

Elsinboro Township Board of Education District Policy Manual

Students Series 5000 Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying Policy 5131.9

Date Adopted: March 30, 2009

Date Revised: February 14, 2011, September 12, 2011,
November 14, 2017, October 15, 2018, November 19,
2018, September 19, 2022

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Prohibiting HIB (Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying)

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying against any pupil. A safe and civil environment in the school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards; harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe environment; and since pupils learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Definition of HIB

For the purposes of this policy and as defined in (*N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.7(a)2iii*), "bullying" is unwanted, aggressive behavior that may involve a real or perceived power imbalance, and "harassment, intimidation or bullying" HIB as defined in *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14*, means any gesture or written, verbal or physical act or any use of an electronic communication device directed at a student that takes place on or off school grounds, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, c.122 (*C.18A:37-15.3*) that:

- A. Targets a student and which may affect his/her educational program;
- B. Substantially disrupts, infringes or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students;
- C. Creates a hostile educational environment for a student(s) by infringing and/or interfering with a student(s)' education;
- D. Severely or pervasively causes physical or emotional harm to a student(s);
- E. Is motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability; or,
- F. By any other distinguishing characteristic; and
- G. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- H. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

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Acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may also be a pupil or group of pupils exercising control over another pupil, in either isolated incidents (e.g., intimidation, harassment) or patterns of harassing or intimidating behavior (e.g., bullying).

The term “school grounds,” pursuant to NJAC 6A:16-1.3, means and includes land, portions of land, structures, buildings, and vehicles, when used for the provision of academic or extracurricular programs sponsored by the school district or community provider and structures that support these buildings, such as school district wastewater treatment facilities, generating facilities, and other central service facilities including, but not limited to, kitchens and maintenance shops. School property also includes other facilities as defined in NJAC 6A:26-1.2, playgrounds, and recreational places owned by local municipalities, private entities, or other individuals during those times when the school district has exclusive use of a portion of such land.

Cyberbullying

The Board of Education expressly forbids cyberbullying. For the purposes of this policy, “cyberbullying” shall mean using the communication capacities of computers, the Internet, and/or any other digital communication devices to bully others by:

- A. Sending or posting cruel messages or images;
- B. Threatening others;
- C. Excluding or attempting to exclude others from activities or organizations;
- D. Starting or passing on rumors about others or the school system;
- E. Harassing or intimidating others;
- F. Sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages directed at a person or persons privately or to an online group;
- G. Sending or posting harmful, untrue or cruel statements about a person to others;
- H. Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material that makes that person look bad or places that person in potential danger;
- I. Sending or posting material about a person that contains sensitive, private, or embarrassing information, including forwarding private messages or images; and/or,
- J. Engaging in tricks to solicit embarrassing information that is then made public.

Pupils found to be engaging in activities as described above shall be subject to the terms and sanctions found in this policy and the discipline code of the district.

Anti-Bullying Coordinator and Anti-Bullying Specialist

The Chief School Administrator shall appoint a district anti-bullying coordinator, who shall be responsible for overseeing and strengthening the anti-bullying

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initiatives and policies of this district to prevent, identify and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of students. The school district shall provide time during the usual school schedule for the Anti-Bullying Coordinator and each school Anti-Bullying Specialist to participate in harassment, intimidation, and bullying training programs. The district anti-bullying coordinator shall also:

- A. Collaborate with the school anti-bullying specialist(s), the Board of Education, and the Chief School Administrator to prevent, identify and respond to harassment, intimidation, or bullying of students in the district;
- B. Shall be made available to private schools in the municipality the public school is located in.
- C. Provide data in collaboration with the Superintendent of Schools, to the New Jersey Department of Education regarding harassment, intimidation, or bullying of students;
- D. Execute such other duties related to school harassment, intimidation, or bullying as requested by the Superintendent of Schools; and,
- E. Meet at least twice per school year (once in the first semester and once in the second semester) with the school anti-bullying specialist(s) to discuss and strengthen procedures and policies to prevent, identify, and address harassment, intimidation or bullying in the district.

