

This guide describes the laws that schools are required to follow related to bullying. The sections list requirements so you can check off the requirements that the school followed. If the school didn't follow all of the requirements, then each section also includes language (**in bold**) from the law that you can copy and paste into the "brief statement of concerns" section of the complaint, and instructions about what other information to include.

This guide is intended to be a tool to help families fill out a PRS complaint. It is not legal advice and we cannot guarantee a particular outcome. It is also possible that your specific situation may not fit neatly into the information provided in the guide. If you have questions about the guide or are still unsure about how to fill out the PRS form after looking at the guide, call the EdLaw Project intake line at 617-910-5829.

The guide includes the sections listed below; you should look through all of the sections that apply to your concerns when you're filling out the complaint.

Responding to a Report of Bullying

The school is required to take certain steps when they become aware that a student has been bullied. Fill out [this section](#) if you have concerns about the school's response to a student being bullied.

Bullying Prevention Plan

The school is required to have a plan to prevent and respond to bullying, and has to communicate certain information about the plan to families. Fill out [this section](#) if you have concerns about the school's bullying prevention plan.

Responding to a Report of Bullying

Everyone who works at the school is required to tell the principal, or someone else at the school like the vice principal, if they know that a student has been bullied. If someone who works at the school knew that the student was being bullied, and they didn't tell anyone else, you should include the following language in the "Brief Statement of Concerns" section of your complaint: **"The School District failed to report an incident of bullying, and therefore failed to comply with MGL c71 s.370(g)."** Then, you should explain who knew, and how you knew that they were aware of the bullying. For example:

- If you told someone at the school, you should include who you told and when. If you

told them in an email, letter, or text message, you should attach it to the complaint.

- If the student told someone at the school, you should include who they told and when.
- If the student’s teacher mentioned something about the bullying, you should include what they said and when.

After the principal or vice principal learns that a student might have been bullied, they have to conduct an investigation to figure out what happened. If the school didn’t conduct an investigation, you should include the following language in the “Brief Statement of Concerns” section of your complaint: **“The School District failed to investigate an incident of bullying, and therefore failed to comply with MGL c71 s370(g).”**

If the school determined that an incident of bullying occurred, they have to tell you. Their communication with you about the results of their investigation is “notice.” The notice has to include everything listed below, check off what the school included in the notice:

- That the school determined, through their investigation, that the bullying occurred.
- The action that they are taking to prevent any further bullying.
- Information about the PRS system and the process for filing a complaint.

If any of the boxes are unchecked, the school didn’t include all the required information in the notice and you should include the following language in the “Brief Statement of Concerns” section of your complaint: **“The School District failed to notify parents/guardians of an incident of bullying and therefore failed to comply with MGL c71 s370(g).”**

If you would like to read the full text of the law that was relied upon to create this section of the guide, it can be found [here](#).

Bullying Prevention Plan

Schools have to have a plan for preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying. If a student was being bullied, you should include any evidence that the school didn’t have an appropriate plan in place in your complaint.

The school has to communicate parts of the plan to families by following the requirements below. Check off the requirements that the school followed:

- The school has to provide families with copies of the parts of the plan that relate to students (the school doesn't have to include their internal policies and procedures that only involve staff).
- The school has to post the full plan on their website.

If any of the boxes are unchecked then the school didn't follow all of the requirements, and you should include the following language in the "Brief Statement of Concerns" section of your complaint: **"The School District failed to make student-related sections of their bullying prevention and intervention plan available to families pursuant to MGL c71 ss370."** Then explain which requirement the school didn't follow.

The school has to provide families with information about the bullying-prevention curriculum that they teach to students in school. The school has to at least provide the information listed below, check off everything that the school provided:

- Information on how families can reinforce the bullying prevention curriculum at home.
- Information on what bullying looks like in schools, and how to identify bullying ("bullying dynamics").
- Information on cyber-bullying and how to be safe online.

If any of the boxes are unchecked then the school didn't follow all of the requirements, and you should include the following language in the "Brief Statement of Concerns" section of your complaint: **"the School District failed to inform parents/guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum of the school, and therefore failed to implement an appropriate plan to address bullying prevention and intervention, pursuant to MGL c71 s370(d)(5)."** Then describe what information wasn't communicated to you.

If you would like to read the full text of the law that was relied upon to create this section of the guide, it can be found [here](#).