

# David's Law

## Preventing Cyberbullying in Texas Schools

### What is David's Law?

During Texas' 85th Legislative Session, Senate Bill 179, formally known as David's Law, was passed and signed into Texas State law. Named after 16-year-old David Molak, a high school student in San Antonio, who died by suicide after being harassed online, the bill aims to bring awareness and new policies to schools to combat cyberbullying.

Senate Bill 179 (SB 179) classifies cyberbullying as a misdemeanor offense. By doing so, the courts may issue subpoenas and uncover people who are posting anonymously online. The law also requires intervention from public schools when any cyberbullying behavior is suspected. Parents of students who cyberbully others may also be held responsible if they could have intervened but didn't.

### How does the law affect a school's response to bullying?

- School districts are required to include cyberbullying policies into district policies and notify parents if their child has been the victim of bullying or is the alleged aggressor.
- The bill requires school districts to develop an anonymous system to report bullying and threats.
- School districts have a greater ability to investigate off campus bullying if they see it materialize in school, enabling school districts and law enforcement agencies to collaborate on investigations.
- School districts have a greater latitude to discipline or expel students for severe bullying behavior, including encouraging a child to commit or attempt suicide.
- The legislation enables law enforcement to unmask anonymous social media users who threaten others.
- Students can be charged with a misdemeanor for harassing or bullying anyone under the age of 18 through text messages, social media, websites, apps, or other means; and provides additional counseling and rehabilitation services to the aggressor and victim.



# How does the law affect a parent's response to bullying?

- A child can be charged with a crime for certain forms of cyberbullying or online harassment.
- If your child is bullied, you can obtain injunctive relief from the courts to stop and/or prevent cyberbullying of your child.
- Courts may hold parents accountable if they could have taken reasonable actions to get their child to cease engaging in cyberbullying and failed to do so.

# What is the link between bullying and suicide?

Cyberbullying is a new phenomenon to recent generations and one that has quickly turned into a significant threat to youth today. Although students who are bullied do have higher rates of suicidal thoughts than the general population, most students who are cyberbullied do not consider taking their own life. There is no direct link between bullying and suicide, but a link has been found between suicide and depression. Bullying is one of many factors involved in suicidal ideation.



## Frisco ISD Resources



Bullying Prevention  
Webpage



Points for Parents: If  
Your Child Bullies Other  
Children



Cyberbullying: What  
Parents Should Know  
and Do



Cyberbullying: What to  
do if it Happens to You

