

## Policy 5512 Harassment, Intimidation, And Bullying Overview

### Policy Statement

In accordance with community expectations for student safety and well-being, and as prescribed by New Jersey Statute, the Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student(s). A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment. Since students learn by example, Board of Education members, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

For the purposes of this Policy, the term "parent," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3, means the natural parent(s) or adoptive parent(s), legal guardian(s), foster parent(s), or parent surrogate(s) of a student. Where parents are separated or divorced, "parent" means the person or agency, which has legal custody of the student, as well as the natural or adoptive parent(s) of the student, provided such parental rights have not been terminated by a court of appropriate jurisdiction.

### Definition

"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:

- A. 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 by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that;
- B. 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
- C. Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that;
  1. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a pupil student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
  2. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
  3. 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.

"Electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

### Student Expectations

The Board expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. The Board believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents, school employees, school administrators, Board of Education members, school volunteers, and community representatives, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school district and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Consequently, principals are responsible for establishing and maintaining a school climate which effectively engages all constituents of the school community including parents, staff, and students in promoting mutual respect and the prevention and timely redress of incidents of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying.

Students are expected to behave in a way that creates a supportive learning environment. The Board believes the best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of staff to use instances of violations of the Code of Student Conduct as opportunities to help students learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior.

The Board expects that students will act in accordance with the student behavioral expectations and standards regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying, including:

- A. Student responsibilities (e.g., requirements for students to conform to reasonable standards of socially accepted behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to those who hold that authority);
- B. Appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, and good citizenship;
- C. Student rights; and

D. Sanctions and due process for violations of the Code of **Student** Conduct.

As part of each school's character education initiatives, building principals and teachers will provide age and situation appropriate opportunities to: 1) instruct students in these expected behaviors; 2) guide them in gaining an understanding of the nature and impact of, harassment, intimidation, and bullying; and 3) guide them in how to respond appropriately in their treatment of one another and in situations involving harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

The district prohibits active or passive support for acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. To this end, students are encouraged to support other students who:

1. Constructively attempt to stop acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
2. Provide support to students who have been, or are being subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying and support the victim(s); and
3. Report acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying to the designated school staff member.

**Consequences and Appropriate Remedial Actions**

All incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying must be handled in a manner which addresses the victim(s), the perpetrators(s), and the environment/circumstances, as appropriate to the situation with the goal being the cessation of the bullying. Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this Policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances. The Board of Education requires its school administrators to implement procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences and remedial responses for students who commit one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. The following factors, at a minimum, shall be given full consideration by school administrators in the implementation of appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying by students. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offense(s), consider the developmental ages of the student offenders and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors, per the Code of Student Conduct and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.

**1. Factors for Determining Consequences**

- a. Age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved and their relationship to the school district;
- b. Degrees of harm;
- c. Surrounding circumstances;
- d. Nature and severity of the behavior(s);
- e. Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior;
- f. Relationships between the parties involved; and
- g. Context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

**2. Factors for Determining Consequences – School Considerations**

- a. School culture, climate, and general staff management of the learning environment;
- b. Social, emotional, and behavioral supports;
- c. Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
- d. Family, community, and neighborhood situations; and
- e. Alignment with Board policy and regulations/procedures.

**3. Factors for Determining Remedial Measures**

Factors for determining remedial measures as they pertain to both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) of harassment, intimidation, or bullying include, but may not be limited to the following considerations and personal attributes:

*a. Personal Factors*

- i. The nature of the behavior;
- ii. The developmental age of the student;
- iii. The student's history of problem behaviors and performance;
- iv. Life skill deficiencies;
- v. Social relationships;
- vi. Strengths;
- vii. Talents; Traits;
- viii. Interests;
- ix. Hobbies;
- x. Extra-curricular activities;
- xi. Classroom participation;

- xii. Academic performance; and
- xiii. Relationship to pupils and the school district.

*b. Environmental Factors*

- i. School culture;
- ii. School climate;
- iii. Pupil-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
- iv. General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments;
- v. Staff ability to prevent and manage difficult or inflammatory situations;
- vi. Social-emotional and behavioral supports;
- vii. Social relationships;
- viii. Community activities;
- ix. Neighborhood situation; and
- x. Family situation.

