

# *Lyndhurst Public Schools*



## **Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying**

### *A Handbook for Caretakers and Students*

Revised May 2024

## ***Introduction....***

*While New Jersey has had a Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) law to protect students for several years, this law was amended most recently in 2011. The revised components of the law outline very clear standards and timelines for how schools must comply when responding to potential HIB incidents that occur both on and off school grounds.*

*This handbook, created by members of the Anti-Bullying team within Lyndhurst Public Schools, is intended to help you understand the law, the district's responsibilities and each school's responsibilities, and your rights as a student and a parent.*

*Read on and help us to take a stand against acts of HIB in our community!*



# IMPORTANT HIB ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS

**ABC: Anti-Bullying Coordinator**

*~Responsible for coordinating and strengthening the school district's HIB policies and procedures*

**ABR: Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act**

*~Also referenced as the New Jersey HIB law*

**ABS: Anti-Bullying Specialist**

*~Responsible for leading all HIB investigations and facilitating SST Meetings in addition to preventing, identifying and addressing HIB incidents in the school*

**CSA: Chief School Administrator**

*~Also known as the Superintendent of Schools*

**HIB: Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying**

*~See page 5 for complete definition*

**Offender**

*~The individual(s) accused of committing a HIB-related behavior*

**SST: School Safety Team**

*~Must include the principal, a teacher, the ABS, and a parent*

*~Responsible for strengthening school climate, addressing patterns of HIB behavior and highlighting potential HIB challenges in the building*

*~Required to meet twice per year*

**Victim**

*~The individual(s) who is the alleged recipient of the HIB-related behavior*

# KEY PLAYERS!

<b>Superintendent</b>	Mr. Joseph DeCorso
<b>Business Administrator</b>	Mr. James Hyman
<b>Assistant Superintendent</b>	Dr. Alma Morel
<b>ABC District Coordinator</b>	Ms. Jamie Stevens
<b>Columbus School</b>	
ABS	Ms. Maria Fagan
Principal	Mr. Robert Giangeruso
<b>Franklin School</b>	
ABS	Ms. Maria Fagan
Principal	Mrs. Jennifer Scardino
<b>High School</b>	
ABS	Ms. Susan Leidemer
Principal	Ms. Laura Vuono
Assistant Principal	Mr. Frank Venezia
<b>Jefferson School</b>	
ABS	Ms. Alexa DeJoseph
Principal	Mr. Joseph Vastola
<b>Memorial Campus</b>	
ABS	Ms. Marisa Hanrahan
Principal	Mrs. Christina Bernardo
<b>Middle School</b>	
ABS	Mrs. Maureen Columbo,
ABS	Ms. Maryann Mule
ABS	Mrs. Tori Palanker
Principal	Mr. Michael Rizzo
<b>Roosevelt School</b>	
ABS	Mrs. Alyssa Radigan
Principal	Mr. Peter Strumolo
<b>Washington School</b>	
ABS	Ms. Marisa Hanrahan
Principal	Mrs. Christina Bernardo

***Other crucial members involved in HIB prevention and the HIB investigation process:***

*Lyndhurst Board of Education Members*

*Lyndhurst Child Study Team*

*Lyndhurst Students, Caretakers, and Community Members*

# Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying 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 meets the following criteria:

1. Causes **substantial disruption** to the orderly operation of the school or a student’s rights;
2. Was motivated by actual or perceived **distinguishing characteristics**;
3. Meets one of the following
  - a. Caused physical or emotional **harm** to a student or his or her property or there was **fear of harm** to student or property
  - b. Had the effect of **insulting or demeaning** a student or group of students;  
or
  - c. The act created a **“hostile educational environment”** that interfered with a student’s education.



***\*These acts can happen ON or OFF school grounds.***

*If a potential act of HIB is brought to our attention, even if it happened in Australia, Lyndhurst Public Schools is required to investigate, per the law!*

*To read more about this definition and the words bolded above, please refer to the New Jersey ABR. A link directly to this law can be found on the “Important Resources!” section of this handbook on page 6.*

# ***Important Resources!***

[www.lyndhurstschools.net](http://www.lyndhurstschools.net)

~Lyndhurst School's web page

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/ParentGuide.pdf>

~Guidance for Parents on the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/>

~State of New Jersey Department of Education website on HIB

<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/PL10/122 .PDF>

~The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/AntiBullyingQA.pdf>

~Questions and Answers related to the ABR

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html>

~A federal government website managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://stompoutbullying.org>

~A National Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Organization

## ***HIB Incident Form 338***

This [form](#) should be used by parents or guardians to report allegations of HIB. A written statement from the alleged victim or other evidence may be attached to the back of this HIB 338 Form (e.g., screenshot, text thread, etc.). Once the form is received by the school, the principal is responsible for implementing the school district's policy and procedures. An investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days from the date of the written report of the incident. Should you have any questions about the investigation, please contact the school principal.

