

Know Your Rights! A Guide for Alaskan LGBT students



Alaska's Code of Ethics and Teaching Standards

If a teacher or principal harasses or discriminates against you or consistently allows other students to harass you they are violating their professional code.

All public educators in the state of Alaska are obligated to abide by the **Code of Ethics of the Education Profession**. One principle of this code is that an educator "**may not harass, discriminate against**, or grant a discriminatory advantage to a student on

the grounds of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, physical or mental conditions, family, social, or cultural background, or **sexual orientation**." They must also make a reasonable effort to protect students from harassment and discrimination on these grounds.

If your school does not take action to protect you from harassment, you and/or

your parents should contact the **Professional Teaching Practices Commission** and file an official complaint.

<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/ptpc/>

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Law

As of the 2007-2008 school year, Alaska's **Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Law** requires your school district to have a policy that prohibits the harassment, intimidation, and bullying of any student. Check to make sure that your school district has one in place and encourage them to publicize the policy among students, teachers, and parents.

Districts are not required to mention sexual orientation

or gender identity in their policies. However, if you notice that school officials aren't enforcing their policy equally or in all situations, they may be in violation of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Law. In this case, you and/or your parents should file a complaint with your district Superintendent.

If the district continues to discriminate in their enforcement of the law, they may also be in violation of

the **14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution**, which promises you equal protection under the law.

<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/TS/SchoolSafety/bullying.htm>

Local School District Policies

One positive step toward making your school safer for LGBT students is to encourage your district or university to include “perceived sexual orientation” and “gender identity” in their non-discrimination/harassment policies or—if such a policy is already in place—to be more assertive and consistent about enforcing it.

Anti-harassment/bullying policies that explicitly address sexual orientation and gender identity have proven to be far more

effective than those that do not. Furthermore, when teachers and administrators make it clear that anti-LGBT harassment will not be tolerated, they reduce their district’s vulnerability to legal liability. Many students have taken their school districts to court for ignoring harassment. Your district does not want to be one of them.

For suggestions on how to advocate for an LGBT-inclusive anti-harassment policy at your school, visit the ACLU’s **Get Busy Get**

Equal website:

<http://gbge.aclu.org/>

Alaskan School Districts with LGBT-inclusive policies:

- Anchorage School District
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools
- Juneau School District
- Matanuska-Susitna Valley School District

About Us:

The ACLU of Alaska and the ACLU of Alaska Foundation are non-partisan organizations dedicated to advancing the cause of civil liberties in Alaska. The former fulfills its mission through legislative advocacy, coalition building, and grassroots advocacy. The latter pursues the same mission through public education and legal action. For more advice or information, please contact us:

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