

Communicating to Caregivers about Investigation Initiation

- When a school staff member initiates a call to inform a caregiver that their child is involved in a bullying incident investigation, they should remember that this call is made at the beginning stage of the investigation and the incident is still considered an allegation until the investigation is completed and a determination is made.
- School staff should never convey that a child has bullied others or has been bullied until the bullying prevention task force has concluded an investigation and that is officially determined. Additionally, this sensitive information of a verified bullying incident should only be communicated by an administrator or other bullying prevention task force member.
- Staff should remember that this information can create a variety of emotions for a caregiver and to be prepared to execute a difficult conversation. Staff members should exercise the same etiquette used by the school when communicating other difficult topics.
- When communicating with caregivers, follow state and federal pupil records statutes in conjunction with district confidentiality policies.

Example of Conversation

“Hello Ms./Mr. _____. This is _____ from _____ school. We wanted to inform you that a report has been made alleging your child’s involvement in a bullying incident. We understand that you have many questions regarding this report and we will have these answers at the conclusion of our investigation. We want to protect the rights and wellbeing of all students involved and keep your child’s safety as our top priority. You can find more information on our bullying policy on our school website. We understand this is troubling information to hear and assure you that we will take all steps to keep your child safe during this investigation.”

The staff member can then share the school’s bullying investigation protocol, give the caregiver a timeline of when they can expect to receive additional communication, and provide contact information in case the caregiver would like to reach out.