

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION & BULLYING

New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act

What Is Considered Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying Under the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act?

Any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents.

The gesture(s) is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either an actual or perceived characteristic such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic **and that**

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 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.

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Where Can Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Take Place?

On school property (in class, at lunch, on the playground, in the locker room, in the hallways, etc.)

At any school-sponsored function (class trips, sporting events, dances, etc.)

On a school bus

Off school grounds, if it substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students

During a conflict, name-calling, threats and other conduct that might look like bullying can occur. However, a conflict and bullying are very different. Unlike bullying, during a conflict, people are equally involved in some type of disagreement. Conflict is considered mutual, meaning everyone is more or less evenly involved.

Bullying, on the other hand, involves one or several people (the bullies) intentionally committing a mean or violent act against another person(s) or a group of people (the victims). When bullying occurs, there is no mutual participation in the disagreement; it is one sided.

Conflicts and bullying can interrupt the school day, damage property and cause injuries to the people involved. However, when the behavior involves a conflict, the school will take action based on its code of student conduct instead of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.

Bullying VS Conflict

If the action(s) does not target a distinguishing characteristic or is a result of a conflict, the school's code of student conduct is followed, not the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.

What Is a Student Code of Conduct?

A school's student code of conduct is a set of the school's rules, expectations, policies and procedures that are supported by the Hawthorne Board of Education policies and New Jersey State Statutes and Codes. It is separate from NJ's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.



Examples of Bullying & Conflict by Grade Level

Grade Level	Conflict (Mutual disagreements, arguments or fights)	Bullying (HIB) (Intent to emotionally or physically hurt a student; it is one sided.)
Elementary School	<p>“You copied my picture...you stole my idea!”</p> <p>“No, I didn’t...you copied from my picture!”</p>	A fellow student grabs the picture you color and tears it up, calling you names related to your religion and cultural heritage.
Middle School	<p>“After you borrowed my basketball, I asked tht you return it and you didn’t!”</p> <p>“I did return it...I left it on your porch.”</p>	While practicing basketball skills in the gym, several students sit nearby and call out insulting comments about the color of your skin and your basketball skills.
High School	<p>“You went after my boyfriend at the party and tried to hook-up with him.”</p> <p>“I was told you broke up and he was available...and he didn’t seem too unhappy with me!”</p>	A students posts explicit photos and insulting words about your sexual orientation on Instagram, attacking you for “stealing” her boyfriend.

Types of Bullying

There are many different forms of bullying. **Remember that in order to be considered bullying under the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, whatever is said or done needs to be motivated by a distinguishing characteristic and create a hostile educational environment for the victim. If it does not meet the above criteria, it is a violation of a school’s code of conduct.** An act that is proven to be a violation of the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill or Rights Act is always a code of conduct violation. However, a code of conduct violation is not always a violation of the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.

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Verbal Bullying: This involves using words to hurt people.

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Cyber-bullying: Using technology as a vehicle for acts of cruelty. This can take the form of verbal or social bullying that is perpetuated and spread through the internet or other forms of technology such as texting and/or posting on social media sites such as Snapchat, Instagram or Twitter.

Social Bullying: This is something commonly referred to as “relational aggression” and involves hurting someone socially by

- Continuously spreading rumors
- Excluding someone purposefully; telling other kids not to be friends with someone
- Manipulating others to leave a person out of a group

Physical Bullying: This includes repeated aggressive physical acts that hurt somebody’s body or hurts or destroys someone’s property or possessions. Physical bullying includes consistent acts of aggression such as

- Hitting, kicking, pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping or pushing
- Taking or breaking someone’s things

Who Are Anti-Bullying Specialists?

According to the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, each school must have a trained Anti-Bullying Specialist. This person is responsible for conducting all HIB investigations.

Anti-Bullying Specialists

District **Anti-Bullying Specialist**

Michael Galluccio
973-423-6415 X 3018

Hawthorne High School **Anti-Bullying Specialist**

Mr. John Codomo
973-423-6415 X3011

Lincoln Middle School **Anti-Bullying Specialist**

Mrs. Jennifer Basilone
973-423-6465

Roosevelt Elementary School **Anti-Bullying Specialist**

Ms. Nicole Matano
973-423-6490

Jefferson Elementary School **Anti-Bullying Specialist**

Ms. Lindsay Gordon
973-423-6439

Washington Elementary School **Anti-Bullying Specialist**

Mrs. Miriam Levin
973-423-6495

You may also visit our website at:

www.hawthorne.k12.nj.us

Relational Aggression

Relational Aggression is consistently excluding another student from the peer group, repeatedly ignoring someone, spreading gossip about someone, and/or withholding friendship. It also can take the form of manipulating a group of friends to exclude one member of the group.

