



**New Jersey Harassment, Intimidation and
Bullying (H.I.B.) Requirements Handbook**

Updated August 2023
Board of Education Approved

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This handbook provides an overview of Mount Laurel School District policy and procedures regarding HIB. Full details should be referred to in the board policy which can be found attached to the end of this document or via the [district website](#) under “Policies” - Policy #5131.1.

2023-2024 Updates

July 19, 2023 NJDOE Broadcast Memo: [Release of HIB 338 Forms for the 2023-2024 School Year](#)

- Minor revisions to HIB 338 Form includes timestamp, sign and date section
- Family/caregivers who report anonymously may still contribute to an investigation
- Additional guidance on the use of preliminary determinations and next steps for each role
- Local Education Agency (LEA) personnel cannot anonymously report allegations of HIB and must submit HIB form 338 within two school days of witnessing or receiving reliable information that a student has been subject to HIB.

Updated forms made available through the district website or Hibster:

- [HIB 338 Form for Families](#)
- [LEA HIB 338 Form](#)

Background

The Mount Laurel Township School District Board of Education believes that a safe and civil environment in the school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Since pupils learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers are required to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying. 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. Therefore, the school district will not tolerate acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The board of education expects all pupils to treat each other with civility and respect and not to engage in behavior that is disruptive or violent. The board expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils, for school personnel, for the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and for the care of school facilities and equipment.

The standards of character education are an essential component of the Mount Laurel Township School District's Code of Conduct. The board believes that with the appropriate infusion of character education into the school curriculum, modeling of appropriate behavior by adults; support and assistance of pupils in school, the community, and at home; our pupils will achieve the above standards of character education.

The board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any pupil. School responses to harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall be aligned with the board-approved code of pupil conduct which establishes standards, policies, and procedures for positive pupil development and pupil behavioral expectations on school grounds, including on a school bus or at school-sponsored functions. The chief school administrator shall be responsible for ensuring the

prompt investigation and response to all reports of harassment, intimidation, and bullying committed on school grounds, at school activities, and on school buses. In addition, the chief school administrator shall ensure that this policy is applied to incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying that are committed off school grounds in cases where a school employee is made aware of such actions. The chief school administrator has the right and authority to impose a consequence on a pupil for conduct away from school grounds that is consistent with the board's approved code of pupil conduct, pursuant to [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1](#) and [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6](#).

On January 5, 2011, the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR) was signed into law, an act concerning HIB in school settings that amended various parts of the statutory law. In particular for school policies and procedures, the act amended N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 et seq., which includes the requirements for the prevention and intervention of HIB on and off school grounds, at school-sponsored functions and on school buses.

In December 2017, the State Board of Education adopted amendments to the regulations related to HIB at N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.7 and new rules at N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8 which went into effect beginning July 1, 2018.

On January 10, 2022, Governor Murphy signed into law amendments to the ABR which required school districts to revise their HIB policies and implement the policies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

Under N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15, each district board of education continues to be granted local control over the contents of the HIB policy, but, at a minimum, the components listed in the amended statute must be included in the school district's policies and procedures prohibiting HIB. Additionally, district policy must continue to conform to all applicable case law, statutes and regulations.

In January of 2018, the Mount Laurel Board of Education revised and re-adopted our policy for Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.

Revisions to our previous policies began in 2011 based on New Jersey Legislation that required more rigorous training for anyone that has significant contact with students to reduce and prevent incidents of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying. This includes our volunteers.

Additional resources to support the implementation of the ABR and to prevent HIB in schools can be found on the [New Jersey Department of Education's \(Department\) HIB website](#) and their [updated FAQ page](#).

Definition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

“Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:

1. Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either 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
2. by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that
3. takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds in accordance with law, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other pupils, and that
4. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a pupil or damaging the pupil’s property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
5. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils; or
6. creates a hostile educational environment for the pupil by interfering with the pupil’s education or by severely or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the pupil.
7. “Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer.

Conflict vs Bullying

Bullying is different from conflict.

- Conflict is a disagreement or argument in which both sides express their views. Conflict occurs naturally when people interact. People do not always agree with other people about the things they want, think, or want to do.
- Bullying is a negative behavior directed by someone exerting power and control over another person. It is an aggressive behavior that is unwanted and unprovoked. The person being targeted is hurt emotionally.

Examples of Conflict:

- Two students get into a fight after a rough play in a soccer game.
- Students disagree over who should do clean-up after a group project.
- Two students who used to be friends bash each other online daily.
- A student wanted to attend another student's birthday party, but wasn't invited.
- Two students argue over who would win in a fight between Spiderman and Batman.
- A student believes he/she should be able to participate in a game but the teacher does not.
- Students begin spreading bad rumors about each other, because they disagree on the best sports team.

Examples of HIB:

These include any gesture, written, verbal or physical act motivated by:

- Race – that are insulting “black/white/Hispanic/Chinese...”
- Color –based on skin color like “you are so white/black etc”
- Religion –items worn (crucifix, Star of David, Yakamas) or about practices/attending synagogue, church etc...
- Ancestry/National Origin – by being Irish, German, being from the USA, Middle East, accents.
- Gender – “girls/boys aren't allowed to do....”, violating personal space or inappropriate touching...
- Sexual Orientation – rumors about person liking same gender or calling someone “gay”
- Gender Identity & Expression – suggesting a female looks like or acts like a boy or vice versa; suggesting one should or should not use a particular restroom
- Mental, Physical or Sensory Disability – learning disability, blindness, wheelchair or use of crutches...
- Any other distinguishing characteristic – association with a particular person, economic class, particular clothing.

