catalysts for rekindling intergenerational and historical trauma as well as race-based traumatic stress.

The [impacts of traumatic stress](#) on physical, psychological and mental health can be significant and long-lasting stress-related responses to real or perceived threats include hypervigilance

⁴ Lynching in America: Confronting the legacy of racial terror. (n.d.). Retrieved March 16, 2021, from <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report/>

⁵ Oregon Remembrance Project. Retrieved March 17th, 2021, from <https://www.oregonremembrance.com/the-story>

and suspicion, sensitivity to threat, aggression and reactivity, hopelessness, despair, depression, social withdrawal, anxiety, cognitive and academic difficulties, and/or substance use. Research examining the effects of stress on development find that chronic childhood stressors are significantly associated with poor long-term health outcomes, and are highly predictive of a heightened physiological stress response, which is tied to structural, functional, and neurochemical brain anomalies, and an increased risk of lifelong behavioral, emotional, psychosocial, and cognitive problems. This is particularly true for those who have experienced [race-based traumatic stress](#), which is often associated with [racial battle fatigue](#).

(b) Harm Reduction

It is essential that all who participate in school communities address the sources and outcomes of the use of hate symbols, hate speech, and other racially motivated, injurious behaviors swiftly and straightforwardly. For the Oregon Department of Education, and the districts across the state, this means protecting students, eliminating all policies and procedures that create the conditions for harmful incidents to occur, and preventing or addressing these acts swiftly and directly.

In practice, this means that every school district, public charter school, the Oregon School for the Deaf, Education Service District, Youth Corrections Education Program provider under contract with the Oregon Department of Education, Juvenile Detention Education Program provider under contract with the Oregon Department of Education, or a program that receives money pursuant to ORS 343.243, enacts and enforces rules to prioritize, protect and assure the mental, physical and social health and well-being of students, their families, staff, leaders, community partners and visitors. This includes ensuring that students, employees, and visitors can learn, work and participate in school activities, occurring on and off school grounds, that are free from discrimination, harassment, and intimidation, and guarantees that students are welcomed and belong.

(c) Healing-Centered, Trauma-Informed Response

It is important to recognize that bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, dismissal, using hate speech and symbols, and creating environments where some are excluded, oppressed, or discounted impact individuals and groups differently. Although most students and adults have, or will, experience adversity, not everyone will be traumatized. It is, however, essential that schools and districts recognize that being exposed to hate-based events can cause traumatic stress, and that students and adults may exhibit traumatic stress-related symptoms such as sadness, anger, exhaustion, difficulty concentrating, sleeplessness, anxiety, hypervigilance, aggression, and avoidance of people and situations for weeks, months or even years after an incident.

In working to address the impact of harmful acts including hate speech, exposure to hate symbols, racism, and discrimination it is essential for those responsible for responding to the event to recognize that:

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- Each person must be given the freedom to define their experience for themselves.
- Individuals are not defined by their trauma, behavior, emotions, thoughts, or capacity to communicate, and their experience is distinct from their multiple intersecting identities.
- Each person brings ways of knowing, personal, family and community support, and connections to place and space that may be central to their healing.
- Responses to traumatic stress are dynamic, and may vary considerably from moment to moment, or day to day.
- Safe, trusting relationships, and a recognition and affirmation of “what is” are foundational for healing.
- The culture, policies, and practices of the institutions that were designed to protect students, such as schools, may be the [very sources of their distress](#).
- The stigma around seeking support, and the dismissal of their concerns that students often experience may prevent some from engaging in traditional approaches, and may require creative, innovative alternatives to standard care.

Under all circumstances, strengths-based, [healing-centered](#)/trauma-informed, racial equity-centered, multi-tiered systems of support are central to promoting emotional health, mental health and healing. This means being explicitly responsive to each student’s linguistic and cultural heritage, and honoring each individual’s values, funds of knowledge, and inherent strengths and challenges.

3) Developing Policy

The following definitions should be used when developing policies to address bias incidents and prohibit the use of symbols of hate:

- (a) “Bias Incident” means a person’s hostile expression of animus toward another person, relating to the other person’s perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, of which criminal investigation or prosecution is impossible or inappropriate. Bias Incidents may include derogatory language or behavior directed at or about any of the preceding demographic groups.
- (b) “Symbol of Hate” means a symbol, image, or object that expresses animus on the basis of race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or nation origin including, the noose, symbols of neo-Nazi ideology or the battle flag of the Confederacy, and whose display:
 - (A) is reasonably likely to cause a substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities, or
 - (B) is reasonably likely to interfere with the rights of students by denying them full access to the services, activities, and opportunities offered by a school.

Most districts have existing policies and procedures for addressing discrimination incidents that pose a threat to students and staff. Districts should use these existing resources as a starting

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point for developing and implementing a framework for responding to incidents in which hate symbols or hate speech occur in both in-person and in distance learning situations. Pursuant to [OAR 581-022-2312](#), on or before January 1, 2021, school districts, public charter schools, the Oregon School for the Deaf, and Education Service Districts must adopt a policy that:

- (a) Affirms every student is entitled to a high quality educational experience, free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin;
 - 1) Affirms every employee is entitled to work in an environment that is free from discrimination or harassment;
 - 2) Affirms every visitor is entitled to participate in an environment that is free from discrimination or harassment;
 - 3) Prohibits the use or display of any symbols of hate, including at a minimum the noose, symbols of neo-Nazi ideology or the battle flag of the Confederacy, on school grounds or in any program, service, school, or activity where the program, service, school, or activity is financed in whole or in part by moneys appropriated by the Legislative Assembly except where used in teaching curriculum that is aligned the Oregon State Standards.

