

UNDERSTANDING HIB: HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

NJ HIB LAW – Anti-Bully Bill of Rights Act

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HIB Coordinator

The purpose of this presentation is to inform the Voorhees community on student conflict and bullying under the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act. The social and emotional welfare of our students is a priority, and education is critical in fostering a safe learning environment. Please understand our goal is educating through the entire process. There will be conflict among peers that do not meet the criteria for HIB bullying yet results in an infringement of student rights and results in consequences that adhere to the school discipline code.



Thank you for your involvement and support of the Voorhees Schools!

HIB DEFINED

HIB DEFINITION:

- *Any gesture, written, verbal or physical act, or electronic communication, whether a single incident or series of incidents That takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus or off school grounds...*

AND

- 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;

AND

- That substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that

AND that:

HIB DEFINED

PICK ONE:

- 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.

“Other Distinguishing Characteristic” is broadly interpreted

- Examples: Vegetarianism, lice, quiet, new kid, parents, etc.
- HOWEVER, need evidence to support conclusion regarding characteristic, can't simply check “Other”

DISTRICT ANTI-BULLYING SPECIALISTS

- E.T. Hamilton Elementary School: *Mr. Derek Myers*
- Kresson Elementary School: *Mrs. Maureen Boyle*
- Osage Elementary School: *Mr. Larry Osborne/Mrs. Maura Abate*
- Signal Hill Elementary School: *Mrs. Amanda Dariano*
- Voorhees Middle School: *Mr. Steve Boianelli*

ANTI-BULLYING SPECIALIST RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Are the people you can access to ask questions and get help from if you think your student is involved in a HIB
- Is part of the school safety team
- Leads the investigation of reported HIB
- Acts as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of HIB in the school
- Assists the principal in appropriately applying the range of ways for responding to HIB established by the school board
- Provides input to local school board on annual re-evaluation, reassessment, review of policy

HOW A HIB COMPLAINT IS CONDUCTED

- HIB report is made-verbally or in electronic form (link available on the district website). Reports can be made by anyone: victim, teacher, parent, administration, etc.
- Initial HIB report is submitted to Principal on the same day the HIB incident is reported.
- Formal investigation begins within one school day of initial HIB report and the entire investigation is to be completed within ten school days.
- Principal or Assistant Principal(s) notifies parents of students (bully and victim) involved in potential HIB incident that a report has been initiated and an investigation will begin.
- Determination is made by the Anti-Bullying Specialist, if action displayed is a Code of Conduct violation or a HIB
- The completed investigation goes to the Principal
- Once the Principal receives the report, they then send it to the Superintendent and the Board of Education
- The Principal informs the parents of both the victim and the bully the result of the HIB
- If report is deemed a Code of Conduct violation; Principal or Assistant Principal decides disciplinary action

DISTRICT WEBSITE INFORMATION

[HIB Information and Reporting](#)

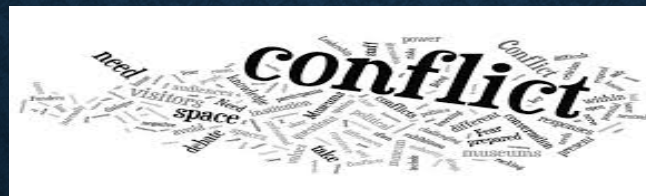
<https://www.voorhees.k12.nj.us/domain/2918>

NORMAL PEER CONFLICT

- A **Conflict** is a disagreement, a difference of opinion or interests between equals.
 - 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 with the same amount of power see the same situation from two different points of view.*

- *In a conflict, both parties have power to influence the situation.*



DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NORMAL CONFLICT AND BULLYING

Normal Conflict:

- A normal part of growing up and of life
- Involves people with similar degrees of power
- Involves a mutual disagreement or difference in interests or goals
- Is reciprocal; both parties participate in the conflict
- Both parties are responsible for wrongdoing
- Can be fairly resolved by compromise or negotiation
- Willing to resolve problem between each other
- Remorseful-both parties will take responsibility for actions

Bullying:

- Bully targets due to a distinguishing characteristic
- Involves an imbalance of power
- Is one-sided
- Involves hurtful behavior on behalf of one party against another
- No remorse-blames the victim
- Bully is responsible for wrongdoing
- The intent is to physically or emotionally hurt someone
- Can be an isolated incident
- No effort to resolve the problem

NON-PHYSICAL BULLYING

Indirect Bullying: Bullying doesn't always have to be directed at one specific individual and it isn't always as obvious as you might think.