Children can bully directly and indirectly:

Direct Bullying

Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting,
Taunting, teasing, epithets, slurs, name-calling, verbal harassment
Threatening, obscene gestures, graphic or written statements

Indirect Bullying

Getting another person to bully someone for you
Spreading rumors
Deliberately excluding someone from a group or activity
Cyber-bullying (text messaging, e-mail, Facebook)

Reporting Requirements for Teachers and Staff

Any school employee, board member, contracted service provider, 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 building principal or his/her designee.

Teachers and staff are responsible for reporting incidents both verbally and in writing.

- Verbal Report - must be made on **the same day** of witnessing or receiving reliable information of possible HIB.
- Written Report - must be submitted to the principal **within two school days** of when witnessed or received reliable information that a student has been subject to a possible HIB. The written report should be completed using the HIB 338 Form for LEAs. This report cannot be made anonymously by LEA members.

If a family member or caregiver makes a verbal allegation of HIB to a district staff member, that staff member must verbally report and then complete and submit the HIB 338 Form.

Any staff member who receives a report of HIB, or is found to have information regarding a HIB incident but does not make the required report, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting Requirements for Administrators

The following procedures shall apply to the reporting of incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying committed by an adult or youth against a student:

- **Preliminary determinations:** Prior to initiating an investigation regarding a reported incident or complaint, the principal or his/her designee, in consultation with the Anti-Bullying Specialist, shall make a preliminary determination as to whether a reported incident or complaint, assuming all facts are presented as true, is a report within the scope of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14. If the principal's predetermination is not to investigate a reported incident or complaint as a HIB, they shall report this to the superintendent immediately on the 338 Form. The superintendent may require an investigation be conducted. The superintendent shall notify the principal of this determination in writing on the 338 Form (N.J.A.C. 18A:37-15(b)(5)).
- **Parent Notification:** The principal shall inform the parents or guardians of all pupils involved in the alleged incident, and may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services; and
- **Investigation Initiation:** The principal or designee shall begin the investigation within **one school day** of the verbal report of the incident.

- **Investigation Completion:** The investigation should be completed 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 written notification from the chief school administrator to the principal to initiate an investigation.
- **Report to Chief School Administrator:** The principal shall submit the report to the chief school administrator within **two school days** of the completion of the investigation.
- **School Board Report:** 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.

A school administrator who receives a report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying from a district employee, and fails to initiate or conduct an investigation, or who should have known of an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying and fails to take sufficient action to minimize or eliminate the harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may be subject to disciplinary action.

The school administrator shall take into account the circumstances of the incident when providing notification to parents and guardians of all students involved in the reported harassment, intimidation, or bullying incident. The circumstances of the incident shall be considered when conveying the nature of the incident, including the actual or perceived protected category motivating the alleged offense.

Family/Caregiver Communication and Appeal Process

Parents of the students who are parties to an investigation shall be provided information about the investigation which 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 within **five school days** after the results of the investigation are reported to the board of education.

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 concerning the written information about an HIB investigation must be filed no later than 60 calendar days after the written information is received by the parents or guardians. The hearing shall be held within 10 days of the request. 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 not later than 90 days after the issuance of the board of education's decision.

Anti-Bullying Roles and Responsibilities

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator

The chief school administrator shall appoint a district anti-bullying coordinator. The district anti-bullying coordinator shall:

- Be responsible for coordinating and strengthening the school district's policies to prevent, identify, and address harassment, intimidation, and bullying of pupils;
- Collaborate with school anti-bullying specialists in the district, the board of education, and the chief school administrator to prevent, identify, and respond to harassment, intimidation, and bullying of pupils in the district;
- Provide data, in collaboration with the chief school administrator, to the Department of Education regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying of pupils; and
- Execute such other duties related to school harassment, intimidation, and bullying as requested by the chief school administrator.

School Anti-Bullying Specialist

The principal in each school shall appoint a school anti-bullying specialist. When a school guidance counselor, school psychologist, or another individual similarly trained is currently employed in the school, the principal shall appoint that individual to be the school anti-bullying specialist. The school anti-bullying specialist shall:

- Chair the school safety/school climate team;
- Lead the investigation of incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the school; and
- Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the school.

School Safety/School Climate Team

The board shall form a school safety/school climate team in each school to develop, foster, and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the ongoing, systemic process and practices in the school and to address school climate issues such as harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The school safety team shall meet at least two times per school year.

The school safety/school climate team shall consist of the principal or his or her designee; a teacher in the school; the school anti-bullying specialist; a parent of a pupil in the school; and other members to be determined by the principal. The school anti-bullying specialist shall serve as the chair of the school safety team.

The school safety/school climate team shall:

- Receive any complaints of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils that have been reported to the principal;
- Receive copies of any report prepared after an investigation of an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
- Identify and address patterns of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils in the school;

- Review and strengthen school climate and the policies of the school in order to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils;
- Educate the community, including pupils, teachers, administrative staff, and parents, to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils;
- Participate in the training required pursuant to the provisions of ([N.J.S.A.18A:37-13 et seq.](#)) and other training which the principal or the district anti-bullying coordinator may request;
- Collaborate with the district anti-bullying coordinator in the collection of district-wide data and in the development of district policies to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils; and
- Execute such other duties related to harassment, intimidation, and bullying as requested by the principal or district anti-bullying coordinator.

