

# Understanding HIB: What parents need to know about Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying

An informational evening about the Anti-Bullying Law, the HIB process, and the difference between bullying and conflict

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# What is the HIB Law?

# HIB Definition Under the Anti-Bullying Rights Act (ABR):

HIB means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or series of incidents, that:

- Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived **characteristic**, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, **AND**
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L. 2010, c 122, **AND**
- Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of the other student(s), **AND THAT:**

# HIB Definition (continued)

- 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**
- 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.

\*There can be multiple aggressors and multiple victims

\*Can occur during one single incident or over the course of several incidents



# HIB Investigation Process

1. Administrator receives verbal/written report & ensures student safety
2. Within 24 hours- Principal informs all parents of report and investigation process
3. Within 1 school day- Anti-Bullying Specialist initiates investigation
4. Within 2 school days - Administrator receives written report from reporting staff member (if applicable)
5. Within 10 days of receipt of written report- Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS) completes investigation and provides written report to Anti-Bullying Coordinator (ABC)
  - a. Report may be amended by ABS after the 10 day limit if additional relevant information is shared.
6. Administrator will proceed with appropriate action/discipline based upon findings (Confirmed HIB, Conflict, Other) -- Consequences and remediation will align with policy and findings as appropriate
7. ABC provides Superintendent with report, Superintendent may affirm/adjust within 2 school days
8. Superintendent reports results of investigation to BOE (All student information is confidential)
9. Within 5 days of meeting- Written notice provided to parents of investigation results
10. Parent may request a hearing in front of the BOE if they disagree with findings -- must take place within 10 days of the request & would occur in Executive Session.
11. BOE issues a decision to uphold or amend the prior decision at next meeting. Parents can appeal to Commissioner of Education

# Confidentiality

Privacy rights of students is paramount at all times. To that end, please be aware of the following aspects:

1. School administrators cannot share any information about another student with you or others -- this includes specific consequences that may/may not be imposed
2. Every reasonable attempt is made during an investigation not to share information between students
3. Students are never identified by name in the Superintendent's report to the the BOE or on state reports
4. HIB Investigation reports are NOT part of a student's cumulative file and are maintained separately. *Only information that normally is included in a disciplinary file would be included in a cumulative file (Same as Code of Conduct)*

# What is the Difference Between *Bullying* & *Conflict*?



## Normal Conflict

- Mutual disagreement or difference in interests or opinion in which both sides express their views; naturally occurs
- Is reciprocal; all parties involved equally in conflict
- Involves people with similar degrees of power
- Equal responsibility
- Can be resolved by compromise
- All parties want to resolve the problem
- All parties show remorse; each takes responsibility for their actions
- Consequences will align with Code of Conduct if applicable

## Bullying

- One-sided issue or disagreement
- Imbalance of power
- Alleged victim targeted for an actual or perceived characteristic
- Done with intention to harm emotionally or physically
- Creates a substantial disruption in the orderly operation of the school
- Potential consequences and remediation will align with board policy

# Cyber-Bullying and Social Media Awareness

# Cyber-Bullying

- Any electronic communication that violates the HIB guidelines
  - Photos, Texting, Phone Calls, Videos, Social Media
- Included in HIB law(s) -- Schools will investigate if it meets all criteria previously discussed
- Parents are encouraged to contact the police directly as they can respond if the behavior involves a criminal offense, such as the following examples:
  - Threats of violence
  - “Sexting”
  - Taking a photo or video of someone in a place where he/she would expect privacy
  - Harassment, stalking, or hate crimes

# What you can do if you are concerned about cyber-bullying?

- Tell your child not to respond
- Document any cyber-bullying incidents and keep all evidence
- Block the person who is cyber-bullying your child
- Contact law enforcement

If you believe your child may be engaging in cyber-bullying:

- Speak calmly
- Explain that cyber-bullying is a serious matter
- Develop strategies in collaboration with the school to prevent future incidents
- Talk with a professional about help for you and your child
- Know your child's friends
- Build on your child's strengths and positive qualities

# Social Media Awareness

What apps are being used?

- Email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, Saraha, VSCO, Multiple Accounts, “Calculator”

Talking about social media at home:

- Follow your child’s social media account(s)
- Check the websites that your child has visited
- Know the password to your child’s email, social media accounts, and cellphones
- Search online for information available about your child
- Model and discuss appropriate device use, such as the amount of time spent on devices and use of devices around others
- Set limits at every age for use of devices
- Talk about the permanency of content posted online and how this can affect online reputation

# How Can You Support Your Child at Home?

- Keep an open conversation at home about the HIB Law
  - Encourage students to advocate for themselves
- Use open-ended prompts
  - Avoid “yes” or “no” answer questions
  - “Tell me what happened”
- Explore different points of view when problem-solving
- Listen to the full story
- Encourage your child to problem solve and utilize decision-making skills
  - “What do you think we can do to fix this?”
- Encourage your child to report issues to a trusted adult as soon as they occur
  - Help your child identify adults they can reach out to in and out of school



**Comments, Concerns, or  
Questions?**

# Contact Information

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**Further Resources can be found at:**

- [Mountainside HIB Information](#)
- [NJ BOE HIB Information](#)