

Case study: Impatient Parents

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Part 1: Case Analysis

1. Briefly summarize the case.

A parent of a female student claims that a boy in her daughter's geometry class has been repeatedly harassing her daughter over the way she is dressed, among other things. The parent claims she has complained multiple times and now demands the harassment stop immediately.

2. Identify the issues to be resolved.

If the girl's parent claims are to be believed one issue to be resolved student harassment.

Another issue concerns whether a parent's complaints about that alleged harassment was ignored by a teacher at the school.

3. Stakeholders involved in the issue.

The stakeholders involved include the girl who is allegedly being harassed, her alleged harasser, both students' sets of parents or guardians and the geometry teacher who may have ignored complaints from the girl's mother.

4. One or two existing laws or court rulings that relate to the issue.

"California school districts are required to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying and procedures for preventing acts of bullying and cyberbullying. California schools are encouraged to refer students involved with bullying to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school support services personnel for case management, counseling, and participation in a restorative justice program, as appropriate" (Stopbullying.gov, 2023).

5. District policies that relate to the issue.

According to the Orinda Union School District website, the district is “committed to protecting students and preventing discrimination on our campuses.” To that end the district has set up a reporting system that allows a bullying victim to report the incident anonymously through a hotline with access to counselors, post it on the We Tip website, or through direct contact with an administrator (OUSD, 2023).

6. Possible solutions to the issues.

Immediate action is required. The first thing that needs to be done is to meet with all parties separately, starting with the geometry teacher, then the alleged victim, and any possible witnesses, and finally the alleged harasser. It is critical to get statements from all these stakeholders before deciding the appropriate course of action. If the harassment allegations are determined to be true, the harassers’ parents would need to be contacted and a consequence would need to be meted out, either a detention that could include an essay about why harassment is harmful or suspensions depending on the true severity of the misbehavior.

7. The solutions chosen to resolve the issue.

Assuming this harassment is exactly what the parent described I believe detention for the student with a writing assignment like the one described above is in order. As it happens, I sat in on a disciplinary meeting this week concerning harassment between students that was much like our case study. The actions I have outlined were deemed appropriate to the offense, however in this case I would also meet with the geometry teacher and stress the importance of responding to any

parent with a harassment claim and also notifying administrators, so we are not caught unaware of the situation.

8. Action steps (2-5) for implementing each solution, including a timeline for each step.

2. Identify the issues to be resolved: Immediately, as soon as they are reported.

3. Stakeholders involved in the issue: This should take no more than 1-2 days. Not much time should pass between the offense and when administrators respond.

4/5. One or two existing laws/district policy: The state of California and our district have anti-harassment laws and policies, so the situation described would send up an immediate red flag and need to be acted upon quickly.

9. Potential moral and legal consequences of each solution.

Not responding to harassment has serious consequences. Generally, it is the bullying student who can be held liable for persistent bullying. But if school officials, including teachers and principals have a responsibility to maintain a safe atmosphere at school and if the injured party can prove the school failed to intervene and stop the bullying, and the student is injured, the school officials can be held liable too (Peeler, 2021).

Part 2: Rationale

Every student, no matter the accusations leveled against them deserve a fair hearing. In this case, the student who was the subject of the harassment was not physically injured. If she was, the response would need to be more drastic. As I noted, I was shadowing my administrative mentor when a similar situation played out this week at my middle school.

I entered his office in the middle of the scenario and watched him interview and retrieve written statements from the witnesses. My mentor, Mr. Giron is not a person who rushes to judgment which is why even after his extensive interviews with the victim and witnesses he wanted to talk directly with the two boys accused of making inappropriate statements about the victims' body, her weight, etc.

He also knew the matter needed to be addressed quickly. He didn't want the boys' actions not to be called out and the impression left on campus that it was okay to use sexual and other derogatory references with no worry of consequences.

He immediately called the boys in, but first researched their records and made sure he knew their personalities so he could appeal to their sense of right and wrong in ways that made sense to each of them. Knowing the first offender had a sister and very much respected his mother, Giron asked the boy what he would do if someone made similar comments about his family. You could tell that made an impact on the boy.

He appealed to what he knew to be the second boy's attraction to girls and asked whether he seriously believed he would convince girls to like him if he acted behaved like he had around them.

In a case that would be similar to how I see our case study resolving, both boys at OIS were given in house detentions and told to write an essay about why their actions violate the high expectations we have for our students, the respect they should hold for their classmates, and social contract they have with our school community,

References

OUSD. (2022-2023) Student/parent handbook. <https://tinyurl.com/2skr5m9x>.

Peeler, T. (2021, April 26). School Bullying Laws. LegalMatch. Retrieved on May 3, 2023 from <https://tinyurl.com/mvv4uhfn>.

Stopbullying.gov. (2023) California anti-bullying laws & policies. Retrieved on May 3, 2023 from <https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/laws/california>.