A parent shall be on the school safety/school climate team only in regard to general school climate issues and shall not participate in activities that may compromise a student's confidentiality. Other members of the school safety/climate team who are not authorized to access student records (see board policy 5125 Student Records) shall be on the team only in regard to general school climate issues and shall not participate in activities that may compromise a student's confidentiality.

HIB Investigation and Intervention Procedures

To protect the victim, the chief school administrator shall take into account the circumstances of the incident when communicating with parents/guardians and when following the investigation procedures.

All reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall be investigated promptly and in accordance with the law and the following procedures:

- All investigations shall be thorough and complete, and documented in writing, and shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Taking of statements from victims, witnesses, and accused;
 - Careful examination of the facts;
 - Support for the victim; and
 - Determination if the alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy.
- The investigation shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the report of the incident and shall be conducted by a school anti-bullying specialist. The principal may appoint additional personnel who are not school anti-bullying specialists to assist in the investigation.
- The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days from the date of the written report of the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated but not yet received by the end of the 10-day period, the school anti-bullying specialist may amend the original report of the results of the investigation to reflect the information.
- The results of the investigation shall be reported to the chief school administrator within two school days of the completion of the investigation and in accordance with law and board policy. The chief school administrator may initiate intervention services, establish training programs to reduce harassment,

intimidation, or bullying and enhance school climate, impose discipline, order counseling as a result of the findings of the investigation, or take or recommend other appropriate action.

- The results of each investigation shall be reported to the board of education no later than the date of the next board meeting following the completion of the investigation, and include:
 - Any services provided;
 - Training established;
 - Discipline imposed; or
 - Other actions taken or recommended by the chief school administrator.
- The chief school administrator or his or her designee shall ensure that parents or guardians of the pupils who are parties to the investigation shall receive information about the investigation. This information shall be provided in writing within 5 school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the board and include:
 - The nature of the investigation;
 - Whether the district found evidence of harassment, intimidation, bullying; or
 - Whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.
- 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.

Responding to Instances of HIB

The board of education recognizes that some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying 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 part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that they require a response either at the classroom, school building or school district levels or by law enforcement officials.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual is appropriate, the principal, in conjunction with the school anti-bullying specialist, shall consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the degree of harm, the nature, and severity 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 include:

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

For every incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the district shall respond to the individual who committed the act. Responses may include:

- Individual responses can include positive behavioral interventions (e.g., peer mentoring, short-term counseling, life skills groups) and punitive actions (e.g., detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension, expulsion);
- 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;
- School responses can include theme days, learning station programs, parent programs, and information disseminated to pupils and parents, such as fact sheets or newsletters explaining acceptable uses of electronic and wireless communication devices;
- 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).

The range of ways in which the school shall respond once an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying is identified shall be defined by the principal in conjunction with the school anti-bullying specialist and shall include an appropriate combination of counseling, support services, intervention services, and other programs as defined by the commissioner.

Retaliation and Reprisal Prohibited

The board prohibits reprisal or retaliation or false accusation against any person who witnesses and/or reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying by any pupil, school employee, board member, contracted service provider, visitor or volunteer. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation or false accusation 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 policies and procedures.

Any act of retaliation or reprisal or false accusation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall not be tolerated. Any pupil, school employee, board member, contracted service provider, volunteer, or visitor 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 pupil found to have engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accused 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 pupil and the pupil's history of problem behaviors and performance, and shall be consistent with this policy. Consequences may include positive behavioral interventions, notification of the parents/guardians, up to and including short or long-term suspension or expulsion, 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 accused 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;

Board Members

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a board member found to have committed an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying; or found to have engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be determined in accordance with district policies, procedures, and agreements, up to and including a public sanction or filed ethics charges;

Visitors, Volunteers, Contracted Service Providers, and All Other Persons

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor, volunteer, contracted service providers, and all other persons found to have engaged in harassment, intimidation, or bullying; or engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accused 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 and Remediation

Consequences and remediation for students, employees, board members, visitors, volunteers, and contracted service providers, engaging in harassment, intimidation, or bullying or engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or false accusations may include the following:

Consequences

1. Removal from the classroom or school;
2. The visitor or volunteer may be banned from school buildings and grounds;
3. Immediate suspension and/or expulsion from classrooms or school property;
4. Termination of volunteer privileges;
5. Legal action.

Remedial measures to reestablish visitor, volunteer, contracted service providers, assembly/board members, or all other persons, privileges may include:

1. Conference with the principal or chief school administrator;
2. Personal action such as a letter of apology;
3. Restitution and restoration.

Preventing HIB

Factors that support students and reduce instances of HIB:

- Actively building and contributing towards a positive school climate
- Promoting positive student development
- Encouraging positive interactions between students and staff
- Creating connections and fostering belonging

School Climate

Reinforcing language: Language is powerful. Give positive feedback and recognize children’s efforts at self-discipline. Name specific actions and avoid global praise or personal judgment. Example: “John, I noticed that you were using respectful language today.”

Reminding Language: Give the children or child the opportunity to show the appropriate behavior; the reminder can be in the form of a statement or question and may be followed by an observation. “Let me hear your ‘indoor voice’ since you are in the office?”

Redirecting Language: Used when a child’s behavior is unsafe or uncaring, probably after several reminders have been given; name the appropriate behavior. “Susan, keep your hands to yourself.”

Promoting Positive Student Development

Build relationships and respect with students.

- Do students know how to seek your help?
- Do students know how to support each other?
- How do you respond when a student reports a problem or seeks help?