Boys: According to decades of human aggression studies, boys traditionally act in a more physical way than girls, and they are not typically as relational. Social status among friends for boys in middle and high school comes from how “tough” they are.

Girls: Most girls will use words to hurt other girls. This behavior usually peaks in middle school and focuses on consistently attacking someone’s relationships with others.



Cyberbullying is a type of relational aggression. Cyberbullying is defined by Webster’s dictionary as “the electronic posting of mean-spirited messages about a person, often done anonymously.” Cyberbullying can include mean text messages or emails; rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and the creation of fake websites or profiles with embarrassing photos and videos.

Today, in the age of social networking, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, and texting, the cruelty of cyberbullying can be anonymous, faceless, and sometimes difficult to track if kids share electronic devices or make up fake online profiles. Other times, it can be easy to track as many kids taunt others openly on social media in order to get more reactions.

It is much harder for a victim to walk away from cyberbullying because it is more difficult to ignore. With cyberbullying, even in the safety of your own home, in your own room, or at your own desk—a bully can find you.

Bullying in the Elementary Years

Early childhood is a vulnerable period for many young children because it can be the first time they are with other kids their own age, and they are still learning how to make friends. These children may not be mature enough to “use their words” and they don’t always understand the consequences of aggressive behavior. Young victims, however, may not be able to verbalize what is happening if they are being bullied at school.

Signs indicating that an elementary school student may be a victim of bullying:

- Child has continued and excessive withdrawal or depressed mood.
- Child refuses to engage with you, even after repeated attempts to involve him/her.
- Child has regressive and/or anxious behaviors over an extended period of time.



Bullying can start as early as preschool and kindergarten

Bullying in Middle & High School

The transition from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school is often stressful for students. Kids must adjust to new surroundings, new people and other new social rules. Changing from one school to another can increase emotional and academic issues, including isolation, anxiety and poor academic performance.

Experts believe that bullying behavior peaks in middle school because this is the time when students begin to gain some independence from their parents and peer groups become more important.

Research has shown that when kids try to find their place in a new social scene, they may begin to exhibit bullying behavior. This may originate from the adolescent’s feelings of insecurity; to combat that feeling, a student may choose to use forms of bullying to gain power.

Signs indicating that a middle or high school student may be a victim of bullying:

- Child does not want to go to school.
- Child no longer sees his/her usual group of friends.
- Child’s grades suffer.
- Child constantly appears stressed or depressed.
- Student seems constantly unfocused or unmotivated.

What Can Parents Do?

1. Set expectations for your child's behavior, in and out of school.
2. Provide a trusting and loving environment at home.
3. Teach your children healthy conflict resolution behavior.
4. Teach your children how they can stop or try to stop bullying when they witness it. Encourage him/her to confide in a trusted adult.
5. Talk to your child about your own experiences with bullying; listen to his/her concerns.
6. Show your children the difference between being assertive and aggressive. Allow your child to practice being assertive with you.
7. Teach your child the social skills he/she needs to navigate school and social situations.
8. In the case of cyberbullying; if your child is being cyberbullied, you should immediately remove your child from the situation (shut down computers and mobile devices.)
9. Additionally, in the case of cyberbullying, parents should consider copying and saving the malicious online texts or posts in case the bullying is ongoing and needs to be reported.

Resources

New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention

www.njbullying.org

(908) 522-2581

Dedicated to increasing community awareness of bullying. Provides information and trainings on bullying prevention.

Stop Bullying.gov

This website provides information from various government agencies on ways children, teens, young adults, parents, educators and others in the community can prevent or stop bullying.

www.stopbullying.gov

Cyberbullying Resources

Commonsense Media, Cyberbullying Toolkit – This toolkit, accessible online, provides tips and resources for educators, parents and youth on the topic of cyberbullying.

www.common sense media.org/educators/cyberbullying-toolkit