# ***Timeline of the HIB Investigation Process***

1. A school employee/contracted service provider verbally reports the information regarding a potential HIB act to the principal on the same day that the HIB behavior was witnessed or reliable information was received.
2. Potential areas of safety are addressed and police are involved if needed.
3. The principal contacts all parents of students allegedly involved and offers availability of counseling and other intervention services, if appropriate.
4. The principal designates the ABS and/or additional personnel to assist in the investigation within **one day** of the verbal report.
5. The school employee/contracted service provider who observed the potential HIB behavior writes an “Initial Report” **within two days** of when the behavior was observed and of when the verbal report was made to the Principal.
6. The ABS “leads” and conducts the investigation...
  - a. Victims and Offenders are interviewed by the ABS and/or his/her designee
  - b. Witnesses, if there were any, are interviewed.
7. The investigation is completed **within 10 school days** of the written “Initial Report.”
8. The results of the investigation are reported to the Superintendent, within two days of the investigation completion. The Superintendent then reviews the report, at which time he may decide to provide intervention services, establish training programs, impose discipline, or take other action.
9. The Superintendent reports the results of the investigation to the BoE at the **BoE meeting immediately following the completion of the investigation.**
10. **Within 5 days** of the investigation, parents/guardians of all alleged victims and offenders receive written notice about the CSA’s report.
  - i. *At any time a parent may request a hearing before the BoE. The hearing must take place within 10 days of the request.*
11. The BOE votes to **affirm, reject or modify** the CSA’s decision at the BoE meeting following the CSA’s report.

# When you, as a caretaker, receive a phone call from the Principal...



## Things To Assume:

- It is our goal to protect the safety and wellbeing of **all** students involved in the potential HIB act, whether a student is named as an alleged victim or an alleged offender.
- An investigation has started and **reliable** information has led the school to identify your child as someone that we must interview in order to determine the extent of their involvement.
- We cannot share details at this time because we most likely have not started the investigation and do not know the full extent to which your child may be a part of the HIB incident.
- A careful and **detailed** investigation will take place.
- We encourage you to speak with your child about the incident and phone the Principal with any remaining concerns you might have.
- In about a month, you will receive a letter from the CSA that will confirm whether the incident was determined to fall under the parameters of HIB.

## Things To NOT Assume:

- Your child is considered guilty, based on past history and from other situations in which school personnel has encountered your child.
- The school has identified you as a “bad parent.”
- Your child will now be targeted as a “bad child” because he/she was named as a potential offender or victim.
- This incident will automatically be recorded in your child’s permanent record simply because he/she was named as a potential offender or victim.
- You will be a bother if you call the school or request a meeting to address your questions and frustrations.





“Don’t panic. It’s not an alligator. It’s a smaller, less aggressive cousin called a ‘caiman’ ...”

*We recognize that it is so hard to not panic upon receiving a call that your child was involved in a potential HIB incident. Rest easy knowing that the safety and wellbeing of all students involved is our first and immediate priority. No information received will be ignored. We are following the law by reaching out to you as soon as possible and yet, we have a lot of work to do before we are able to reach a final determination about if an act met all criteria for HIB.*

*After the initial phone call to you and after you have had the chance to discuss and review the incident with your child, please NEVER HESITATE to call the Principal back with any questions you might have. We want to make sure that you remain confident in the investigation process as it is outlined in the NJ ABR and in our procedures within Lyndhurst Public Schools that carry out these critical laws.*

# ***Attention Students!***



## ***If you are being bullied...***

- ~If you are being bullied, you might be scared to talk about it or you might feel ashamed.
- ~Your initial reaction might be to hide what is going on. Don't do this!
- ~The most important thing you can do is to TALK about what's going on with someone that you trust.

## ***What to do if you think someone is being bullied:***

- ~Talk to that person.
- ~Let the person know that you care and that they did nothing wrong.
- ~Include this person in your group of friends.
- ~Stick up for this person (if you observe a situation in which it will not put you at a safety risk, make a statement and let the alleged bully know that what they are doing is wrong and to stop immediately!)
- ~Tell someone (an adult, like a counselor, teacher or parent!) and let them know what you think is going on.



*“Never be bullied into silence.  
Never allow yourself to be made a victim.  
Accept no one’s definition of your life, but define yourself.”  
- Harvey Fierstein*

**Speak up!**

**When you speak up, rest assured that your identity will remain confidential. If you would prefer to remain anonymous, you can call the ABS and share whatever information you have and an investigation will still immediately begin.**

# ***“Conflict” and “Bullying:” The Difference***

## **In A Conflict:**



- Students are **equally involved** in a disagreement
- It's **mutual** (everyone is evenly involved)

## **In a Bullying Situation:**

- It involves students **intentionally committing a mean or violent act** against another person or group of people
- There is no mutual participation
- It is **one-sided**



***Have questions about this packet or about anything related to HIB?***

- Please contact your child's principal or ABS (contact information located on page 4 of this packet)

*Thank you for taking the time to review this handbook and for reaching out with your questions and concerns!*

**“We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided.”**

*-J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*