

Bullying In Schools: What Parents Need to Know



South Amboy Public Schools

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING

BOE Policy 5131.1

Harassment, intimidation or bullying” is defined as **any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication**, whether it be a **single incident or a series of incidents**, that...

- ...is reasonably perceived as being motivated either 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...

AND

- ...that takes place **on school grounds**, at **any school-sponsored function** or **on a school bus**, or **off school grounds**, in accordance with the law...

AND

- that **substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school** or the **rights of other students** AND

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And meet one of the following:

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;

or

- 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.

Actual or Perceived Characteristic

- Race
- Creed
- Color
- National origin
- Ancestry
- Age
- Genetic information
- Pregnancy
- Sex
- Religion
- Disability
- Military service
- Nationality

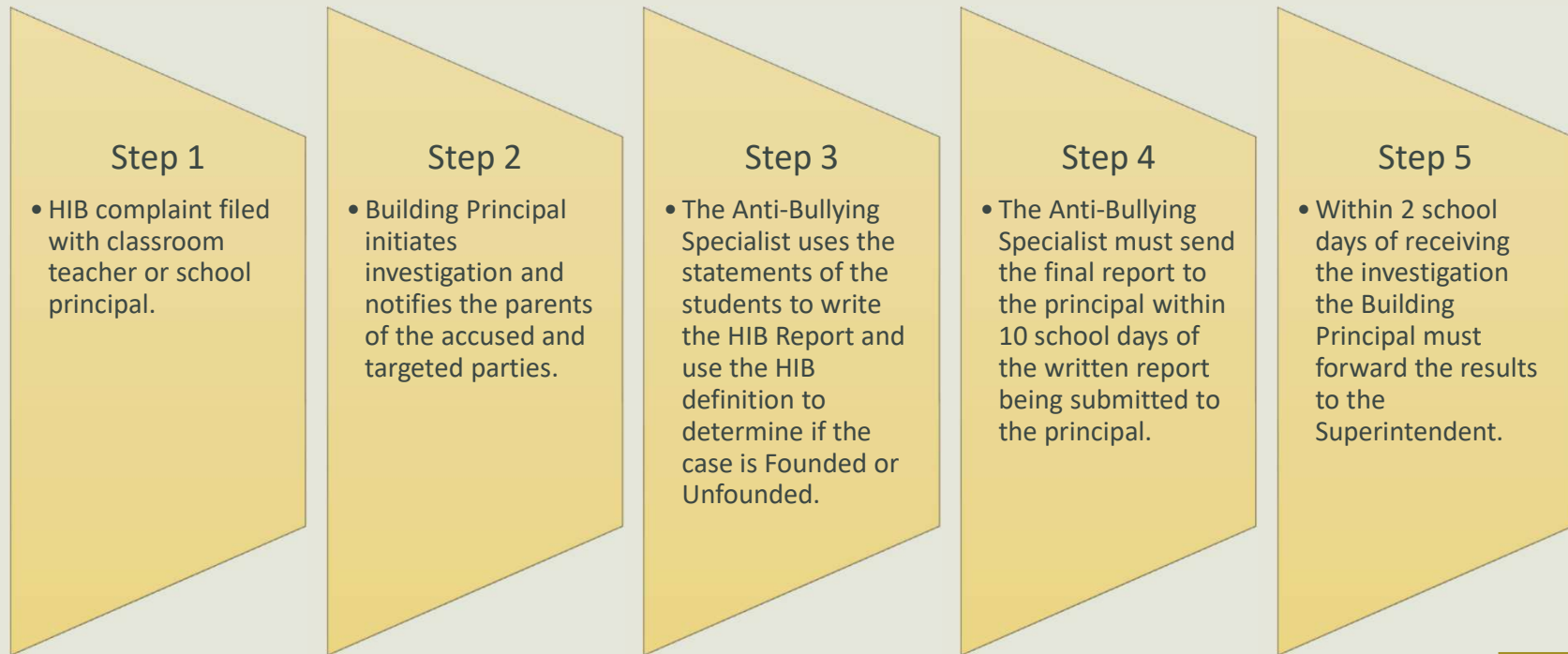
Other Characteristics

- Marital/domestic partnership/civil union status
- Affectional or sexual orientation
- Gender identification or expression
- Height, intelligence and sports proficiency
- Vegetarianism

A Distinguishing Characteristic is NOT a dispute between students such as:

- A relationship falling apart between former friends
- A fight over a piece of property
- Some form of personal vendetta of one against another

HIB Investigation Timeline



HIB Investigation Timeline

Step 6

- Superintendent signs off on HIB response and informs the Board of Education at the next regular business meeting of the incident.

Step 7

- The Superintendent will notify the Parent/Guardian of the accused and targeted parties of the outcome within five days of the Board of Education Meeting.

Step 8

- Parent/Guardians have the right to appeal the decision. The hearing must occur within 10 days of receiving the request

Step 9

- At the next Board of Education Meeting the Board will vote to affirm, reject or modify the decision.



What Can You Do If You
Suspect Bullying?

“My Child Does Not Bully and Is Not Being Bullied”

Are you sure?

- Many parents underestimate risks and their child’s involvement in problem issues and overestimate level of communication at home

Talk about it anyway!

- Talk about not joining in the behavior and reporting it to an adult if it happens



Most children do not report bullying to adults.



- Feelings of shame or not wanting to worry parents
- Fear of retaliation
- No confidence for change
- Fear telling will make it worse
- Fear they would not be believed
- It would be worse to be a snitch
- Poor past response

Signs of Bullying: Victims

- Comes home from school with torn, dirty clothing
- Brings home damaged books or other possessions
- Reports things “lost”
- Has cuts, bruises, or scratches
- Seems afraid to go to school
- Sleep disturbances
- Loses interest in schoolwork
- Appears sad, depressed, or irritable
- Social withdrawal
- Feels picked on or persecuted
- Talks about running away
- Attempts to take protection to school
- Has few friends

Talk With Your Child

- “Are there any kids at school who you really don’t like? Why?”
- “Who do you sit with at lunch?”
- “What do you do between classes and what usually happens between classes?”
- “Who do you hang out with at school?”
- “Do you ever see kids being picked on?”



Talk With Your Child

Subtle Questions

- “Have you ever gotten a mean email or insult on social media?”
- “How do you feel when you hear kids putting each other down?”
- “What do you do when you get angry at someone at school? If your peers get mad at you, how do they act?”

Direct Questions

- “Are there any kids at school who are bullying or picking on you?”
- “Are there any kids at school who tease you in a mean way?”
- “Are there kids at school who leave you out of exclude you purpose?”
- “Is there anyone at school who seems scary to you?”



What Can You Do If Your Child
Is Being Bullied?

Create a Safe Environment

- Be supportive and empathic
- Don't ignore or minimize
- Never blame or shame
- Listen
- Gather as much information as possible
- Who, when, where, witnesses, attempts to cope
- Do not criticize or encourage physical retaliation



Work With Your Child

Ask your child what they think should be done

Encourage walking away and telling an adult

Encourage assertiveness when appropriate

Practice these techniques at home

Encourage traveling with friends and avoiding areas where bullies hang out

Do not address bullying publicly



Provide Encouragement and Support

Don't:

- Force a meeting between your child and bully
- Contact the parents of the child who bullied your child

Do:

- Let the school do this
- Follow up with your child
- Create a safe home environment with open communication
- Help develop your child's positive attributes
- Seek professional help

