

Clementon Elementary School

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Overview for Volunteers

PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* is to strengthen the standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating and responding to incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) of students that occur on school grounds and off school grounds under specified circumstances.

HIB DEFINITION

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

- Is reasonably **perceived as being motivated** either by an **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**;
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus; or off school grounds (see note below)
- Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; **and that**

(Must meet one of the following conditions in addition to causing substantial disruption or interference)

- 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.

HIB OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS

School districts have the right to impose consequences on a student for conduct away from school grounds. Schools are required to address HIB occurring off school grounds, when there is a nexus between the HIB and the school (i.e., the HIB substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students).

CONFLICT vs. BULLYING

Bullying is not a phase young people must endure or outgrow. Bullying is not a conflict between students or among groups of students. Conflict is a mutually competitive or opposing action or

engagement, including a disagreement, an argument or a fight, which is a normal part of human development. *Bullying is one-sided*, where one or more students are victims of one or more person's aggression, which is intended to physically or emotionally hurt the victims.

FOUR TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIORS

There are generally four types of bullying behaviors. These behaviors and some examples are identified below:

- Verbal—Includes taunting, name calling, malicious teasing or making threats
- Psychological—includes spreading rumors, purposefully excluding people from activities, breaking up friendships
- Physical—includes hitting, punching, shoving, spitting or taking personal belongings
- Cyberbullying—includes using the Internet, mobile phone or other digital technologies to harm others.

STAFF FUNCTIONS

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator (Mr. Jared Fudurich, Principal) – coordinates policies, collaborates with school anti-bullying specialists, Board of Education, and Superintendent, and provides data to NJ Department of Education

School Anti-Bullying Specialist (Ms. Laura Mason, Guidance Counselor)—leads the investigation of HIB reports, primary official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents

REPORTING OBLIGATIONS/INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

- Volunteers must make a verbal report to a staff member on the same day the incident occurs. It is not the responsibility of the volunteer to determine the validity of the shared or witnessed incident. Any conversation, accusation or witnessing of something that could potentially fall under the HIB definition, is to be reported. The Principal and/or Anti-Bullying Specialist will determine if an investigation is warranted and the investigation will conclude whether or not the incident meets the criteria.
- Staff member makes verbal report to the principal the same day they are informed.
- Principal notifies parents of the alleged victim and alleged harasser/bully that an investigation is being conducted.
- Follow-up written report is submitted within 48 hours of verbal report (done by the staff member with input from volunteer).
- Principal or Anti-Bullying Specialist determines if the allegation meets the criteria for a HIB investigation.
- Principal notifies parents of the alleged victim and alleged harasser/bully that an investigation is being conducted.
- If so, an investigation is initiated by Anti-Bullying Specialist within one day of receiving verbal report.
- Investigation determines one of the following outcomes: No evidence of HIB, Inconclusive, Does not meet the definition of HIB, or Yes—violation of policy
- Investigation is completed within 10 school days from the date of the written report of suspected HIB.
- Parents of the alleged victim and alleged harasser/bully are notified by the Principal of the outcome of the investigation.
- Report submitted to District Anti-Bullying Coordinator within 2 school days of completion, who then shares with the Superintendent.

- Superintendent reports incidents to the Board of Education at the next scheduled meeting. Information that may identify any specific individual is not included.
- Board of Education decides to accept, reject or modify the superintendent's decision.
- Letter of the Board's decision is sent to the parents/guardians of alleged victim and alleged harasser/bully. This letter is sent to notify parents that an investigation was conducted as per state law, and is sent regardless of whether the incident(s) did or did not meet the HIB criteria.
- The HIB report is kept separate from a student's permanent educational records and does not follow the student to the high school level. Data regarding incidents is included on state and federal reports, as required by law, to assist in the development of programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

New Jersey Department of Education:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/>

Clementon School Anti-Bullying Specialist: masonl@clementon.k12.nj.us