Encouraging positive interactions between students and between you and the student.

Students need to learn the proper ways to interact with others.

- What do your words/actions convey?
- How can you model the desired behavior?
- What do you do when you observe something inappropriate? When you intervene, how does that intervention support students?

Create connections and fostering belonging

Students need to feel connected to school and with others.

- Do you know the students' names?
- Do you encourage students to use names when referring to each other?

Resources

www.StopBullying.gov

What is Cyberbullying

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it>

The Trevor Project Hotline

<http://www.youtube.com/trevorprojectmedia>

Champions Against Bullying:

<http://www.championsagainstabullying.com/>

Helping Students in Troubling Times

<https://schoolcounselor.org/Publications-Research/Publications/Free-ASCA-Resources/Helping-Students-in-Troubling-Times>

How to Prevent School Bullying

<https://momlovesbest.com/bullying-prevention>

NJ Department of Education - New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR): FAQ & Resources

<https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/sandp/hib/faq.shtml>

Appendix

- Investigation Steps and Timeline
 - [HIB Incident Flowchart](#)

- HIB Report Forms
 - [HIB 338 Form for Families](#) (updated 2023)
 - [LEA HIB 338 Form](#) (updated 2023)

**Mount Laurel School District
Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Handbook
Acknowledgement Form**

Please select the appropriate response, sign and return this form to the correct department at:

Mount Laurel Board of Education
330 Mount Laurel Road
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

Or

To the school in which you are volunteering

- Board of Education Member (Business Office)
- Substitute and/or New Employee (Human Resources)
- Contract Service Providers (Curriculum Office)
- Volunteer (School Main Office)

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read the
(Printed First and Last Name)

Mount Laurel manual on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying. I understand the requirements
and will report potential incidents of HIB.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mt. Laurel Anti-Bullying Coordinator:

Matthew Saul, District Anti-Bullying Coordinator

Phone: 856-231-4140 ext. 23505

Address: 520 Hartford Road, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

Email: msaul@mtlaurelschools.org

MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP BOARD POLICY [5131.1]

Adopted November 15, 2022
Last Revised November 15, 2022
Last Reviewed September 27, 2022
Prior Revised Dates 01/23/2018

MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

FILE CODE: 5131.1

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING

The Mount Laurel Township School District Board of Education believes that a safe and civil environment in the school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Since pupils learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers are required to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying. 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. Therefore, the school district will not tolerate acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The board of education expects all pupils to treat each other with civility and respect and not to engage in behavior that is disruptive or violent. The board expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils, for school personnel, for the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and for the care of school facilities and equipment.

The standards of character education are an essential component of the Mount Laurel Township School District's Code of Conduct. The board believes that with the appropriate infusion of character education into the school curriculum, modeling of appropriate behavior by adults; support and assistance of pupils in school, the community, and at home; our pupils will achieve the above standards of character education.

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This authority shall be exercised only when it is reasonably necessary for the pupil's physical or emotional safety, security, and well-being or for reasons relating to the safety, security, and well-being of other pupils, staff, or school grounds, pursuant to [N.J.S.A. 18A:25-2](#) and [18A:37-2](#), and when the conduct which is the subject of the proposed consequence materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. The board directs the chief school administrator or his or her appropriately trained and qualified designee to develop detailed regulations suited to the age level of the pupils and the physical facilities of the individual schools.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that may involve a real or perceived power imbalance. "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any 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, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or off school grounds, in accordance with the law, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other pupils, and that:

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

"Electronic communication" means communication that is transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

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

Students

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 nature of the student's disability, if any, and to the extent relevant; the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Consequences shall be consistent with the board-approved code of pupil conduct and [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7](#). Consequences and remedial measures shall be designed to:

- A. Correct the problem behavior;
- A. Prevent another occurrence of the problem;
- A. Protect and provide support for the victim of the act; and
- A. 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:

- A. Consequences (Administrative Disciplinary Action, see 5131 Conduct and Discipline, Code of Student Conduct)

Behavior	CSC #	First Offense	Subsequent Offenses
Harassing language or gesture	A-37	Warning, parent conference, and/or suspension (ISS or OSS) up to 3 days depending on severity	Suspension of up to 5 days
Biased/racial/sexually harassing remarks or behavior	A-39	Suspension (ISS or OSS), parent notification, I&RS referral	Suspension of up to 5 days, parent conference, I&RS referral, possible police contact
Verbal, visual, or written threat	A-40	In school suspension, parent notification	Suspension, parent conference, I&RS referral
Harassment, intimidation, bullying	A-44	Peer mediation, suspension of up to 3 days, parent conference	Suspension of up to 5 days, parent conference, I&RS referral

A. Remedial Measures

1. Personal

- a. Restitution and restoration;
- b. Mediation;
- c. Peer support group for the victim;
- d. Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
- e. Supportive pupil interventions, including the participation of the intervention and referral services team;
- f. Behavioral assessment or evaluation, including, but not limited to, a referral to the child study team, as appropriate;
- g. Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- h. Involvement of school disciplinarian;
- i. Pupil counseling;
- j. Parent conferences;
- k. Pupil treatment or therapy.

1. Environmental (Classroom, School Building or School District)

- a. School culture change;
- b. School climate improvement;
- c. Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs;
- d. School policy and procedures revisions;
- e. Modifications of schedules;
- f. Adjustments in hallway traffic;
- g. Modifications in pupil routes or patterns traveling to and from school;
- h. Supervision of pupils before and after school, including school transportation;
- i. Targeted use of monitors (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, locker room, playground, school perimeter, bus);
- j. Teacher aides;
- k. Small or large group presentations for fully addressing the behaviors and the responses to the behaviors;
- l. Supportive institutional interventions, including the participation of the intervention and referral services team;
- m. Parent conferences;
- n. Family counseling;
- o. 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.

