

INTRODUCTION



Overview of Process and Procedures

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

"Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:

1. Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either 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
2. By any other distinguishing characteristic; and that
3. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds, as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that
4. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a pupil or damaging the student's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
5. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
6. 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 pupil.

The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights was signed into legislation in January of 2011. While the Evesham Township School District Policy 5512 HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING provides a thorough and comprehensive account of the new mandates, the district has developed a plan that designates the required personnel that assist in preventing, identifying, and addressing instances that involve the harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) of students. In addition, the plan outlines our process as it relates to procedures and guidelines that also relate to prevention and identification of HIB. Our goal is to continue to provide a safe and caring learning environment, which promotes civility and respect in and amongst students and staff.

The Superintendent annually appoints a district Anti-Bullying Coordinator (ABC) who is responsible for coordinating and strengthening the school district's Anti-Bullying Plan. The ABC will collaborate with the Anti-Bullying Specialists throughout the district to help prevent, identify, and respond to HIB incidents.

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Director of Curriculum and Instruction

The Principal in each school annually appoints an Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS) who is responsible for working with the building/house principal to assist in preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of HIB in the school. The ABS is also the co-chair, along with the building administrator of the School Safety Team.

School Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS): School Counselors

Each school shall have a designated School Safety Team that helps to develop, foster, and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the on-going, systemic process and practices in the school. School climate issues such as harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be an area of focus. The building/house principal is the co-chair and must appoint the ABS, a teacher and a parent to be on the team. Other members may be appointed as appropriate.

Week of Respect

The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (P.L.2010, c.122) requires that the week beginning with the first Monday in October of each year be designated as the Week of Respect in New Jersey. To recognize the importance of character education, school districts, charter schools and Renaissance school projects are required to observe the week by providing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing HIB. To facilitate planning, see online resources at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/sandp/climate/>.

The New Jersey Legislature has set aside this week, along with School Violence Awareness Week, to highlight these very important issues. However, it is our clear, consistent message throughout the school year about positive school climate and student behavioral expectations that will help to reduce violence and create safe and supportive learning environments for all of our students and staff.