



Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying

Green Hills School
2022



Staff Roles

- Anti-Bullying Specialist: Marybeth Stiles, School Counselor
- Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Jon Paul Bollette, Principal

Definition of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means:

- Any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or 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
- That takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds

Definition of HIB Cont'd

The HIB must **substantially disrupt or interfere** with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and:

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that it will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging a 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.

Types of Bullying

- Verbal bullying - Name-calling, taunting, teasing, threatening
- Physical bullying - Hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging property
- Psychological - Spreading rumors, breaking up friendships
- Cyberbullying - Internet, social media, text messages

Reporting Procedures

- All acts of HIB must be reported verbally to the principal on the same day when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident
- Principal will inform parents of all students involved in the alleged incident
- All allegations of HIB will be reported in writing (using the new NJDOE reporting form) to the principal within two school days of when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information

Reporting Procedures cont'd

- Students may report HIB anonymously via “Bully Box” outside the school counselor’s office or via the [Google Form](#) located on the [HIB area](#) of the school website.
- Parents may report HIB anonymously via the new NJDOE reporting form ([click here](#)) found on the HIB area of the [school website](#).
- Principal has discretion to decide whether to investigate as HIB

Threshold Assessment Checklist

- **ASSUMING ALL ALLEGATIONS ARE TRUE**, the principal must determine if the allegations include:
 - Substantial Disruption or Interference
 - Actual or Perceived Distinguishing Characteristic
 - One of the following:
 - Actual harm to self or property or fear of reasonable harm to self or property
 - Demeaning to student or group the student is part of
 - Creation of a hostile educational environment

Any incident that does not meet this threshold will not be investigated as a HIB. Superintendent will review all threshold determinations made by principal and can overturn decision not to investigate.

Investigation Procedures

- Initiated by the principal or designee within one school day of the verbal report
- Conducted by the anti-bullying specialist and the principal
- Parents of victim and accused will be notified of investigation
- Parental permission not required to interview students (*Goss v. Lopez 419 US 565 (1975)*)
- Principal may appoint additional personnel to assist with investigation

Investigation Procedures (*cont.*)

- Students may be asked to provide written statements at time of interview
- Investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days from date of written report of alleged HIB
- If additional, anticipated information relevant to the investigation is not received within school 10 days, anti-bullying specialist may amend original report to reflect the new information

Important Specifics

- Threshold for a founded HIB incident is “likelier than not”
- Finding is based on how statements/actions are *perceived* by the alleged victim, not on how they were *intended* by the alleged aggressor
- **Must** be motivated by a perceived or actual characteristic
- Unfounded HIB can still be a code of conduct violation
- Difference between what feels like bullying vs. what the law says
- If it happens outside of school, and it has an educational impact at school, it can be considered a HIB

Results of Investigation

- Results shall be reported to the superintendent within two days of completing the investigation
- Results reported to the board of education (BOE) no later than the date of the next board meeting following the completion of the investigation, along with information on action taken or recommended by superintendent
- BOE receives redacted copy of the HIB report. No information which would identify the students involved will be shared with the BOE.

Results of investigation (*cont.'d*)

- Parents of the students who are parties to the investigation are entitled to receive information about the investigation:
 - In accordance with Federal and State law and regulation
 - Including the nature of the investigation and whether evidence of HIB was found
 - Whether discipline was imposed or services provided for their child
 - Provided in writing within five school days after results are reported to the BOE
 - Due to privacy laws, parents may only receive information about their own child

Results of Investigation (*cont.*)

- A parent may request a hearing before the BOE
 - Request must be made no later than 60 calendar days of receipt of written notice of outcome of investigation
 - Must be held within 10 days of request
 - BOE shall meet in executive session for the hearing
 - BOE may hear from school anti-bullying specialist about the incident, recommendations for discipline or services, or programs instituted
- At the next BOE meeting following its receipt of the report the board shall issue a decision to affirm, reject or modify the superintendent's decision.

Recently Approved Legislation

P.L. 2021, c.338 – S1790

- School now will need to provide state with data:
 - Data on the number of times an incident was determined to be outside definition of HIB and not investigated
 - NJDOE will review data as part of state monitoring process
 - Superintendent will be notified in writing of each determination and has authority to order HIB investigation

Recently Approved Legislation

P.L. 2021, c.338 – S1790 cont'd

- If student commits crime of “cyber-harassment,” the law creates option for municipal court to order that a minor, under age 16, along with a parent or guardian, attend a class or training related to cyber-harassment
- Provides that parent or guardian may be fined up to \$100 for a first offense, and up to \$500 for subsequent offenses for failing to comply with court order
- Creates potential for parent or guardian to be liable in a civil action if parent demonstrates willful or wanton disregard in the exercise of supervision of minor (related to cyber-harassment)

Recently Approved Legislation

P.L. 2021, c.338 – S1790

- District will keep written record of date, time, and manner whenever district notifies parent or guardian about alleged HIB incident
- Written reports of alleged HIB filed by staff member or contracted service provider shall be filed on a numbered form developed by NJDOE
- Form submitted promptly by principal to superintendent EVEN IF preliminary determination made not to do HIB investigation
 - Kept on file at school, NOT part of student record unless incident results in discipline for other reasons or otherwise required to be maintained (educationally relevant)
 - Form is available on the [HIB information page](#) of our website

School-wide Initiatives

- Mustang Zone
- Morning homeroom - character education, community building
- Week of Respect
- Great Kindness Challenge
- Assemblies
- Pass it Along
- Lessons relating to bullying prevention and education

Supporting Your Children at Home

- Build empathy
- Respect
- Set the example
- Know their friends
- Supervision - online and offline
- Encourage positive problem solving
- Ask questions
- Encourage them to be upstanders

Helpful Websites

- Green Hills School [Website](#)
- Parent Resources - [NJDOE](#)
- Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights - [NJDOE](#)
- [StopBullying.Gov](#)