The principal, in consultation with appropriate 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 Superintendent.

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:16-332-7.

The Superintendent, or designee, and the principal shall report a HIB incident to law enforcement 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*.

Staff

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for any staff member who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions to disciplinary charges which could result in suspension or termination. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to:

A. Consequences

1. Conference with the supervisor and the victim if appropriate;
2. Corrective action plan;
3. Admonishment such as a letter in the personnel file;
4. Temporary removal from the classroom;
5. Discipline measures such as:
 - a. Withholding of increment;
 - b. Suspension without pay;
1. Legal action; and
2. Termination.

B. Remedial Measures

1. Personal
 - a. Letter of apology;

- b. Restitution and restoration;
- c. Mediation;
- d. Support group;
- e. Probationary period in which the supervisor in conjunction with the employee may develop and implement the following:
 - i. Corrective action plan;
 - ii. Behavioral assessment or evaluation;
 - iii. Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored.
- f. Referral for a psychiatric examination (see policy 4112.4/4212.4 Employee Health); and
- g. Referral for counseling, treatment, or therapy.

2. Environmental (Classroom and/or School Building):

- 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 plan;
- d. Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs;
- e. School policy and procedures revisions;
- 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, and Bullying Behavior

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

The board shall allow reports to be anonymous, but no formal disciplinary action shall be based solely on an anonymous report. Any school employee, board member, contracted service provider, pupil, parent, visitor, 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 building principal or his/her designee.

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. If a parent makes a verbal allegation of HIB to a district staff member, the staff member must complete and submit the HIB 338 Form. The HIB 338 Form shall be kept on file at the school and will only be added to the 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.

Any staff member who receives a report of a HIB, or is found to have information regarding a HIB incident but does not make the required report, may be subject to disciplinary action. 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.A.C. 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 following procedures shall apply to the reporting of incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying committed by an adult or youth against a student:

- A. Prior to initiating an investigation regarding a reported incident or complaint, the principal or his/her designee, in consultation with the Anti-Bullying Specialist, shall make a preliminary determination as to whether a reported incident or complaint, assuming all facts are presented as true, is a report within the scope of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14. If the principal's predetermination is not to investigate a reported incident or complaint as a HIB, they shall report this to the superintendent immediately on the 338 Form. The superintendent may require an investigation be conducted. The superintendent shall notify the principal of this determination in writing on the 338 Form (N.J.A.C. 18A:37-15(b)(5)).
- B. All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be reported verbally to the school principal on the same day that the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. Form 338 shall be submitted following the verbal report;
 - A. The principal shall inform the parents or guardians of all pupils involved in the alleged incident, and may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services; and
 - A. All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be reported in writing to the school principal within two school days of when the school employee or contracted service provider

witnessed or received reliable information that a pupil had been subject to harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

A board member, school employee, contracted service provider, pupil, or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a pupil has been subject to, harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall report the incident to the building principal and any appropriate school official, or to any school administrator or safe schools resource officer, who shall immediately initiate the school district's procedures concerning school bullying.

A board member or a school employee who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, to the appropriate school official designated by the school district's policy, or to any school administrator or safe schools resource officer, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in this policy, shall be immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

A school administrator who receives a report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying from a district employee, and fails to initiate or conduct an investigation, or who should have known of an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying and fails to take sufficient action to minimize or eliminate the harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may be subject to disciplinary action.

The school administrator shall take into account the circumstances of the incident when providing notification to parents and guardians of all students involved in the reported harassment, intimidation, or bullying incident. The circumstances of the incident shall be considered when conveying the nature of the incident, including the actual or perceived protected category motivating the alleged offense.

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator

The chief school administrator shall appoint a district anti-bullying coordinator. The chief school administrator shall make every effort to appoint an employee of the school district to this position. The district anti-bullying coordinator shall:

- A. Be responsible for coordinating and strengthening the school district's policies to prevent, identify, and address harassment, intimidation, and bullying of pupils;
- A. Collaborate with school anti-bullying specialists in the district, the board of education, and the chief school administrator to prevent, identify, and respond to harassment, intimidation, and bullying of pupils in the district;
- A. Provide data, in collaboration with the chief school administrator, to the Department of Education regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying of pupils; and
- A. Execute such other duties related to school harassment, intimidation, and bullying as requested by the chief school administrator.

The district anti-bullying coordinator shall meet at least twice a school year with the school anti-bullying specialists in the district to discuss and strengthen procedures and policies to prevent, identify, and address harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the district.

School Anti-Bullying Specialist

The principal in each school shall appoint a school anti-bullying specialist. When a school guidance counselor, school psychologist, or another individual similarly trained is currently employed in the school, the principal shall appoint that individual to be the school anti-bullying specialist. If no individual meeting these criteria is currently employed in the school, the principal shall appoint a school anti-bullying specialist from currently employed school personnel. The school anti-bullying specialist shall:

- A. Chair the school safety/school climate team;
- A. Lead the investigation of incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the school; and
- A. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the school.

School Safety/School Climate Team

The board shall form a school safety/school climate team in each school to develop, foster, and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the ongoing, systemic process and practices in the school and to address school climate issues such as harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The school safety team shall meet at least two times per school year.