A school leader shall complete school leader training that shall include information on the prevention of harassment, intimidation, and bullying as required in NJSA 18A:26-8.2.

In addition, a school safety team shall be established in each school to foster and maintain a positive school climate within the schools. The school safety/climate team must, at a minimum, consist of the principal or his/her designee, a teacher within the school, the school anti-bullying specialist who will serve as the team chair, and a parent/guardian of a student within the school. Any parent/guardian who serves on the school safety team shall not participate in any activity of the team that may compromise the confidentiality of students.

The Principal shall be appointed by the Chief School Administrator to fulfill the role of anti-bullying specialist.

The Principal or Chief School Administrator must appoint the currently employed school guidance counselor, school psychologist, or another similarly trained individual as the school anti-bullying specialist. If there is no such individual meeting these criteria, the Principal or Chief School Administrator must appoint another currently employed individual in the school to the position of school anti-bullying specialist.

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The school anti-bullying specialist shall:

- A. Chair the school safety team;
- B. Lead investigations of incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying in the school; and,
- C. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying in the school.

The Superintendent of Schools/designee shall develop a list of appropriate responses to actions of harassment, intimidation, or bullying occurring off school grounds, in cases in which a school employee is made aware of such actions. These responses shall be consistent with the district's code of student conduct and other provisions of this policy and in accordance with the provisions of state and federal laws.

For school staff to address HIB that occurs off school grounds there must be a reason to believe, at a minimum, that the alleged HIB has substantially disrupted or interfered with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students. Once this determination has been made, school staff must implement the provisions of this policy and the code of student conduct of the district.

Expected Behavior

The Board of Education expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

The Board of Education believes that standards for pupil behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the pupils, parents/guardians, staff, and community members, producing an atmosphere that encourages pupils to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property on the part of pupils, staff, and community members.

The Board of Education believes that the best discipline is self-imposed and that it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities to help pupils learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with pupils shall apply best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage pupils' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

Consequences and Remedial Measures for Acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying Discipline of Pupils

In considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, the administrator

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should consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the level of harm, the nature of the behavior, past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred. Institutional (i.e., classroom, school building, school district) responses can range from school and community surveys, to mailings, to focus groups, to the adoption of research-based bullying prevention program models, to training for certificated and non-certificated staff, to the participation of parents and other community members and organizations, to small or large group presentations for fully addressing the actions and the school's response to the actions, in the context of the acceptable pupil behavior and the consequences of such actions and to the involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers.

The district board of education requires its school administrators to implement procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences and remedial responses for students who commit one or more acts of HIB, consistent with the code of student conduct, and the consequences and remedial responses for staff members who commit one or more acts of HIB.

In every incident found to be HIB, the school principal, in consultation with appropriate school staff, may apply disciplinary consequences and/or remedial actions, such as the provision of counseling, behavioral interventions, or other measures.

The following factors, at a minimum, shall be given full consideration by school administrators in the implementation of appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each act of HIB by students. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offenses, consider the developmental ages of the student offenders, the nature of the student's disability, if any, and to the extent relevant, and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors, per the code of student conduct and *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7*.

The principal, in consultation with appropriate school staff, shall develop an individual student intervention plan when a student is found to be an offender in three HIB incidents and each subsequent incident occurring within one school year. The student intervention plan may include disciplinary consequences and/or remedial actions and may require the student, accompanied by a parent or guardian, to satisfactorily complete a class or training program to reduce HIB behavior. Each student intervention plan must be approved by the district chief school administrator.

Should a student be found to be an offender in a HIB incident, a copy of the results of the HIB investigation shall be included in the student's record pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-32-7*.

While the majority of incidents may be addressed solely by school officials, the chief school administrator or designee and the principal shall report a HIB incident to law enforcement

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officials if the conduct rises to the level of a mandatory report as outlined in the *Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials*.

The Chief School Administrator shall provide annually to pupils and their parents/guardians the rules of the district regarding pupil conduct, and the policy shall appear in all publications of the school district's comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools within the school district, including the pupil handbook.

