

Respect for All

2026-27 Anti-Bullying Essay, Poster and Multimedia Contest

Celebrating Student Voice, Kindness, Inclusion and Upstander Action

October is National Anti-Bullying Month and provides an opportunity for students to use their voices, creativity and experiences to help create safe, supportive and inclusive school communities.

The Respect for All Anti-Bullying Essay, Poster and Multimedia Contest invites students to share their ideas about preventing bullying and harassment, supporting others, standing up for what is right, and creating a school community where every student feels respected and included.

Students are encouraged to use their own experiences, perspectives and creativity to communicate what **Respect for All** means to them.

For questions about the contest, please contact
RespectForAll@schools.nyc.gov.

RFA Essay Contest for Students

Theme: Kindness over Bullies

Students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and share how they or others have helped create a more welcoming, respectful and inclusive school community.

Your essay should demonstrate your understanding of bullying or harassment and highlight how students and adults can take action to prevent it, respond to it, report it or support someone who has experienced it.

Essay Requirements

- Essays must be **no more than 400 words**.
- Each submission must include: Student name, Grade level & School name
- The essay must respond to **one** of the prompts below.
- Essays should reflect the student's own ideas, experiences and voice.

Essay Prompts

1. **Respecting Our Differences:** People may have different identities, backgrounds, beliefs, interests, abilities or experiences. Why is it sometimes difficult for people to accept differences? What can students and adults do to create a more welcoming and inclusive school community?
2. **The End of Bullying Begins With Us:** What can students do to help prevent bullying and harassment in their school? Describe something you or someone you know has done to support others, report a concern, interrupt harmful behavior or make your school community more respectful and inclusive.

RFA Poster Contest for Students

Theme: Kindness Makes a Difference

Art can be a powerful way to communicate ideas, experiences and emotions.

Students are invited to create an original poster that raises awareness about bullying and harassment and communicates a positive message about respect, kindness, inclusion, belonging or standing up for others.

Your poster may reflect your experiences, your hopes for your school community or your ideas about how students and adults can help prevent or respond to bullying and harassment.

Poster Requirements

- Artwork must be **original student work**.
- Posters must not exceed **11 x 17 inches**.
- The poster must communicate a clear message related to bullying prevention, respect, kindness, inclusion, belonging or supporting others.
- Students should use their creativity to communicate a message that can engage and inspire the school community.
- Each poster submission must include a **brief statement explaining what the poster means to the student and the message they want others to understand**.
- Posters exceeding the 11 x 17-inch size limit will not be accepted.

RFA Multimedia Contest for Students

Theme: Reporting Bullying is Brave

Students are invited to use multimedia to share their ideas, experiences and messages about preventing bullying and harassment and creating a school community where everyone feels safe, supported and respected.

Students may use **video, audio, photography, animation, digital art or other multimedia formats** to communicate their message.

Your submission should demonstrate how students and adults can contribute to a positive school environment by showing kindness, supporting others, standing up to harmful behavior and knowing how and when to report concerns.

Multimedia Requirements

- Submissions must be **original student work**.
- Multimedia submissions may incorporate audio, images, animation, video or a combination of formats.
- The submission must relate to bullying prevention, respect, inclusion, belonging, kindness, upstander behavior or creating a safe and supportive school community.
- Students should use the format creatively and intentionally to communicate their message.
- Each submission must include a **brief statement explaining what the submission means to the student and the message they want others to understand**.
- Submissions should be appropriate for a school audience.

School Submissions to the Superintendent's Office

Each school may submit entries to its respective Superintendent's Office:

- One essay
- One poster
- One multimedia submission

Schools should select student work that reflects the goals of the Respect for All initiative and demonstrates thoughtful student voice, creativity, understanding of bullying prevention and meaningful action.

School Submission Deadline

Schools must submit their entries to their respective Superintendent's Office no later than: **December 15, 2026**

Superintendent's Office contact information is available through the NYC Public Schools district leadership webpage.

Scoring Rubric (Essay, Poster, Multimedia)

Each Superintendent's Office is encouraged to use the **2026 Rubric** when reviewing submissions.

Criterion	4 – Excellent	3 – Good	2 – Developing	1 – Needs Improvement
RFA / Anti-Bullying Understanding	Demonstrates a clear, accurate and thoughtful understanding of bullying, harassment, bias or other behaviors that undermine a safe and supportive school environment.	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the topic with minor gaps.	Demonstrates some understanding but the message may be general or incomplete.	Demonstrates limited understanding or includes significant confusion about the topic.
Student Voice & Personal Connection	Clearly communicates meaningful ways students and adults can prevent, interrupt, report or respond to bullying and harassment and/or support others.	Communicates at least one clear action students or adults can take.	Includes an action or solution, but it is general or underdeveloped.	Provides little or no actionable message.
Creativity & Overall Impact	Highly original, engaging and memorable. Uses the format effectively to communicate a powerful message that can positively influence the school community.	Creative, engaging and effectively communicates the message.	Shows some creativity and communicates the basic message.	Limited creativity, effort or impact; message is difficult to understand or incomplete.
Upstander / Action-Oriented Message	Clearly communicates meaningful ways students and adults can prevent, interrupt, report or respond to bullying and harassment and/or support others.	Communicates at least one clear action students or adults can take.	Includes an action or solution, but it is general or underdeveloped.	Provides little or no actionable message.

In addition to the individual contest criteria, reviewers should consider how effectively each submission reflects the goals of Respect for All, including:

- Creating safe and supportive school communities
- Preventing bullying and harassment
- Promoting kindness, respect and inclusion
- Recognizing the impact of bullying and harassment on students
- Encouraging students to become upstanders
- Promoting appropriate reporting and help-seeking
- Supporting students who experience or witness bullying or harassment
- Celebrating student voice and creativity

Each Superintendent's Office should select one winning submission in each category:

- Essay
- Poster
- Multimedia

District Selection Deadline

Superintendent's Offices should select their district winners no later than:
January 15, 2026

Superintendents are encouraged to recognize and celebrate participating students and schools through appropriate school and community events, including Community Education Council meetings.

Submission of District Winners to Respect for All

Following district recognition, each Superintendent's Office must submit copies of its winning essay, poster and multimedia submission to the Respect for All office.

District-winning submissions should include:

- Student name
- Grade level
- School name
- District
- Contest category
- Student's required statement, where applicable

Final Submission Deadline

District-winning submissions must be emailed to:

RespectForAll@schools.nyc.gov no later than **February 1, 2026**

Social-Emotional Learning Connections

The contest also provides opportunities for students to demonstrate skills connected to Social-Emotional Learning, including the ability to:

- Recognize unwelcome teasing, bullying and harassment.
- Identify how bullying and harassment can affect individuals and communities.
- Identify strategies for safely responding to bullying and harassment.
- Understand how students may feel when they experience bullying, harassment or exclusion.
- Distinguish between bullying and non-bullying situations
- Explain why bullying, harassment and making fun of others can cause harm.
- Identify strategies for preventing and stopping bullying and harassment.
- Demonstrate ways to safely support someone who is experiencing bullying or harassment.
- Evaluate whether strategies for preventing or responding to bullying are effective.
- Identify appropriate ways to report bullying, harassment or other concerns and seek help from trusted adults.