The school safety/school climate team shall consist of the principal or his or her designee; a teacher in the school; the school anti-bullying specialist; a parent of a pupil in the school; and other members to be determined by the principal. The school anti-bullying specialist shall serve as the chair of the school safety team.

The school safety/school climate team shall:

- A. Receive any complaints of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils that have been reported to the principal;
- B. Receive copies of any report prepared after an investigation of an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
- C. Identify and address patterns of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils in the school;
- D. Review and strengthen school climate and the policies of the school in order to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils;
- E. Educate the community, including pupils, teachers, administrative staff, and parents, to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils;

- F. Participate in the training required pursuant to the provisions of ([N.J.S.A.18A:37-13 et seq.](#)) and other training which the principal or the district anti-bullying coordinator may request;
- G. Collaborate with the district anti-bullying coordinator in the collection of district-wide data and in the development of district policies to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils; and
- H. Execute such other duties related to harassment, intimidation, and bullying as requested by the principal or district anti-bullying coordinator.

A parent shall be on the school safety/school climate team only in regard to general school climate issues and shall not participate in activities that may compromise a student's confidentiality. Other members of the school safety/climate team who are not authorized to access student records (see board policy 5125 Student Records) shall be on the team only in regard to general school climate issues and shall not participate in activities that may compromise a student's confidentiality.

Investigating Reported Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

To protect the victim, the chief school administrator shall take into account the circumstances of the incident when communicating with parents/guardians and when following the investigation procedures.

All reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall be investigated promptly and in accordance with the law and the following procedures:

- A. All investigations shall be thorough and complete, and documented in writing, and shall include, but not be limited to:
 - 1. Taking of statements from victims, witnesses, and accused;
 - 2. Careful examination of the facts;
 - 3. Support for the victim; and
 - 4. Determination if the alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy.
- A. The investigation shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the report of the incident and shall be conducted by a school anti-bullying specialist. The principal may appoint additional personnel who are not school anti-bullying specialists to assist in the investigation.
- A. The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days from the date of the written report of the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated but not yet received by the end of the 10-day period, the school anti-bullying specialist may amend the original report of the results of the investigation to reflect the information.
- A. The results of the investigation shall be reported to the chief school administrator within two school days of the completion of the investigation and in accordance with law and board policy. The chief school administrator may initiate intervention services, establish training programs to reduce harassment, intimidation, or bullying and enhance school climate, impose discipline, order counseling as a result of the findings of the investigation, or take or recommend other appropriate action.
- A. The results of each investigation shall be reported to the board of education no later than the date of the next board meeting following the completion of the investigation, and include:

1. Any services provided;
 2. Training established;
 3. Discipline imposed; or
 4. Other actions taken or recommended by the chief school administrator.
- A. The chief school administrator or his or her designee shall ensure that parents or guardians of the pupils who are parties to the investigation shall receive information about the investigation. This information shall be provided in writing within 5 school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the board and include:
1. The nature of the investigation;
 2. Whether the district found evidence of harassment, intimidation, bullying; or
 3. Whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.
- B. 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.

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

The board of education recognizes that some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying 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 harassment, intimidation, or bullying that they require a response either at the classroom, school building or school district levels or by law enforcement officials.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual is appropriate, the principal, in conjunction with the school anti-bullying specialist, shall consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the degree of harm, the nature, and severity 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 include:

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

For every incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the district shall respond to the individual who committed the act. Responses may include:

- A. Individual responses can include positive behavioral interventions (e.g., peer mentoring, short-term counseling, life skills groups) and punitive actions (e.g., detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension, expulsion);
- A. 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;
- A. School responses can include theme days, learning station programs, parent programs, and information disseminated to pupils and parents, such as fact sheets or newsletters explaining acceptable uses of electronic and wireless communication devices;
- A. 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).

The range of ways in which the school shall respond once an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying is identified shall be defined by the principal in conjunction with the school anti-bullying specialist and shall include an appropriate combination of counseling, support services, intervention services, and other programs as defined by the commissioner.

Retaliation and Reprisal Prohibited

The board prohibits reprisal or retaliation or false accusation against any person who witnesses and/or reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying by any pupil, school employee, board member, contracted service provider, visitor or volunteer. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation or false accusation 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 policies and procedures.

Any act of retaliation or reprisal or false accusation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall not be tolerated. Any pupil, school employee, board member, contracted service provider, volunteer, or visitor 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.

A. Students

The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a pupil found to have engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accused 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 pupil and the pupil's history of problem behaviors and performance, and shall be consistent with this policy. Consequences may include positive behavioral interventions, notification of the parents/guardians, up to and including short or long-term suspension or expulsion, as permitted by law;

A. School Employees

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accused 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;

A. Board Members

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a board member found to have committed an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying; or found to have engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be determined in accordance with district policies, procedures, and agreements, up to and including a public sanction or filed ethics charges;

A. Visitors, Volunteers, Contracted Service Providers, and All Other Persons

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor, volunteer, contracted service providers, and all other persons found to have engaged in harassment, intimidation, or bullying; or engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or falsely accused 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 and Remediation

Consequences and remediation for students, employees, board members, visitors, volunteers, and contracted service providers, engaging in harassment, intimidation, or bullying or engaged in retaliation, reprisal, and/or false accusations may include the following:

A. Consequences

1. Removal from the classroom or school;
2. The visitor or volunteer may be banned from school buildings and grounds;
3. Immediate suspension and/or expulsion from classrooms or school property;
4. Termination of volunteer privileges;
5. Legal action.