Provisions shall be made for informing parents/guardians whose primary language is other than English. These district rules shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Describing pupil responsibilities including the requirements for pupils to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property, and rights of others; obey constituted authority, and respond to those who hold that authority;
- B. Addressing appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship and academic success,
- C. Explaining pupil rights; and,
- D. Identifying disciplinary sanctions and due process.

Pupils

Consequences and remedial measures for a pupil who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Consequences shall be consistent with the Board of Education approved code of student conduct and NJAC 6A:16-7. Consequences and remedial measures shall be designed to:

- A. Correct the problem behavior;
- B. Prevent another occurrence of the problem;
- C. Protect and provide support for the victim of the act; and
- D. Take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a pupil who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including short and long-term suspension or expulsion, as permitted by law. The consequences and remedial measures may include but are not limited to:

Consequences

- A. Admonishment;
- B. Temporary removal from the classroom;

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- C. Deprivation of privileges;
- D. Classroom or administrative detention;
- E. Referral to disciplinarian;
- F. In-school suspension during the school week or the weekend;
- G. After-school programs;
- H. Out-of-school suspension (short-term or long-term);
- I. Legal action; and
- J. Expulsion.

Remedial Measures

- A. Personal;
- B. Restitution and restoration;
- C. Mediation;
- D. Peer support group;
- E. Recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council;
- F. Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
- G. Supportive student interventions, including the participation of the intervention and referral services team;
- H. Behavioral assessment or evaluation, including, but not limited to, a referral to the child study team, as appropriate;
- I. Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- J. Assignment of leadership responsibilities (e.g., hallway or bus monitor);
- K. Involvement of school disciplinarian;
- L. Student counseling;
- M. Parent conferences;
- N. Student treatment; or
- O. Student therapy.

Environmental (Classroom, School Building, or School District)

- A. School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
- B. School culture change;
- C. School climate improvement;
- D. Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs;
- E. School policy and procedures revisions;
- F. Modifications of schedules;
- G. Adjustments in hallway traffic;
- H. Modifications in student routes or patterns traveling to and from school;
- I. Supervision of students before and after school, including school transportation;

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- J. Targeted use of monitors (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, locker room, playground, school perimeter, bus);
- K. Teacher aides;
- L. Small or large group presentations for fully addressing the behaviors and the responses to the behaviors;
- M. General professional development programs for certificated and non-certificated staff;
- N. Professional development plans for involved staff;
- O. Disciplinary action for school staff who contributed to the problem;
- P. Supportive institutional interventions, including the participation of the intervention and referral services team;
- Q. Parent conferences;
- R. Family counseling;
- S. Involvement of parent-teacher organizations;

Classified pupils are subject to the same disciplinary procedures as nondisabled pupils and may be disciplined in accordance with their IEP. However, before disciplining a classified pupil, it must be determined that:

- A. The pupil's behavior is not primarily caused by his/her educational disability;
- B. The program that is being provided meets the pupil's needs.

Staff

Remains consistent with the Board of Education requirements that all violations and complaint reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying committed by an adult or youth against a student be investigated promptly by the appropriately designated administrator or his/her designee.

All investigations shall be thorough and complete with the understanding that complaints about any staff member or adult conduct cannot be investigated by a member of the same bargaining unit. Any person who has been convicted of bias intimidation may be disqualified for employment in this district.

The Board of Education prohibits the employment of or contracting for school staff positions with individuals whose criminal history record check reveals a record of conviction for a crime of bias intimidation or conspiracy to commit or attempt to commit a crime of bias intimidation.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for any staff member who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to disciplinary charges that could result in suspension or termination. The consequences and

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remedial measures may include but are not limited to:

Consequences

- A. Admonishment;
- B. Temporary removal from the classroom;
- C. Deprivation of privileges;
- D. Referral to disciplinarian;
- E. Withholding of Increment
- F. Suspension;
- G. Bans from providing services, participating in school district-sponsored programs, or being in school buildings or on school grounds;
- H. Legal action; and
- I. Termination.