These policies must also:

- (i) Prioritize, protect, and assure the mental, physical and social health of students, families, staff, and leaders. This includes removing any and all barriers that interfere with a student's well-being, belonging, and ability to thrive; and
- (ii) Assure that every effort will be made to educate those committing the offense regarding the impact of their actions with appropriate, non-punitive remedial measures. Some suggested references include [A Framework for Safe & Successful School's Positive Discipline](#) or [Oakland Unified School District's Restorative Justice Whole School Implementation Guide](#) will be enacted.

We also suggest that you engage in immediate and ongoing communication of the rationale for this rule and associated district policies to all students, families, staff, and school community members.

We have provided a [Toolkit](#) that includes these talking points to assist you in that process in the [resources section](#) at the end of this document.

We recognize that changes to existing policies and procedures may require facilitated conversations with school boards, leaders, key stakeholders, students, families, and community partners. Please consider the following resources.

- Please see the [following example](#) of a policy used by other Oregon school districts.
- Please see this [Decision-Making Tool](#) to guide in your policymaking.

4) Developing Procedures

School districts, public charter schools, the Oregon School for the Deaf, Education Service Districts, Youth Corrections Education Program providers under contract with the Oregon Department of Education, Juvenile Detention Education Program providers under contract with the Oregon Department of Education, or a program that receives money pursuant to ORS 343.243 must adopt procedures for addressing bias incidents that:

(A) Define persons impacted broadly to include individuals at whom an incident was directed as well as students in the larger school community likely to be impacted by the incident;

(B) Require responding staff to prioritize the safety and well-being of all persons impacted;

(C) Require responding staff to recognize the experience of all persons impacted, acknowledge the impact, commit to taking immediate action, and prevent further harm against those persons impacted from taking place;

(D) Include in any redirection procedures educational components that address the history and impact of hate as well as procedural components to ensure the safety, healing, and agency of those impacted by hate, accountability, and transformation for people who cause harm as well as transformation of the conditions that perpetuate the harm.

- Discrimination, exclusion, othering, harassment, and the use of hate symbols and hate speech are complex and multifaceted, and often reflect systemic problems rather than individual shortfalls.
- Swift disciplinary actions, zero-tolerance policies, and other punitive responses frequently ignore this multidimensionality in favor of immediate resolution. These approaches do little to alter the attitudes and biases that resulted in the negative, and often violent, behavior and provide little chance for growth, healing, or understanding.
- Remediation strategies must include trauma-informed, healing-centered approaches that address the root causes and consequences of these harmful acts, and create opportunities for education and learning while avoiding blame, punishment, or further exacerbation of the attitudes and biases that may have prompted the event(s).

(E) Include communication protocols that provide all persons impacted with information relating to the investigation.

(i) The information provided to the persons at whom the behavior was directed and the person who committed the behavior must include that an investigation has been initiated, actions taken to prevent reoccurrence, findings of the investigation and the final determination based on those findings, to the extent allowed under state and federal law, the actions taken with respect to the person who committed the behavior to remedy behavior and, when

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applicable, a citation to the law prohibiting release and an explanation of how that law applies to the current situation.

(ii) The information provided to students in the school community likely to be impacted by the incident must include that an investigation has been initiated and actions taken to prevent reoccurrence.

(F) Direct administrators and school personnel to consider whether the behavior also implicates other civil rights laws and, if so, to respond accordingly. The nature of the conduct must determine the process used, the rights and protections available to persons impacted, and the right to appeal to the Oregon Department of Education or the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights; and

(G) Require administrators to develop and implement instructional materials to make this policy and related practices including reporting procedures, educational processes, and possible consequences known to all school employees and students.

When developing district procedures for addressing these incidents, we recommend using and/or amending existing policies to be aligned with the rules set forth in this document.

Please refer to the following resources for detailed suggestions and recommendations to guide you in your policy and response planning.

- [Confronting White Nationalism in Schools: A Toolkit](#) from the [Western States Center](#) for specific strategies for responding to hateful acts and extremist organizing in schools.
- [What did you just say? Responses to racist comments collected from the field.](#)
- [Responding to Hate and Bias at School: A Guide for Administrators, Counselors and Teachers](#) from [Learning for Justice](#).

5) Complaint Process

Complaints may be handled under existing policies and procedures for discrimination or harassment (AC and AC-AR; see e.g., [Reynolds School District's Discrimination Complaint Procedure](#)) or (JFCF) or a district may develop new policies and procedures (see e.g., [TTSD Bias Incident and Hate Speech AR](#)).

Regardless of the policy and procedure utilized to address the complaint, the complainant must be informed of their right to appeal the district's final decision to either the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights or the Oregon Department of Education.

The complaint process must provide for individuals to report their concerns either verbally or in writing. And complainants must be informed of their right to appeal the district's final decision

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to either the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights or the Oregon Department of Education.

6) Resources

[Toolkit for Superintendents](#). (Talking points, letter to community from superintendent and school board, letter to staff from superintendent and school board.)

[Lesson on First Amendment in Schools for High school Students](#) (activity download at the top right of the page.)

For questions and more information, please email EveryStudentBelongs@ode.state.or.us.