Consequences for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion of students, as set forth in the Board's approved Code of Pupil Conduct pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1. Consequences for a pupil who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying are those that are graded according to severity of the offenses, considering the developmental age of the student offenders and the student's histories of inappropriate behaviors and performance, and must be consistent with the Board's approved Code of Student Conduct and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7, Student Conduct. The use of negative consequences should occur in conjunction with remediation and not be relied upon as the sole intervention approach. Remedial measures shall be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the problem, protect and provide support for the victim of the act, and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

**4. Examples of Consequences**

- a. Admonishment;
- b. Temporary removal from the classroom;
- c. Deprivation of privileges;
- d. Classroom or administrative detention;
- e. Referral to disciplinarian;
- f. In-school suspension during the school week or the weekend;
- g. After-school programs;
- h. Out-of-school suspension (short-term or long-term);
- i. Reports to law enforcement or other legal action;
- j. Expulsion; and
- k. Bans from providing services, participating in school-district-sponsored programs, or being in school buildings or on school grounds.

**5. Examples of Remedial Measures**

**a. Personal – Student Exhibiting Bullying Behavior**

- i. Develop a behavioral contract with the student. Ensure the student has a voice in the outcome and can identify ways he or she can solve the problem and change behaviors;
- ii. Meet with parents to develop a family agreement to ensure the parent and the student understand school rules and expectations;
- iii. Explain the long-term negative consequences of harassment, intimidation, and bullying on all involved;
- iv. Ensure understanding of consequences, if harassment, intimidation, and bullying behavior continues;
- v. Meet with school counselor, school social worker, or school psychologist to identify possible mental health issues (e.g., what is happening and why?);
- vi. Develop a learning plan that includes consequences and skill building;
- vii. Consider wrap-around support services or after-school programs or services;
- viii. Provide social skill training, such as impulse control, anger management, developing empathy, and problem solving;
- ix. Arrange for an apology, preferably written;
- x. Require a reflective essay to ensure the student understands the impact of his or her actions on others;
- xi. Have the student research and teach a lesson to the class about bullying, empathy, or a similar topic;
- xii. Arrange for restitution (i.e., compensation, reimbursement, amends, repayment), particularly when personal items were damaged or stolen;

- xiii. Explore age-appropriate restorative (i.e., healing, curative, recuperative) practices; and
- xiv. Schedule a follow-up conference with the student.

a. Personal – Target/Victim

- i. Meet with trusted staff member to explore the student’s feelings about the incident;
- ii. Develop a plan to ensure the student’s emotional and physical safety at school;
- iii. Have the student meet with the school counselor or school social worker to ensure he or she does not feel responsible for the bullying behavior;
- iv. Ask students to log behaviors in the future;
- v. Help the student develop skills and strategies for resisting bullying; and
- vi. Schedule a follow-up conference with the student.

b. Parents, Family, and Community

- i. Develop a family agreement;
- ii. Refer the family for family counseling; and
- iii. Offer parent education workshops related to bullying and social-emotional learning.

6. Examples of Remedial Measures – Environmental (Classroom, School Building or School District)

- a. Analysis of existing data to identify bullying issues and concerns;
- b. Use of findings from school surveys (e.g., school climate surveys);
- c. Focus groups;
- d. Mailings-postal and email;
- e. Cable access television;
- f. School culture change;
- g. School climate improvement;
- h. Increased supervision in “hot spots” (e.g. locker rooms, hallways, playgrounds, cafeterias, school perimeters, buses);
- i. Adoption of evidence-based systemic bullying prevention practices and programs;
- j. Training for all certificated and non-certificated staff to teach effective prevention and intervention skills and strategies;
- k. Professional development plans for involved staff;
- l. Participation of parents and other community members and organizations (e.g., Parent Teacher Associations, Parent Teacher Organizations) in the educational program and in problem-solving bullying issues;
- m. Formation of professional learning communities to address bullying problems;
- n. Small or large group presentations for fully addressing the actions and the school’s response to the actions, in the context of the acceptable student and staff member behavior and the consequences of such actions;
- o. School policy and procedure revisions;
- p. Modifications of schedules;
- q. Adjustments in hallway traffic;
- r. Examination and adoption of educational practices for actively engaging students in the learning process and in bonding students to pro-social institutions and people;
- s. Modifications in student routes or patterns traveling to and from schools;
- t. Supervision of student victims before and after school, including school transportation;
- u. Targeted use of monitors (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, locker room, playground, school perimeter, bus);
- v. Targeted use of teacher aides;
- w. Disciplinary action, including dismissal, for school staff who contributed to the problem;
- x. Supportive institutional interventions, including participation in the Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
- y. Parent conferences;
- z. Family counseling;
- aa. Development of a general harassment, intimidation, and bullying response plan;
- bb. Behavioral expectations communicated to students and parents;
- cc. Participation of the entire student body in problem-solving activities to address harassment, intimidation, and bullying issues;
- dd. Recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council;

- ee. Participation in peer support groups;
- ff. School transfers; and
- gg. Involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers and juvenile officers or other appropriate legal action.
- hh. For victims of a violent criminal offense, see Policy 2415.6 Unsafe School Choice Options.

**Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Reporting Procedure**

The Board of Education requires the Principal at each school to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this Policy. All Board members, school employees, and volunteers and contracted service providers who have contact with are required to report verbally alleged violations of this Policy to the Principal or the Principal’s designee on the same day when the individual witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. All Board members, school employees, and volunteers and contracted service providers who have contact with also shall submit a report in writing to the Principal within two school days of the verbal report. The Principal will inform the parents of all involved in alleged incidents i.e. parents of alleged target(s) and perpetrator(s), and, as appropriate, may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services. The Principal, upon receiving a verbal or written report, may take interim measures to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of all parties pending the findings of the investigation.

Students, parent(s), and visitors are encouraged to report alleged violations of this Policy to the Principal on the same day when the individual witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. Students, parents, and visitors may report an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying anonymously. Formal action for violations of the Code of Student Conduct may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report; however, such anonymous reports should be investigated to the extent possible so as to determine if there is a basis for credibility and determine more solid evidence to take formal action, as appropriate.

A Board member or school employee who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in this Policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

The district may consider every mechanism available to simplify reporting, including standard reporting forms and/or web-based reporting mechanisms. Principals and teachers are encouraged to develop, communicate, and implement means by which pupils students can report concerns and/or incidents involving harassment, intimidation, and bullying without fear of reprisal and/or retaliation.

**Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Anti-Bullying Specialist and School Safety Team(s)**

The district’s student assistance counselors will serve as the anti-bullying specialist in their assigned buildings. The anti-bullying specialist will chair the School Safety Team, lead the investigation of incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying, and act as the primary school official for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

**Anti-Bullying Information:**

<b>DISTRICT COORDINATOR</b>		
<b>ANTI-BULLYING SPECIALISTS:</b>	<b>Schools Assigned</b>	<b>Contact Info.: Email/Phone #</b>
Katherine T. Carey (District Anti-Bullying Coordinator)	Central Adm. Office 206 E. Holly Ave. / Sewell, NJ 08080	Contact Info.: Email/Phone # <a href="mailto:kcarey@wtps.org">kcarey@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856-589-6644
Heather Petolicchio	Wash. Twp. HS 9-10 509 Hurffville-Crosskeys Rd. / Sewell, NJ 08080	<a href="mailto:hpetolicchio@wtps.org">hpetolicchio@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856 589-8500
Jamie Oliver	Wash. Twp. HS 11-12 529 Hurffville-Crosskeys Rd. / Sewell, NJ 08080	<a href="mailto:joliver@wtps.org">joliver@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856 589-8500
Michael Petticrew	Bunker Hill Middle School 372 Pitman-Downer Rd. / Sewell, NJ 08080	<a href="mailto:mpetticrew@wtps.org">mpetticrew@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856 881-7007
Alex Illas	Chestnut Ridge Middle School 641 Hurffville-Crosskeys Rd. / Sewell, NJ 08080	<a href="mailto:ailas@wtps.org">ailas@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856 582-3535
Tom Woodson	Orchard Valley Middle School 238 Pitman-Downer Rd. / Sewell, NJ 08080	<a href="mailto:twoodson@wtps.org">twoodson@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856 582-5353
Tom Woodson	Bells Elementary School 227 Greentree Rd. / Turnersville, NJ 08012	<a href="mailto:twoodson@wtps.org">twoodson@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856 589-8441
Michael Petticrew	Birches Elementary School 416 Westminster Blvd. / Turnersville, NJ 08012	<a href="mailto:mpetticrew@wtps.org">mpetticrew@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856 232-1290
Alex Illas	Hurffville Elementary School 200 Hurffville-Grenloch Rd. / Sewell, NJ 08080	<a href="mailto:ailas@wtps.org">ailas@wtps.org</a> Phone: 856 589-7459
Sandy Conlin	Thomas Jefferson Elementary School	<a href="mailto:sconlin@wtps.org">sconlin@wtps.org</a>

