

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying

Parent Presentation 2023-24

Staff Roles

- Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Mr. Faas, Administrator
- Anti-Bullying Specialist: Mrs. Smith, School Counselor

Definition of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means:

- Any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents
- That is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic
- That takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds

Definition of HIB Cont'd

The act of HIB must substantially disrupt or interfere with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and:

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that it will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Types of Bullying

- Verbal bullying - Name-calling, taunting, teasing, threatening
 - Physical bullying - Hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging property
- Psychological - Spreading rumors, breaking up friendships
- Cyberbullying - Internet, social media, text messages

Reporting Procedures

- All acts of HIB must be reported verbally to the principal on the same day when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident.
- Principal will inform parents of the alleged incident.
- All allegations of HIB will be reported in writing (using the new NJDOE reporting form) to the principal within two school days of when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information

Reporting Procedures Cont'd

- Parents may report HIB through the form on the school website.
- Principal does not have discretion to decide whether to investigate as HIB.

Threshold Assessment Checklist

● ASSUMING ALL ALLEGATIONS ARE TRUE, the principal must determine if the allegations include:

- Substantial Disruption or Interference

- Actual or Perceived Distinguishing Characteristic

- One of the following:

- Actual harm to self or property or fear of reasonable harm to self or property.

- Demeaning to student or group the student is part of

- Creation of a hostile educational environment

Any incident that does not meet this threshold will not be investigated as a HIB. Superintendent will review all threshold determinations made by principal (ABC) and can overturn the decision not to investigate.

Investigation Procedures

- Initiated by the principal or designee within one school day of the verbal report
- Conducted by the Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS) and the Principal (ABC)
- Parents of victim and accused will be notified of investigation
- Parental permission not required to interview students (Goss v. Lopez 419 US 565 (1975))
- Principal may appoint additional personnel to assist with investigation

Investigation Procedures (Cont.)

- Students may be asked to provide written statements at time of interview.
- Investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days from date of written report of alleged HIB.
- If additional, anticipated information relevant to the investigation is not received within school 10 days, Anti-Bullying Specialist may amend original report to reflect the new information.

Important Specifics

- Threshold for a founded HIB incident is “likelier than not”.
- Finding is based on how statements/actions are perceived by the alleged victim, not on how they were intended by the alleged aggressor.
- Must be motivated by a perceived or actual characteristic.
 - Unfounded HIB can still be a code of conduct violation.
- Difference between what feels like bullying vs. what the law says.
- If it happens outside of school, it can be considered a HIB.

Results of Investigation

- Results shall be reported to the Superintendent within two days of completing the investigation
- Results reported to the Board of Education (BOE) no later than the date of the next board meeting following the completion of the investigation, along with information on action taken or recommended by Superintendent.
- BOE receives redacted information. No information which would identify the students involved will be shared with the BOE.

Results of investigation (Cont.'d)

- Including the nature of the investigation and whether evidence of HIB was found.
- Whether discipline was imposed or services provided for their child.
- Provided in writing within five school days after results are reported to the BOE.
- Due to privacy laws, parents may only receive information about their own child

Results of Investigation (cont.)

- A parent may request a hearing before the BOE.
 - Request must be made no later than 60 calendar days of receipt of written notice of outcome of investigation.
 - Must be held within 10 days of request.
 - BOE shall meet in executive session for the hearing.
- At the next BOE meeting following its receipt of the report the board shall issue a decision to affirm, reject or modify the superintendent's decision.

Supporting Your Children at Home

- Build empathy
- Respect
- Set the example
- Know their friends
- Supervision - online and offline
- Encourage positive problem solving
- Ask questions
- Encourage them to be upstanders

Helpful Websites

- Tuckerton School Website
- Parent Resources - NJDOE
- Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights - NJDOE
- StopBullying.Gov