

# Step Up. Step In.

Stop Sexual Bullying in Georgia

## Sample Parent Announcement

### Overview

Utilize the following letter and/or email templates – with the FAQ accompanying them – to announce the campaign to parents and other external audiences. Customize the message as you see fit for your school. Release the parent announcement from a principal or other administrator to demonstrate that your school is serious about this issue. Provide a single point of contact for parents to ask questions.

### Letter

Dear Parent,

I am excited to announce that our school has joined a new campaign called *Step Up. Step In.* Led by the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault (GNESA), *Step Up. Step In.* is a collaborative movement that engages schools and communities to identify and stop sexual bullying from occurring between youth.

Sexual bullying includes a broad category of behavior, like unwanted touching and groping, sexting, spreading sexually charged rumors, picking on someone for his or her perceived sexual orientation, and more. This is an important issue that affects middle schools and high schools across the country – and prohibits students’ abilities to learn and grow at their fullest potential. We are committed to participating in this campaign to create a culture that does not tolerate this type of behavior so that our students remain focused on their academics and extracurricular activities.

Please review the enclosed FAQ or visit [www.StepUpStepIn.org](http://www.StepUpStepIn.org) to learn more about the campaign. Please contact [<insert name/insert title>](#), who will be heading up this initiative at our school, with questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

[<Insert Name>](#)

[<Insert Title>](#)



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is *Step Up. Step In.*?

Led by the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault (GNESA), *Step Up. Step In.* is collaborative movement that engages schools and communities to identify and stop sexual bullying from occurring between youth. The goal is to stop the potential for escalating sexual violence.

*Step Up. Step In.* provides schools with a Toolkit and prepared resources to help them implement the campaign. Schools are also encouraged to activate *Step Up. Step In.* however they feel will best motivate the students and communities they serve. The Toolkit and resource library are available for review and download at [www.StepUpStepIn.org](http://www.StepUpStepIn.org).

### What is sexual bullying?

Sexual bullying can be violent or non-violent. *Step Up. Step In.* defines sexual bullying as:

“Any instance when youth use sexual words, acts, images, threats, or any other behavior in any manner to distress, harm, taunt, demean, humiliate, and/or embarrass other youth who do not welcome, encourage, or want to participate in the exchange. Sexual bullying may occur once, or it may occur frequently. It encompasses a wide variety of behaviors and is perpetrated by youth against their peers. It can occur in person, online or digitally. In some instances, such as spreading rumors about a classmate, a victim may not even know it is occurring.”

### What are examples of sexual bullying?

Sexual bullying includes a broad category of behavior, like unwanted touching and groping, sexting, spreading sexually charged rumors, picking on someone for his or her perceived sexual orientation, and more. While this is not an exhaustive list, examples are as follows:

Verbal	Conversation about sexual topics or acts; lewd, suggestive or demeaning remarks; derogatory names based upon real or rumored sexual activity; sex-based or demeaning rumors about individuals or groups; coercion by force or threat
Written	Written correspondence about, or that suggests, sexual acts or uses sex to demean recipients; Graffiti that appears on personal belongings or in public space
Images and Multimedia	Sexual photos; drawings; live or recorded video, audio, and any other format; sending, forwarding, or keeping sexually explicit content without permission
Touching and Groping	Non-violent or violent touching; groping and grabbing of a sexual nature; tugging, touching, or snapping undergarments

## Is sexual bullying the same as sexual harassment?

They are not the same, but there is overlap between the two. Sexual bullying includes behavior that is typically considered to be sexual harassment.

## Why is there a need for a campaign like *Step Up. Step In.* in Georgia?

Funded by a grant from the Georgia Department of Public Health, GNESEA began examining sexual bullying among Georgia's youth in 2010, conducting 22 focus groups with adolescent males (11 to 14 years old) and the adults who influence them. From rural and urban communities to those in between, the research found, in part:

- Touching and groping, sexual rumors, and bullying of perceived LGBT youth were among the most frequently reported acts – with many participants stating this type of behavior was a “daily” or “almost every day” occurrence at their schools
- Participants overwhelmingly reported the school and school-related venues as the primary location where sexual bullying occurs – and, within schools, occurring most often in specific locations like hallways and cafeterias where groups of students congregate with minimal supervision
- Youth often dismissed sexual bullying – such as touching and groping or picking on a student for his/her perceived sexual orientation – as “not that serious,” “joking,” and even “flirting”

## Is this campaign suitable for youth?

Yes, *Step Up. Step In.* has been developed as a youth-centered campaign that brings the issues of sexual bullying and prevention to schools and communities in a straightforward but age-appropriate manner.

## Can only schools participate in the campaign?

Yes, at this time, *Step Up. Step In.* is designed for public middle schools and high schools. Schools that want to join the campaign should register their interest at [www.StepUpStepIn.org](http://www.StepUpStepIn.org).

## Where can I find more information about *Step Up. Step In.*?

Visit [www.StepUpStepIn.org](http://www.StepUpStepIn.org) for more information about the campaign, as well as resources that schools can utilize to implement *Step Up. Step In.* to stop sexual bullying.

# Email

Copy and paste this content into the body of an email. **Reminder!** Attach the FAQ that is available for download at [www.StepUpStepIn.org](http://www.StepUpStepIn.org).

Subject Line: We Have Become a Step Up. Step In. School!

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