Remedial Measures

- A. Personal;
- B. Restitution and restoration;
- C. Mediation;
- D. Support group;
- E. Recommendations of behavior or ethics council;
- F. Corrective action plan;
- G. Behavioral assessment or evaluation;
- H. Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- I. Involvement of school disciplinarian;
- J. Counseling;
- K. Conferences;
- L. Professional development programs;
- M. Work environment modifications;
- N. Treatment; or
- O. Therapy.

Environmental (Classroom, School Building or School District)

- A. School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation or bullying;
- B. School culture change;
- C. School climate improvement;
- D. Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs;
- E. School policy and procedures revisions;

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- F. Modifications of schedules;
- G. Supervision;
- H. Small or large group presentations for fully addressing the behaviors and the responses to the behaviors;
- I. General professional development programs for certificated and non-certificated staff;
- J. Professional development plans for involved staff;
- K. Disciplinary action;
- L. Supportive institutional interventions, including the participation of the intervention and referral services team;
- M. Conferences;
- N. Counseling.

Reporting Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB)

The Superintendent of Schools, principal, and/or their designee shall be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy.

Any school employee, pupil, Board Member, or volunteer who has witnessed, or has reliable information that a pupil has been subject to harassment, intimidation, or bullying, must report the incident to the appropriately designated administrator or his/her designee.

All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be reported verbally to the school principal on the same day when the school employee or contracted services provider witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. This includes an act of HIB committed by an adult or youth against a student. The principal may use his/her discretion in handling initial HIB complaints in accordance with current HIB legislation. The principal shall inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students involved in the alleged incident, and may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services. All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying including an act of HIB committed by an adult or youth against a student, shall be reported in writing to the principal within 2 school days of when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information that a student had been subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

In cases in which an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying occurs exclusively among or between special education students or students with developmental disabilities in the context of a county special services school district or a separate program for special education students within a school district, the school employee who witnesses such an incident shall have the discretion to determine whether it is necessary to report the incident or if the incident may have been affected by the condition of the student(s) and thereby warrants an alternative approach

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more appropriate in the special education context.

Reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying in any form, including but not limited to, oral reports, written reports, or electronic reports shall be taken. Reports shall also be made to the Department of Education through the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS). The Board of Education shall allow reports to be anonymous, but no formal disciplinary action shall be based solely on an anonymous report.

The principal or his/her designee is required to inform the parents of all students involved in alleged incidents, and, as appropriate, may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services. When providing notification to the parents of all students involved, the principal or his/her designee shall take into account the circumstances of the incident when conveying the nature of the incident, including the actual or perceived category motivating the alleged offense. The principal or his/her designee shall keep a written record of the date, time, and manner of notification to parents.

Students, parents, and visitors are encouraged to report alleged acts of HIB to the principal on the same day when the individual witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. The school district shall provide an online means to complete the HIB 338 Form issued by the Department to anonymously report an act of HIB. Formal action for violations of the code of student conduct may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

A member of a board of education or a school employee who promptly reports an incident of HIB and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in the district's policy is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

The Board of Education requires that all violations and complaint reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying be investigated promptly by the appropriately designated administrator or his/her designee. The principal (or his/her designee) and the anti-bullying specialist may make a preliminary determination if the complaint is within the scope of HIB prior to initiating an investigation. All investigations shall be thorough and complete and shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Taking of statements from the victim, witnesses, and accused;
- B. Careful examination of facts;
- C. Support for the victim; and
- D. Determination if the alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy.

The appropriately designated administrator shall maintain all reports and records of the investigation on file.

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Investigating Allegations of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB)

The district board of education requires a thorough and complete investigation to be conducted for each report of an alleged incident of HIB. All details of an alleged incident must be populated into the HIB 338 Form. However, completing the form shall not delay beginning the investigation in accordance with the law.

The HIB 338 Form shall be kept on file at the school and will only be added to a student record if the alleged incident is founded, disciplinary action is imposed, or is otherwise required to be contained in a student's record under State or Federal law.

The investigation shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the verbal report of the incident. The investigation shall be conducted by the school anti-bullying specialist appointed by the principal. The principal may appoint additional personnel who are not school anti-bullying specialists to assist the school anti-bullying specialist in the investigation. Investigations of complaints concerning adult conduct shall not be investigated by a member of the same bargaining unit as the individual who is the subject of the investigation.

