

It is our belief that every child needs to have a safe and civil environment in school in order to achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe, disciplined environment. In 2011, a law, commonly referred to as the "Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights," was passed in order to strengthen the reporting and investigative procedures as well as to promote respectful and tolerant school climates.



What is harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) under the new law?

HIB is any singular or series of incidents that includes gestures, written, verbal, physical acts or electronic communications that **must meet ALL three of these criteria:**

1. Is reasonably perceived to be motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic such as race, color, religion, gender, disability, ancestry or by any other distinguishing characteristic.
2. Takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, or off school grounds (i.e. cyberspace, bus stop).
3. Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students, and also **meets ONE of the following criteria:**
 - a reasonable person should know they will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property, or
 - has the effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students, or
 - creates a hostile educational environment for students by interfering with the students education OR severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to a student.

What is the difference between a conflict between students and HIB?

<u>Conflict</u>	<u>HIB</u>
*Two guilty parties	*HIB is one sided
*Includes arguments & fights	*One or more students are victims of one or more persons aggression meeting the criteria for HIB.
*A normal part of growing up	*The intent is to physically or emotionally hurt someone.



What happens when my child is reported to be involved in an incident of HIB?

- ◆ A verbal report of HIB is made to the principal immediately. Reporter has 2 days to write written report.
- ◆ Principal immediately notifies all parents maintaining confidentiality of other students.
- ◆ Anti-bullying specialist has 10 days to complete investigation, notify all parents (including witnesses), and complete written report for the principal.
- ◆ Discipline can be imposed immediately if school code of conduct is violated.
- ◆ Principal forwards report to the superintendent who may take further action.
- ◆ Superintendent reports findings to the school board.
- ◆ Superintendent provides parents with a written report within 5 days of the report to the school board.

What are my due process rights as a parent?

- ◆ Parents can request a school board meeting based on the findings of the written report. Meeting must occur within 10 days.
- ◆ The school board must issue a written decision at the next meeting.
- ◆ Parents can appeal to the Commissioner of Education within 90 days.
- ◆ Parents of the victim can file a complaint with the NJ Division of Civil Rights within 180 days of the incident.
- ◆ Parents can file in Superior Court or Federal District Court if the HIB incident is based on a protected characteristic.

What are School Safety Teams (SST)?

- ◆ Meets at least 2 times a year and focuses on reviewing HIB investigations, identifying patterns, strengthening school policies, and improving school climate/culture.
- ◆ SST is chaired by the anti-bullying specialist and must consist of the principal, a teacher, and a parent.

How will I know how well my child's school is enforcing the new law and its preventative efforts?

Beginning in 2012, the state report card for every school district and school will include the HIB information which will include the type and number of incidents. The grade will be based on the number of HIB incidents as well as their effort to implement the law, policies, and prevention. This information will also be posted on the district and school home page.



What should I do if I feel that my child has been a victim of HIB under the law?

Contact the school and explain what is happening.

- ◆ Anti-bullying specialist
- ◆ Guidance counselor
- ◆ Social Worker
- ◆ Teacher
- ◆ Administrator
- ◆ Bus driver

Who is the anti-bullying coordinator for the school district?

John Frangipani, Asst. Superintendent of Schools
District Anti-Bullying Coordinator
794-6700 ext. 2008



VINELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Anti-Bullying

Bill of Rights:

A Parent's Guide

