



## Interviewing the Complainant and Perpetrator

### Interviewing the Complainant

1. Take the complainant seriously.
2. Explain the investigation process.
  - a. Alleged perpetrator and any witnesses will be interviewed.
  - b. Ensure complainant understands that you cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, but information obtained from the investigation will be given on a need-to-know basis only.
  - c. A written report will be prepared after the investigation process has taken place.
3. Ask the complainant how they are feeling about the situation before seeking the facts. Stay emotionally connected while factually impartial.
4. Find out what happened. Get specific details. Use the Investigation Steps Checklist for guidance.
5. Find out the effects of the bullying on the complainant. For example:
  - *How did the alleged perpetrator's remarks/actions affect you?*
  - *When you say you were upset, what do you mean by upset?*
  - *How did you act? Did you experience any change in behavior?*
  - *Did you go to a doctor? (documentation) If yes, for what?*
  - *Has your work/studies been affected? If yes, how?*
  - *Have you spoken to anyone about your feelings after the incidents?*
6. Find out the names of witnesses.
7. Ask the complainant what assistance we can provide or if there is any temporary/immediate action they believe is necessary.
8. Assess the complainant's credibility.
  - *How does the complainant appear during the interview?*
  - *Does the story and facts sound correct?*
  - *Note the complainant's appearance, facial expressions, body language, etc.*
  - *Does the complainant have a motive to lie?*
9. Document any refusal by the complainant to divulge information. Document any gestures.
10. Go over the complainant's account of the incident and get a signed written statement that the facts you have are correct.
11. Ask the complainant to alert you immediately if any more incidents occur.

## Interviewing the Perpetrator

1. Give a brief indication of the nature of the meeting to the alleged perpetrator before you commence the interview.
2. The alleged perpetrator and/or investigator may tape the interview with knowledge and consent of the other party.
3. Explain the purpose of the interview is to investigate a complaint of bullying made against the alleged perpetrator and that:
  - a. Allegations of bullying are taken seriously and will be fully investigated.
  - b. The purpose of the interview is to elicit facts associated with a complaint.
4. Ask the alleged perpetrator for whatever information he or she has in regard to the complaint. Get specific details. Use the Investigation Steps Checklist for guidance.
5. Find out the names of any witnesses to corroborate statement.
6. Assess the alleged perpetrator's credibility.
  - *How does the alleged perpetrator appear during the interview?*
  - *Does the information the alleged perpetrator give sound correct?*
  - *Note the alleged perpetrator's appearance, facial expressions, body language, etc.*
7. If a student chooses not to answer questions about a bullying incident, document this and let them know that it is fine, but will assume what was said is true.
8. Document any gestures.
9. After going over what the alleged perpetrator has said, have he or she sign a written statement that these facts are correct.
10. Investigator can now identify areas of agreement and areas of conflict between the complainant and alleged perpetrator's statements to determine follow-up questions.