The investigation shall be completed, and the written findings submitted to the principal as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days from the date of the written report of the alleged incident of HIB or from the date of the written notification from the chief school administrator to the principal to initiate an investigation. Should information regarding the reported incident and the investigation be received after the end of the 10-day period, the school anti-bullying specialist or the principal shall amend the original report of the results of the investigation to ensure there is an accurate and current record of the facts and activities concerning the reported incident.

The principal shall proceed in accordance with the code of student conduct, as appropriate, based on the investigation findings. The principal shall submit the report to the chief school administrator within two school days of the completion of the investigation and in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (*N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq.*). As appropriate to the findings from the investigation, the chief school administrator shall ensure the code of student conduct has been implemented and provide intervention services, order counseling, establish training programs to reduce HIB and enhance school climate, or take or recommend other appropriate action, including seeking further information as necessary.

The chief school administrator shall report the results of each investigation to the board of education no later than the date of the regularly scheduled board of education meeting following the completion of the investigation. The chief school administrator's report also shall include information on any consequences imposed under the code of student conduct, intervention services provided, counseling ordered, training established, or other action taken or recommended by the chief school administrator.

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Parents of the students who are parties to the investigation shall be provided with information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation. The information to be provided to parents includes the nature of the investigation, whether the district found evidence of HIB, or whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the incident of HIB. This information shall be provided in writing within five school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the board of education. The school district may not divulge personally identifying information or any information that could result in the identification of any student other than the child of the parents or guardians being notified.

A parent or guardian may request a hearing before the board of education after receiving the information. Any request by the parents or guardians for a hearing before the district board of education concerning the written information about a HIB investigation, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15b(6)(d)*, must be filed with the district board of education secretary no later than 60 calendar days after the written information is received by the parents or guardians. The hearing shall be held within 10 business days of the request. Prior to the hearing, the chief school administrator shall confidentially share a redacted copy of the official investigation form that removes all student identification information with the board of education. The board of education shall conduct the hearing in executive session, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act (*N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 et seq.*), to protect the confidentiality of the students. At the hearing, the board of education may hear testimony from and consider information provided by the school anti-bullying specialist and others, as appropriate, regarding the alleged incident, the findings from the investigation of the alleged incident, recommendations for consequences or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such incidents, prior to rendering a determination.

At the regularly scheduled board of education meeting following its receipt of the report or following a hearing in executive session, the board shall issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the chief school administrator's decision. The board of education's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 6A:3*, no later than 90 days after the issuance of the board of education's decision.

A school administrator who receives a report of HIB, or who determines a reported incident or complaint, assuming all facts presented are true, is a report within the scope of *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14* and fails to initiate or conduct an investigation, or who should have known of an incident of HIB and fails to take sufficient action to minimize or eliminate the HIB, may be subject to disciplinary action.

The district board of education also requires a thorough investigation of complaints or reports of HIB, occurring on district board of education school buses, at district board of education school-sponsored functions, and off school grounds involving a student who attends an approved private school for students with disabilities. The investigation will be conducted by the district board of education's

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anti-bullying specialist in consultation with the approved private school for students with disabilities.

Range of Ways to Respond to Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

The district board of education authorizes the principal of each school to define the range of ways in which school staff will respond once an incident of HIB is confirmed, and the chief school administrator shall respond to confirmed HIB, according to the parameters described below and in this policy. The district board of education recognizes that some acts of HIB may be isolated incidents requiring that the school officials respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts and provide support programs for victims. Other acts may be so serious or parts of a larger pattern of HIB that they require a response either at the classroom, school building, or school district levels or by law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who commits an act of HIB may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1*, Discipline of Pupils and as set forth in *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2*, Short-term suspensions, *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3*, Long-term Suspensions and *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.5*, Expulsions.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual is appropriate, the administrator shall consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the degree of harm, the nature, and severity of the behavior, past incidences, or continuing patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred. Institutional (i.e., classroom; school building; school district) responses may include but are not limited to:

- A. School and community surveys;
- B. Mailings;
- C. Focus groups;
- D. Adoption of research-based bullying prevention program models;
- E. Training for certificated and non-certificated staff;
- F. Participation of parents and other community members and organizations;
- G. Small or large group presentations for staff, students, and the community for fully addressing a positive school climate and culture as well as the issues surrounding harassment, intimidation or bullying in the school community;
- H. The involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers.