	95 Altair Dr. / Sewell, NJ 08080	Phone: 856 589-7459
Sandy Conlin	<b>Wedgwood Elementary School</b> 236 Hurffville Rd. / Sewell, NJ 08080	sconlin@wtps.org Phone: 856 227-8110
Sandy Conlin	<b>Whitman Elementary School</b> 827 Whitman School Rd. / Turnersville, NJ 08012	sconlin@wtps.org Phone: 856 227-1103
Lauren Krupa	<b>Grenloch Terrace Early Childhood Center</b> 251 Woodbury-Turnersville Rd. / Sewell, NJ 08080	lkrupa@wtps.org Phone: 856 227-1303

### Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Investigation

The Board requires a thorough and complete investigation to be conducted for each report of violations and complaints which wither identify harassment, intimidation or bullying or describe behaviors that indicate harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The investigation shall be initiated by the Principal or the Principal's designee within one school day of the verbal report of the incident. The investigation shall be conducted by the school Anti-Bullying Specialist in coordination with the Principal or Principal's designee. The Principal may appoint additional personnel who are not school Anti-Bullying Specialists to assist with the investigation.

In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated but not yet received by the end of the ten (10) day period, the school Anti-Bullying Specialist or Principal may amend the original report of the results of the investigation to reflect the information and to ensure there is an accurate and current record of the facts and activities concerning the reported incident.

The Principal shall proceed in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, as appropriate, based on the investigation findings. The Principal shall submit the report to the Superintendent within two (2) school days of the completion of the investigation and in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq.). As appropriate to the findings from the investigation, the Superintendent shall ensure the Code of Student Conduct has been implemented and provide intervention services, order counseling, establish training programs to reduce harassment, intimidation, or bullying and enhance school climate, or take or recommend other appropriate action, as necessary.

The Superintendent shall report the results of each investigation to the Board of Education no later than the date of the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting following the completion of the investigation. The Superintendent's report also shall include information on any consequences imposed under the Code of Student Conduct, services provided, counseling, training established or other action taken or recommended by the Superintendent.

Parents of involved student offender(s) and target/victim(s) shall be provided with information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation. The information to be provided to parents shall include the nature of the investigation, whether the district found evidence of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. This information shall be provided in writing within five (5) school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the Board of Education.

A parent may request a hearing before the Board of Education after receiving the information about the investigation. The hearing shall be held within ten (10) school days of the request. The Board of Education shall conduct the hearing in executive session, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 et seq.), to protect the confidentiality of the students. At the hearing, the Board may hear testimony from and consider information provided by the school Anti-Bullying Specialist and others, as appropriate, regarding the alleged incident, the findings from the investigation of the alleged incident, recommendations for consequences or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such incidents, prior to rendering a determination.

At the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting following its receipt of the Superintendent's report on the results of the investigations to the Board or following a hearing in executive session, the Board shall issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the Superintendent's decision. The Board's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:3, Controversies and Disputes, no later than ninety days after issuance of the Board of Education's decision.

A parent, student, or organization may file a complaint with the Division on Civil Rights within one hundred eighty (180) days of the occurrence of any incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying based on membership in a protected group as enumerated in the "Law Against Discrimination," P.L.1945, c.169 (C.10:5-1 et seq.).

#### Reprisal or Retaliation Prohibited

The Board prohibits a Board member, school employee, contracted service provider who has contact with pupils, school volunteer, or pupil from engaging in reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against a victim, witness, or any other person who has reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying or who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. As well, the Board prohibits any person, including pupils, employees, volunteers, and/or visitors from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

All suspected acts of reprisal, retaliation, and/or false accusation will be taken seriously and appropriate responses will be made in accordance with the totality of the circumstances.

**Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy Publication and Dissemination**

This Policy will be disseminated annually by the Superintendent to all school employees, contracted service providers who have contact with students, school volunteers, students, and parents who have children enrolled in a school in the district, along with a statement explaining the Policy applies to all acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14 that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or on a school bus and, as appropriate, acts that occur off school grounds.

The Superintendent shall ensure that notice of this Policy appears in the student handbook and all other publications of the school district that set forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards for schools within the school district.

The Superintendent shall post a link to the district's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy that is prominently displayed on the homepage of the school district's website, and the principals will notify students and parents of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy's availability on the school district's website.

The Superintendent shall post the name, school phone number, school address, and school email address of the district Anti-Bullying Coordinator on the home page of the school district's website. Each Principal shall post the name, school phone number, address, and school email address of both the Anti-Bullying Specialist and the district Anti-Bullying Coordinator on the home page of each school's website.

**NOTE:** To view or print a complete copy of the district's policy on *Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying* (Policy # 5512), please visit our website at [www.wtpps.org](http://www.wtpps.org). You may also contact the main office of your child's school to request a printed copy of this policy.