- Example: The “popular kids” at school won't allow “non-clique” members to sit at their lunch table. At first glance this may not seem like a bullying scenario, but in reality, these kids are bullying by excluding others in a social environment. By refusing to let others join them, the popular kids are publicly rejecting and ignoring others.

(with further investigation this MAY be HIB if the distinguishing characteristic is established and motivated by “non-clique” or “unpopular”)

Direct Bullying: Bullying is the use of greater strength and influence directed to one specific person, as a way to intimidate and force someone to do what the bully wants them to do.

- Example: A couple of boys create a false e-mail account using the information of a fellow student. They send e-mails to other male students in the form of fraudulent love letters. They then print the e-mails and display them both on and off the school campus and proceed to verbally tease the student against whom they committed fraud. This type of action can be extremely embarrassing and traumatic for the student who is being bullied.

PHYSICAL BULLYING

Physical bullying can be just as emotionally traumatizing with the addition of the actual trauma to the body.

- Examples:

A few of the school athletes are standing in a hallway joking when they spot a smaller classmate struggling to carry his schoolbooks. One of the athletes sticks his foot out and deliberately trips the smaller boy and they all laugh and call the boy names, like “clumsy” and “dork.”

A boy has had trouble coping with things since his parents got divorced. Over the last few months, he has neglected his schoolwork, started wearing all-black clothing, and has gotten a few face piercings. A few of his schoolmates have become hostile towards him because of the sudden physical changes. The altercations have suddenly escalated as they have pushed him onto the ground, kicked him in the stomach, and locked him in the bathroom.

CONSEQUENCES

Consequences for bullying can be given in multiple forms, for example:

- 1) School: School Code of Conduct Violation, Detention, In-School Suspension (ISS), Out of School Suspension, Peer Mediation to promote self-expression, understanding and practicing/applying empathy for others.
- 2) Community-Police Involvement: Formal Harassment report which could have legal action attached to it; possible criminal record

HIB RECURRING THEME:

Impact on Victim is paramount

Why?

...intended to help victims rather than punish offenders

HIB ISSUES

1. Parents of aggressors think a substantiated HIB is a **scarlet H**.
 - Focus on long term consequences instead of short term lesson.
 - Misses the point and creates distrust and resentment.
2. Parents of targets think a substantiated HIB leads to greater discipline or more serious consequences.
 - School is where we give kids the space to mess up and learn.
 - Misses the point and creates distrust and resentment.

CHANGES IN RECORD KEEPING

SB1790:

Imposes civil liability on parents of offenders whose kids are adjudicated delinquent of cyber harassment as well as fines for parents/guardians who fail to comply with any condition of adjudication.

Creates a “record” for offenders:

- 1st and 2nd offense: Results of investigation placed in student record.
- 3rd offense: Results placed in record, individual student intervention plan developed by principal and staff and approved by superintendent, may require student (accompanied by parent or guardian) to complete class/program to reduce HIB behavior.

Principal must keep written record of initial notification to parents

DOE guidance for parents to be posted on homepage



WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF THE SITUATION ON AN INDIVIDUAL?

“I’m not okay.”

“Things keep happening.”=
Significant Effect!!!

- If situations continue, first and foremost, **REPORT** situation **IMMEDIATELY** to the nearest teacher, counselor or administrator.
- Further discipline action will ensue from School Administration; possibly resulting in a second HIB violation.

“I’m fine.”

“Things are better.”=
Not a Significant Effect!!!

- If a student reports, “I’m feeling fine.” after being asked after the investigation how they feel, it does not mean that the bully is getting away without a consequence. **THIS IS THE RESULT WE WANT!** *Consequences apply even if the HIB is found to be negative.* There may also be Peer Mediation and ongoing counseling for all involved.

The MOST important concern is making sure student’s feel SAFE!!!!

THE END OF BULLYING/HARASSMENT ENDS WITH YOU

Break the Bullying Cycle...tips for parents, teachers and students!

- Encourage students to speak up during the bullying event by asking the bully to stop.
- Support the victim by telling them that you are sorry that this happened to them. Ask what you can do to help.
- Encourage the victim to report the incident(s) to a teacher or counselor immediately after it happens.
- Include the victim in situations where bullying often occurs, i.e., lunchtime, clubs, etc.
- Report the incident! Remember a parent, teacher or student can report an incident of bullying/harassment.