For every harassment, intimidation, or bullying incident, the district shall respond to the individual who committed the act. Responses may include, but not be limited to:

- A. Individual responses can include positive behavioral interventions (e.g., peer mentoring,

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short-term counseling, life skills groups) and punitive actions (e.g., detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension, expulsion);

- B. Classroom responses can include class discussions about an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, role plays, research projects, observing and discussing audio-visual materials on these subjects, and skill-building lessons in courtesy, tolerance, assertiveness and conflict management;
- C. School responses can include theme days, learning station programs, parent programs and information disseminated to students and parents, such as fact sheets or newsletters explaining acceptable uses of electronic and wireless communication devices;
- D. District-wide responses can include community involvement in policy review and development, professional development programs, adoption of curricula and school-wide programs and coordination with community-based organizations (e.g., mental health; health services; health facilities; law enforcement; faith-based).

This policy and the code of student conduct shall apply to instances when a school employee is made aware of alleged HIB occurring off school grounds.

Retaliation and Reprisal Prohibited

The Board of Education prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Chief School Administrator and/or principal or their designee after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law and Board of Education policies and procedures.

Any act of retaliation or reprisal against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall not be tolerated. Any student, school employee, volunteer, visitor, or Board of Education Member who engages in the act of retaliation or reprisal or who falsely accuses another shall be subjected to consequence and appropriate remedial action. In cases where any state or federal law has allegedly been violated, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

Students

The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance, and shall be consistent with this policy. Consequences may include positive behavioral interventions, notification of parents/guardians, up to and including short or long-term suspension or

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expulsions, as permitted by law.

School Employees

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be determined in accordance with district policies, procedures, and agreements, up to and including suspension or dismissal from service.

Visitors, Volunteers

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be determined by the Chief School Administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Consequences

- A. Admonishment;
- B. Temporary removal from the classroom or school;
- C. Deprivation of privileges;
- D. Classroom or administrative detention;
- E. Referral to disciplinarian;
- F. In-school suspension during the school week or the weekend;
- G. After-school programs;
- H. Out-of-school suspension (short-term or long-term);
- I. Legal action;
- J. Withholding of Increment;
- K. Suspension;
- L. Expulsion;
- M. Termination.

Remedial Measures

- A. Personal;
- B. Restitution and restoration;
- C. Mediation;
- D. Peer support group;

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- E. Recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council;
- F. Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
- G. Supportive student interventions, including the participation of the intervention and referral services team;
- H. Behavioral assessment or evaluation, including, but not limited to, a referral to the child study team, as appropriate;
- I. Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- J. Assignment of leadership responsibilities (e.g., hallway or bus monitor);
- K. Involvement of school disciplinarian;
- L. Counseling;
- M. Conferences;
- N. Professional development programs;
- O. Work environment modifications;
- P. Treatment; or
- Q. Therapy.

Examples of consequences for a school employee or a contracted service provider who has contact with pupils that engages in reprisal or retaliation may include, but not be limited to: verbal or written reprimand, increment withholding, legal action, disciplinary action, termination, and/or bans from providing services, participating in school district sponsored programs, or being in school buildings or on school grounds. Remedial measures may include, but not be limited to: in or out-of-school counseling, professional development programs, and work environment modifications.

Examples of consequences for a Board member who engages in reprisal or retaliation may include, but not be limited to: reprimand, legal action, and other action authorized by statute or administrative code. Remedial measures may include, but not be limited to: counseling and professional development.

Support for Victims of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

The Superintendent of Schools/designee shall establish procedures and practices for supporting victims of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, incorporating the services of professional staff members within the district or as he/she deems appropriate.

