

Northfield Community School



Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

~ HIB Definition ~

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means **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 [handicap] disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic**, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function [or], on a school bus, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, CHAPTER 122, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a)** reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; [or]
- b)** has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students [in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school];
or
- c)** 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.



~ HIB Definition ~



Key Points

- Can be verbal, physical, written, or an electronically communicated message
- Imbalance of Power
- Motivated by one or more actual or perceived characteristics:
 - Race
 - Color
 - Religion
 - Ancestry
 - Gender
 - Sexual Orientation
 - National Origin
 - Gender Identify or Expression
 - A Mental, Physical, or Sensory Disability



~ Conflict vs. Bullying ~

Conflict is a struggle between two or more people who perceive they have incompatible goals or desires. Conflict occurs naturally as we interact with one another. It is a normal part of life that we will not always agree with other people about the things we want, what we think, or what we want to do. Most conflicts arise in the moment because people of the same relative amount of power see the same situation from two different points of view.

Bullying behavior is very different from conflict. It is behavior that is intended to cause some kind of harm. The person doing the bullying purposely says or does something to hurt the target of his/her behavior. There is always an imbalance of power (physical or social) or strength between the person doing the bullying and the target of the behavior. The person doing the bullying may be physically bigger or stronger or may be older or have greater social status or social power than the person being targeted.

Conflict is:

- Occasional
- Uncomfortable, but not intended to hurt
- No imbalance of power
- There is an effort to solve a problem
- A normal part of human interaction
- Can be worked through by the individuals involved

Bullying is:

- Often and repeated
- Intended to hurt
- Imbalance of power is present
- No effort to solve the problem by the person who bullied
- A part of unhealthy relationships
- Should ALWAYS be reported to school staff

~ Signs That a Child is Being Bullied ~

Physical, Emotional, Academic, Behavioral/Social

Physical Signs

- Cuts, bruises, scratches
- Headaches, stomachaches
- Damaged possessions
- “Missing” possessions that need to be replaced

Emotional Signs

- Withdrawal and/or shyness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Aggression

Academic Signs

- Withdrawal and/or shyness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Aggression

Behavioral/Social Signs

- Changes in eating or sleeping habits (e.g., nightmares)
- No longer wanting to participate in activities once enjoyed
- Beginning to bully siblings or mistreat family pets
- Hurting self, attempting or threatening suicide
- Suddenly changing friends

~ Responsibility ~

A member of a board of education, school employee, contracted service provider, student or volunteer who has witnessed, or has reliable information that a student has been subject to harassment, intimidation or bullying shall report the incident to the appropriate school official designated by the school district's policy.



“Promptly” reporting to the appropriate school official designated by the District policy, ‘ or to any school administrator or safe schools resource officer’ **shall result in immunity from civil liability.**

~ HIB Reporting and Timelines ~

- **All acts** of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) shall be **reported verbally** to the school principal on the **same day** when the school employees or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident.
- **The principal shall inform the parents or guardians of 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 shall be reported in writing to the building principal within school two (2) days** of when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information that a student had been subject to harassment, intimidation or bullying.
- **An investigation** shall be initiated by the **principal or the principal's designee within one (1) 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 ten (10) school days from the date of the written report** of the incident. In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated but not yet received by the end of the ten (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 superintendent of schools within two (2) days of the completion of the investigation**, and the superintendent may decide to provide intervention services, establish training programs to reduce harassment, intimidation or bullying and enhance school climate, impose discipline, or order counseling as a result of the findings of the investigation, or take or recommend other appropriate action

~ HIB Reporting and Timelines ~

- **The results of each investigation shall be reported to the board of education no later than the date of the board of education meeting next following the completion of the investigation**, along with information on any services, provided, training established, discipline imposed, or other action taken or recommended by the superintendent.
- **Parents or guardians of the students who are parties of the investigation shall be entitled to receive information about the investigation**, including the **nature of the investigation, whether the district found evidence of HIB or whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the incident of HIB**. This information shall be **provided in writing within five (5) school days after the results are reported to the board**.
- **A parent or guardian may request a hearing before the board** after receiving the information, and **the hearing shall be held within ten (10) days of the request**. The board shall meet in executive session for the hearing to protect confidentiality of the students. At the hearing the board may hear from the school-anti-bullying specialist about the incident, recommendation for discipline or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such incidents.
- **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 superintendent's decision. **The board's decision may be appealed** to the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with the procedures set forth in law and regulation, **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 HIB based on the membership in a protected group as enumerated in the "Law Against Discrimination," P.L. 1945, c. 169 (C. 10:5-1 et seq.)