



8 Strategies for Educators Addressing Religious-Based Bullying of Muslim Kids

Educators should implement anti-bullying prevention strategies that address: a whole-school approach; a positive school climate; social-emotional character development (SECD) of students, including promoting upstanders; an emphasis on inclusion; an explicit mention of protected groups in the school's harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) policy; teacher and staff training pertaining to the prevention of bullying; cultural sensitivity and support for minority students (e.g., faculty sponsorship for clubs or student groups, a recognition of all religious holidays, etc.); and religious literacy and addressing bias and inaccuracies in the curriculum.

- 1. Teachers should be equipped with anti-bullying training** in order to develop the skills necessary to implement a school's anti-bullying program.
- 2. Bullying should be effectively managed every time it is reported.** This entails compliance with the school's anti-bullying policy, including investigation and remedies that should be put in place to address the safety of the target if the criteria for bullying have been met.
- 3. Make sure to address the target of the bullying,** reassuring them that they are wanted and should feel safe within the school. Counseling may also be needed depending on the child's well-being, as well as the severity and persistence of the bullying.
- 4. Make sure to address the child who bullies** to understand what is compelling him/her to act aggressively and to see if counseling may be warranted.
- 5. Incorporate anti-bullying initiatives into school-based learning on life skills.** Ensuring a student's ability to participate and thrive within the school community must include a focus on anti-bullying work, with specific attention on religious-based bullying and challenging of stereotypes.
- 6. Teachers should incentivize students to challenge biases.**
- 7. K-12 teachers should ask questions** on their introductory surveys at the start of the school year about children's likes and needs, as well as a faith celebration question.
- 8. Promote inclusion of individuals with disabilities** (e.g., providing a safe quiet space for the child to retreat to when distressed) by embracing each person's uniqueness and contribution to the school community.