A. Remedial measures to reestablish visitor, volunteer, contracted service providers, assembly/board members, or all other persons, privileges may include:

1. Conference with the principal or chief school administrator;
2. Personal action such as a letter of apology;
3. Restitution and restoration.

Visitors, volunteers, contracted service providers, board members or all other persons in violation of this policy shall not be permitted on school property without the approval of the chief school administrator.

Appeal Process

The parent or guardian may request a hearing before the board concerning the written information about a harassment, intimidation, or bullying investigation. The request for a Board hearing shall be filed with the board 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 days of the request. The board shall meet in executive session for the hearing to protect the confidentiality of the students. At the hearing, the board may hear from the school anti-bullying specialist about the incident, recommendations for discipline or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such incidents.

A parent who seeks to appeal the decision of the principal's predetermination not to investigate an incident or complaint as a HIB must first make their appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision may be appealed to the board.

At the next board of education meeting following its receipt of the report, the board shall issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the chief school administrator's decision. The board's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with the law, no later than 90 days after the issuance of the board's decision.

A parent, student, 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."

Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities (APSSDs)

The board is committed to ensuring that all district students that require placement in approved private schools for students with disabilities (PSSD) have the safe and civil environment in their school placement necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. All approved PSSDs receiving students with disabilities from this district shall be committed to treating their students with civility and respect and shall refuse to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

When an approved PSSD receives a complaint or report of an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying involving a district student placed in the approved PSSD that occurred on a district school bus, at a district school-sponsored function, and off school grounds, the approved PSSD shall notify the anti-bullying coordinator of the report or complaint.

The chief school administrator shall assign a school anti-bullying specialist to investigate a complaint or report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, occurring on the district school buses, at district school-sponsored functions, and off school grounds involving a student who attends an approved PSSD. The

investigation conducted by the district anti-bullying specialist shall be in consultation with the approved PSSD.

The full-time non-teaching principal of the approved PSSD shall report to the anti-bullying coordinator and the child study team director, any complaint or report of an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying involving a district student placed in the approved PSSD that occurred at the PSSD or an activity sponsored by the PSSD. The report shall include the names of the district students who are parties to the harassment, intimidation, or bullying investigation and the results of each investigation. The principal of the approved PSSD shall make this report to the district anti-bullying coordinator and to the student's parents/guardians no later than five school days following the investigations' completion. The report to the district shall include information on any service(s) provided; training established; and, the discipline imposed or other action taken or recommended by the full-time non-teaching principal of the PSSD.

Once an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying is identified, the full-time non-teaching principal of the approved PSSD shall determine the appropriate response to address the individual circumstances in consultation and conjunction with appropriate district staff, as necessary. The approved PSSD shall not, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.6(f), unilaterally implement disciplinary action involving removal to an interim alternative educational setting, suspension of more than 10 consecutive or cumulative school days in a school year, or termination of placement. Disciplinary action involving suspension and expulsion from the approved PSSD shall be implemented in conjunction with the district and according to law (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8) and board policies 5114 Suspension and Expulsion and 6171.4 Special Education.

Parents or guardians of students who are parties to harassment, intimidation, or bullying investigations conducted by this district or an approved PSSD in which their child is placed may request a hearing before the board of education concerning the information received about an investigation. Any request for a hearing before the board of education shall be filed within 60 calendar days after the written information about the harassment, intimidation, or bullying investigation is received by the district and the parents or guardians. The hearing before the board shall be scheduled in collaboration with the approved PSSD and held by the board within 10 business days of the request. The approved PSSD and the board shall coordinate the policies and procedures for conducting such hearings.

Week of Respect

The week beginning with the first Monday in October of each year is designated as a "Week of Respect" in the State of New Jersey. The district, in order to recognize the importance of character education, shall observe the week by providing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing harassment, intimidation, or bullying as defined by law ([N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14](#)). Throughout the school year, the district shall provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing harassment, intimidation, and bullying in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Training

A. School Leaders

Any school leader who holds a position that requires the possession of a chief school administrator, principal, or supervisor endorsement shall complete training on issues of school ethics, school law, and school governance as part of the professional development for school leaders required in accordance with State Board of Education regulations. This training shall also include information on the prevention of harassment, intimidation, and bullying ([N.J.S.A. 18A:26-8.2](#)).

A. Teaching Staff Development

Each public school teaching staff member shall complete at least two hours of instruction in suicide prevention, to be provided by a licensed health care professional with training and experience in mental health issues, in each professional development period. The instruction in suicide prevention shall include information on the relationship between the risk of suicide and incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying and information on reducing the risk of suicide in pupils who are members of communities identified as having members at high risk of suicide ([N.J.S.A. 18A:6-112](#)).

A. Board Members

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 on harassment, intimidation, and bullying in schools, including a school district's responsibilities as required by law ([N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 et seq.](#)). A board member shall be required to complete the program only once ([N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33](#)).

A. Staff, Pupil, and Volunteer Training

The school district shall:

1. Provide training on the school district's harassment, intimidation, or bullying policy to school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with pupils;
2. Provide ongoing staff training, in cooperation with the Department of Education, in fulfilling the reporting requirements;
3. Ensure that the training includes instruction on preventing bullying on the basis of the protected categories as required by law ([N.J.S.A.18A:37-14](#)) and other distinguishing characteristics that may incite incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
4. Develop a process for discussing the district's harassment, intimidation, or bullying policy with pupils.