Investigation & Appeal

The Superintendent of Schools/designee is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the Superintendent of Schools/designee shall oversee a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of the alleged incident.

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At the Board meeting following the receipt of the report, the Board of Education shall issue a decision, in writing to affirm, reject or modify the decision of the Superintendent of Schools. The decision of the Board of Education may be appealed to the NJ Commissioner of Education in accordance with the procedures set forth in law and regulation, no later than 90 days after the issuance of the decision of the Board of Education.

A parent/guardian or organization may file a complaint with the Division on Civil Rights within 180 days of the occurrence of any incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying based on membership in a protected group as enumerated in the “Law Against Discrimination,” PL 1945, c169 (C. 10:5-1 et seq).

Response to an Incident of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

Some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring that the school responds appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be serious or part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that requires a response either at the classroom, school building, or school district level or by law enforcement officials.

Consequences for False Accusation

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a pupil found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under NJSA 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils.

Public Participation

Based on broad community involvement (i.e., the use of a process that includes representation of parents/guardians and other community representatives, school employees, volunteers, pupils, and administrators for the purpose of providing input regarding the development and content of the policy that is based on accepted core ethical values), the Board of Education shall develop general guidelines for pupil conduct and shall direct development of detailed regulations suited to the age levels of the pupils and the mission and physical facilities of the individual schools. Board policy requires all pupils in the district to adhere to the rules and regulations established by the school district and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infractions of these rules.

Dissemination and Implementation

The district board of education requires the chief school administrator to annually disseminate the HIB policy to all school employees, contracted service providers who have contact with students, school volunteers, students, and parents who have children enrolled in a school in the school district, along with

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a statement explaining that the policy applies to all acts of HIB, pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14, that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions or on a school bus and, as appropriate, acts that occur off school grounds. The chief school administrator shall post a link to the policy that is prominently displayed on the home page of the school district's website. The chief school administrator shall ensure that notice of the district's policy appears in the student handbook and all other publications of the school district that set forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards for schools within the school district.

The chief school administrator shall post the name, school phone number, school address, and school email address of the district anti-bullying coordinator and school anti-bullying specialist on the home page of the school district's website. Additionally, the chief school administrator shall post the contact information for the School Climate State Coordinator on the school district home page alongside the school district's HIB policy. The chief school administrator shall post the Department of Education's Guidance for Parents on the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* on the district homepage and on the homepage for each school in a district with a website.

The chief school administrator and the principals shall provide training on the school district's HIB policies to school employees, contracted service providers, and volunteers who have significant contact with students. The training shall include instruction on preventing bullying on the basis of the protected categories enumerated in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14 and other distinguishing characteristics that may incite incidents of discrimination, HIB. The school district's employee training program shall include information regarding the school district policy against HIB, which shall be provided to full-time and part-time staff, contracted service providers, and school volunteers who have significant contact with students.

The chief school administrator shall develop and implement a process for annually discussing the school district policy on HIB with students. The chief school administrator and the principals shall annually conduct a re-evaluation, reassessment, and review of the HIB policy and any report(s) and/or finding(s) of the school safety/school climate team, with input from the school anti-bullying specialists, and recommend revisions and additions to the policy as well as to HIB prevention programs and approaches based on the findings from the evaluation, reassessment, and review.

The Chief School Administrator shall take the following steps to publicize this policy:

- A. Publicized on the district website;
- B. Distributed annually to all staff, students, and parents/guardians;
- C. Printed in school handbooks, and
- D. Posted at the entrance of each building.

All pupils and staff shall be informed that harassment, intimidation, or bullying is prohibited

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on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus. This shall include the development of a process to annually discuss the policy with students. This information shall also be incorporated into the student handbook and employee training programs.

Training of Staff Members, Administrators & Board of Education Members

The training needs of district staff for the effective implementation of this policy, procedures, and initiatives of the Board of Education shall be reviewed annually. The Board of Education shall also implement staff training programs consistent with this review. Such training shall include, but not be limited to information on the relationship between the risk of suicide and incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying and reducing the risk of suicide among students, especially for those students who are members of communities identified as having members at high risk of suicide.

