

HIB Synopsis

The River Edge School District, in accordance with the tenets of the National School Climate Council (NSCC), is committed to developing and maintaining a sustainable, positive school climate that fosters student development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic society.

This school climate includes:

- Norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe and respected
- Educators modeling and nurturing attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning
- Students, families, and educators working together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision
- Valuing each person's contribution to the operations and the care of our schools

The prevention of acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying is a key component of the development and maintenance of a positive school climate. The River Edge School District engages in systematic and sustained harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention efforts. These efforts include interdisciplinary classroom, school-wide, and district initiatives that are designed to educate, intervene, empower, and remediate students and faculty about HIB behaviors. These initiatives result in a greater sense of empathy and self-worth to contribute to school and community membership for students and staff alike.

What is the definition of HIB under the NJ Anti-bullying Bill of Rights?

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:

1. 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
2. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or off school grounds as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18a:37-15.3
3. Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students
4. That 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
5. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students or creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering
6. With a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Conflict vs. Bullying

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 or an argument 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 victim(s).

"Harmful or demeaning conduct motivated only by another reason, for example, a dispute about a relationship or personal belongings, or aggressive conduct without identifiable motivation does not come within the statutory definition of bullying."

K.L. v. Evesham School District (App. Div. 2011)

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

- ***Verbal*** – Includes taunting, name calling, malicious teasing or making threats (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001);
- ***Psychological*** – Includes spreading rumors, purposefully excluding people from activities, breaking up friendships (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001);
- ***Physical*** – Includes hitting, punching, shoving, spitting or taking personal belongings (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001); and
- ***Cyberbullying*** – Includes using the Internet, mobile phone or other digital technologies to harm others. (DuPage County Anti-Bullying Model Policy and Best Practices, 2011).

HIB Off School Grounds

School districts 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). The bully/victim relationship must be within the same school district for the district to have HIB jurisdiction. If not, then it may be referred to the home district administration as a code of conduct violation.

When deciding on a course of action the administration shall consider the following:

- The nature and circumstances of the act
- The degree of harm, nature, and severity of the behavior
- Past incidences or patterns of behavior
- The context in which the alleged incident occurred

Possible actions include, but are not limited to the following:

- ***Remedial Actions*** – Restitution, peer group support, Behavior Management Plan, parent conferences, student treatment/therapy
- ***Consequences*** - Suspension of recess, detention, in-school or out-of school suspension, and in severe cases may include police or legal action or expulsion

HOW TO REPORT AN INCIDENT OF HIB

**ALL INCIDENCES OF HIB MUST BE REPORTED TO THE
BUILDING PRINCIPAL**

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator and Specialists

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator:

Beth Rosen

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Cherry Hill School Anti-Bullying Specialist:

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Roosevelt School Anti-Bullying Specialist:

Tara Benevento

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