The board shall annually examine the training needs of the school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students for the effective implementation of the harassment, intimidation, or bullying policies, procedures, programs, and initiatives of the district board of education and implement training programs for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students. The

annual examination of training needs shall take into consideration the findings of the annual review and update of the code of student conduct.

Information regarding the school district policy against harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be incorporated into a school's employee training program and shall be provided to full-time and part-time staff, volunteers who have significant contact with pupils, and those persons contracted by the district to provide services to pupils.

Throughout the school year, the district shall provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction on preventing harassment, intimidation, and bullying, consistent with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Reporting to the Board

Two times each year between September 1 and January 1 and between January 1 and June 30, the school board shall hold a public hearing at which the chief school administrator will report to the board of education all acts of violence, vandalism, and harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) which occurred during the previous reporting period. The report shall include the number of HIB reports in the schools, the status of all investigations, the nature of the HIB, and other data required by law.

- A. The number of reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
- A. The status of all investigations;
- A. The nature of the bullying based on one of the protected categories identified in [N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14](#) such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic;
- A. The names of the investigators;
- A. The type and nature of any discipline imposed on any pupil engaged in harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
- A. Any other measures imposed, training conducted, or programs implemented, to reduce harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Reporting to the Department of Education

The information, including but not limited to, oral reports, written reports, or electronic reports shall also be reported once during each reporting period between September 1 and January 1 and between January 1 and June 30, to the Department of Education. The report shall include:

- A. Data broken down by the enumerated categories including the protected categories as listed above and the type of harassment, intimidation, and bullying (any gesture; any written, verbal

or physical act; or any electronic communication, whether it be a single or series of incidents);
and

- A. Data broken down by each school in the district, in addition to district-wide data.

The report shall be used to grade each school for the purpose of assessing its effort to implement policies and programs consistent with law ([N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 et seq.](#)). The district shall receive a grade determined by averaging the grades of all the schools in the district.

Each school shall post the grade received by the school and the overall district grade on the homepage of the school's website. The district shall post all the grades for each school of the district and the overall district grade on the homepage of the district's website. A link to the report shall be available on the district's website. The information shall be posted on the websites within 10 days of the receipt of a grade by the school and district.

It shall be a violation to improperly release any confidential information not authorized by federal or State law for public release.

The chief school administrator will annually submit the report to the Department of Education utilizing the Student Safety Data System (SSDS). The chief school administrator shall accurately report on each incident of violence, vandalism, alcohol and other drug abuse, and incident of harassment intimidation, and bullying within the school district. Any allegations of falsification of data will be reviewed by the board of education using the requirements and procedures set forth in [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.3\(g\)](#).

The State Board of Education shall impose penalties on any school employee who knowingly falsifies the report. Therefore, the chief school administrator shall make a reasonable effort to verify reports of violence, vandalism, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The board shall provide ongoing staff training, in cooperation with the Department of Education, in fulfilling the reporting requirements. The majority representative of the school employees shall have access monthly to the number and disposition of all reported acts of school violence, vandalism, harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Program Assessment and Review

Each school and the school district shall annually establish, implement, document, and assess bullying prevention programs or approaches, and other initiatives involving school staff, pupils, administrators, volunteers, parents, law enforcement and community members. The programs or approaches shall be designed to create school-wide conditions to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

Policy Development and Review

The district harassment, intimidation, and bullying policy shall be adopted through a process that includes the representation of parents or guardians, school employees, volunteers, pupils, administrators, and community representatives.

The district shall annually conduct a re-evaluation, reassessment, and review of this policy, any report(s) and/or finding(s) of the school safety/school climate team(s). The board shall also make any necessary revisions and additions to this policy by law. The board shall include input from the school anti-bullying specialists in conducting its re-evaluation, reassessment, and review. The district shall transmit a copy of the revised policy to the appropriate executive county chief school administrator within 30 school days of the revision.

Publication, Dissemination, and Implementation

In publicizing this policy, the community including pupils, staff, board members, contracted service providers, visitors, and volunteers shall be duly notified that the rules detailed within apply to any incident of harassment intimidation, and bullying that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other pupils in accordance with the law.

The chief school administrator shall take the following steps to publicize this policy:

- A. Provide a link to this policy in a prominent place on the district website;
- A. Provide a link to this policy in a prominent place on each school's website;
- A. Distribute this policy annually to all staff, pupils, and parents/guardians; and
- A. Print this policy in any district publication that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of pupil conduct and in pupil handbooks;

The district shall notify pupils and parents/guardians that the policy is available on the district's website. The district shall publish the name, school phone number, school address, and school email address of the district anti-bullying coordinator on the home page of the district website. Each school within the district shall publish the name, school phone number, school address, and school email address of the district anti-bullying coordinator and their school anti-bullying specialist on the homepage of the school's website. The information concerning the district anti-bullying coordinator and the school anti-bullying specialists shall also be maintained on the district's website.

Additionally, the district and each school shall make available, in an easily accessible location on its website, the current version of the Department of Education's *Guidance for Parents on the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights of Act* for the use by parents/guardians, pupils, and district staff to assist in resolving complaints concerning pupil harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The school district will also publish the contact information for the School Climate State Coordinator established at the NJDOE who serves as a resource to parents, students, and educators on the district websites.

The chief school administrator shall ensure that the rules for this policy are applied consistently with the district's code of pupil conduct (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7) and all applicable laws and regulations. All disciplinary sanctions shall be carried out with the necessary due process.

This and all related policies shall be reviewed on a regular basis.