

A photograph of a car driving on a winding road at night. The car's headlights illuminate the road ahead, creating a bright path through the dark. The road curves to the right, and the surrounding landscape is dark and hilly. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, orange and yellow tones from the headlights and the night sky.

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying (HIB) in Schools

The road ahead according to
new laws and investigation
requirements...

HIB laws have been updated by the NJDOE to...

- Establish clearer standards of the definition of HIB
- Clarify and strengthen standards on preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to HIB incidents
- Use existing resources to increase school safety; and
- Reduce the risk of suicide

Legal Definition of HIB

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 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.
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L. 2010, c 122
- Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students, and that:

HIB definition continued...

- 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;
- 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.

Overall Goal of HIB Reporting

- The push for this initiative is to make bystanders as responsible as those directly involved in HIB incidents.
- All school personnel (ex: students, teachers, school volunteers, etc.), including students and parents / guardians must report incidences of HIB as soon as they happen.
- Banding together as an entire school community against HIB will strengthen the movement to get HIB out of our schools.

Reporting HIB Incidents and the Route of the Report...

Any member of the school community must alert the building principal as soon as a HIB incident is witnessed and list the names of victim(s), aggressors, and witnesses. At that time, the principal, or school secretary, will call the parents / guardians of all students involved to let them know their child will be involved in an investigation of HIB.

The Initial Call Home...

- The initial call home to parents /guardians is made to let you know your child will be part of an HIB investigation, even if your child is simply listed as a witness. If you are not home, a message will be left, and the investigation will proceed.
- An investigation of HIB is conducted by counselors or school administrators speaking to your child for an expectedly short period of time – there is an official investigation report used across the district and the person conducting the investigation uses the questions on the form and records answers – all topics are related to the reported HIB event.

Who Leads a HIB Investigation?

- Building principals and school specialists lead all HIB investigations. School specialists are counselors chosen in each school to lead investigations. They are:
 - Grades K-5: Ms. Barbara DiCarlo
 - Smalley School: Mrs. Janeen Kinney
 - BBHS: Mrs. Jessica Luteran

Timeline of HIB Reports...

Witness HIB Incident



Report Incident to BP (immediately)



Fill out HIB incident report (within 24 hours) and hand the report directly to school specialist

Reports found in school main office and with specialist



School specialist has 10 days to complete investigation form, discuss findings with building principal and assign consequences / aid to students as needed.



Completed Report sent to Superintendent for approval

Completed report shared with BOE at next meeting; once approved a letter is sent home to parents/guardians of all students involved.

Parents/guardians can appeal decisions to the BOE within 5 days if they do not agree with findings.

Important Points to Remember...

- The student code of conduct, which stands as the guideline for student expectation and consequence, has not changed. The code of conduct is still what we follow – consequences are NOT suddenly tougher.
- What HAS changed: the responsibility of anyone in the school community who sees or is a victim of HIB, as well as the way schools track incidents of HIB.

Important Points...

- The reason for the investigation period is to see if the reported incident is HIB under the new definition – or if the incident was just conflict among students – which happens in school. It is not a negative thing to be a part of an investigation of HIB, most students will be listed as witnesses.
- HIB incidents are tracked to identify “hot spots” in schools which may need increased monitoring, or clarify misunderstood themes, serving to guide us in developing more specific assemblies or character education plans for students.
- The new HIB laws will likely serve to not only empower our school community against HIB, but also increase the conversations we all have about tolerance, character, respect, and kindness.