By the 2011-2012 school year, all candidates for school administrator or teacher certification will be required to complete a program on harassment, intimidation, or bullying prevention, and that training in this area will be a part of the professional development requirements for these individuals.

Within one year after being newly elected or appointed or being re-elected or re-appointed to the Board of Education, a Board Member shall complete a training program dealing with harassment, intimidation, or bullying in schools and including a school district's responsibilities under PL 2002, c.83 (C.18A;37-13 et seq). This training shall be provided by the New Jersey School Boards Association in consultation with recognized experts in school bullying from a cross-section of academia, child advocacy organizations, nonprofit organizations, professional associations, and governmental agencies. Board Members shall be required to complete the program only once.

The training course for any safe school resource officers and/or public school employees assigned by the Board of Education to serve as a school liaison to law enforcement must include training in the protection of students from harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The extent and characteristics of harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior in the district's schools, and implementation programs, or other responses, if appropriate, shall be reviewed annually. These programs or other services shall be planned in consultation with parents, and other community members, including appropriate community-based social and health provider agencies, law enforcement officials, current and new school employees, school volunteers, students, and school administrators, as appropriate.

Twice annually, at a public hearing, the Chief School Administrator must report to the Board of Education, all acts of violence, vandalism, harassment, intimidation, or bullying that

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occurred during the previous period. This report shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. The number of reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the status of all investigations;
- B. The nature of the bullying is based upon one of the protected categories identified in Section 2 of PL 2002, c.83 (C18A:37-14);
- C. The names of the investigators;
- D. The type and nature of any discipline imposed on any student engaged in harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and,
- E. Any other means imposed, training conducted, or programs implemented to reduce harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The information shall also be reported once during each semester of the school year to the Department of Education. The report must include data broken down by the enumerated categories as listed in Section 2 of PL 2002, c.83 (C18A:37-14, and data broken down by each school in the district, in addition to district-wide data.

The report will be used to grade schools and districts in their efforts to implement policies and programs with the “Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.” It shall be a violation to improperly release any confidential information not authorized by federal or state law for public release.

The district shall be graded by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education on its efforts to identify harassment, intimidation, or bullying and the School Report Card shall include data identifying the number and nature of all reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The grade assessed for each school and the district shall be published on the district website, along with a link to the report. This information shall be posted on the district website within 10 days of the receipt of a grade by the school and district. The Chief School Administrator shall ensure that the rules for this policy are applied consistently with the district’s code of student conduct NJAC 6A:16-7 and all applicable laws and regulations and that all disciplinary sanctions are carried out with necessary due process.

A copy of this policy and any future revisions to it shall be transmitted to the County Executive Chief School Administrator within 30 days of the adoption of the policy and/or any revisions to it. Annually, the district shall conduct a re-evaluation, reassessment, and review of this policy, making any necessary revisions and additions.

The Board of Education shall include input from the school anti-bullying specialist(s) in conducting this review, re-evaluation, and reassessment.

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The week beginning with the first Monday in October of each year has been designated as a “Week of Respect” in the State of New Jersey. This district shall observe the week by providing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing harassment, intimidation, and bullying. In addition, the district shall provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction dealing with the prevention of harassment, intimidation, and bullying, in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Legal References

NJSA 2A:4A-60 et al. Disclosure of juvenile information; penalties for disclosure

2C:12-1 Definition of assault

2C:33-19 Paging devices, possession by students

2C:39-5 Unlawful possession of weapons

18A:6-1 Corporal punishment of pupils

18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties

18A:25-2 Authority over pupils

18A:37-1 et seq. Discipline of Pupils

NJAC 6A:14-2.8 Discipline/suspension/expulsions

6A:16-1.1 et seq. Programs to Support Student Development

6:32-12.1 Reporting requirements

Possible Cross References

1120, 1410, 3517, 3541.33, 4131, 4131.1, 4148, 4231.1, 4248, 5010, 5020, 5113, 5114, 5124, 5131.7, 5132, 5145, 5145.4, 5145.6, 5145.11, 5145.12, 6142.41, 6145, 6164.4, 6171.4, 6172