

# Monroe Township Public Schools

## MONROE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### HARRASSMENT, INTIMIDATION & BULLYING HANDBOOK



#### Policy Statement

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student. 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, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

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## Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Definition

### 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:

1. **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;
2. 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;
3. **Substantially disrupts** or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that
  - a. **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 student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
  - b. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
  - c. 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.

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Schools are required to address harassment, intimidation, and bullying occurring off school grounds, when there is a nexus between the harassment, intimidation, and bullying and the school (e.g., the harassment, intimidation, or bullying substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students).

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

## **Perceived Characteristic** is NOT:

“Harmful or demeaning conduct motivated only by another reason, for example, a dispute about a relationship or personal belongings or aggressive conduct without identifiable motivation does not come within the statutory definition of bullying.”  
K.L. v. Evesham School District (App. Div. 2011)

**Substantially Disrupts** or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students: *\*The bully/victim relationship must be within the same district for the district to have HIB jurisdiction. If not, then it may be referred to the home district administration as a code of conduct violation, in addition to the local law enforcement agency.*

A “**reasonable person**” is any adult member of the school community

“**Under the circumstances, will have the effect of...**” means even if the target claims to not be bothered by, upset by, offended by the behavior, the reasonable person must treat and respond to the behavior as it is presented, not as it is reported to be perceived by the target. The **reasonable person** must intervene.

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## Types of Bullying Behavior

**Verbal** – Includes taunting, name-calling, malicious teasing or making threats (U.S. Department of Justice 2001);

**Psychological** – Includes spreading rumors, purposefully excluding people from activities, breaking up friendships (U.S. Department of Justice 2001);

**Physical** – Includes hitting, punching, shoving, spitting or taking personal belongings (U.S. Department of Justice 2001); and

**Cyberbullying** – Includes using the Internet, mobile phone or other digital technologies to harm others. Cyberbullying sometimes referred to as “electronic bullying” or “online social cruelty,” is defined as HIB that takes place: through email; through instant messaging; in a chat room; on a website or gaming site; or through digital messages or images sent to a cellular phone.

## Conflict vs. Bullying

**Bullying** is one sided, where one or more students are victims of one or more person’s aggression, which is intended to physically or emotionally hurt the victim(s).

- Bullying is not a phase young people must endure and outgrow.
- Bullying is not a conflict between students or among groups of students.

**Conflict** is a mutually competitive or opposing action or engagement, including a disagreement, or an argument, which is a normal part of human development.

- A conflict has the potential to transform into bullying if what was once a mutually competitive or opposing action or engagement becomes a one-sided act of aggression. This happens when one party has “moved on” from the conflict while the other has not, and continues to engage in inappropriate behaviors.

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## 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, 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.

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. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent student conduct problems and foster students' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

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

1. 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);
2. Appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, and good citizenship;

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3. Student rights; and
4. Sanctions and due process for violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

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

1. Walk away from acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying when they see them;
2. Constructively attempt to stop acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
3. Provide support to students who have been subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
4. Report acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying to the designated school staff member.

## Investigation Procedures

### School Day One (1):

- Verbal report made to Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS) or Principal
- ABS informs building Principal
- **Principal** must inform parents/guardians “of all students involved”

### School Day Two (2):

- Principal must initiate investigation by Anti-Bullying Specialist(s) **within one (1) school day of report.**

### School Day Eleven (11):

- ABS complete investigation and submits written report to Principal
- Principal proceeds in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, as appropriate, based on the investigation findings.

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## **School Day Thirteen (13):**

- Results of the investigation must be given to Superintendent within two (2) school days of completing the investigation. Superintendent ensures the Code of Conduct has been implemented (e.g. intervention services, training, discipline, counseling, etc.).

## **Report to Board of Education:**

- Superintendent must report to Board of Education no later than next board meeting following completion of investigation.

## **Parents of involved student offenders and targets/victims:**

- Within five (5) days after the results of the investigation are reported to the Board of Education, Superintendent's office provides information about the investigation. Information provided 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.

## **Due Process: Rights for Alleged and Accused Victim(s)**

## **Report to Parent / Guardian:**

- District must provide "information about the investigation to parents / guardians of "students who are parties to the investigation" about investigation and findings within five (5) school days after investigation results are presented at a board meeting. Information to include: nature of investigation, whether evidence of HIB found, whether discipline or services were provided to address the HIB.

## **Board Hearing:**

- Parent / Guardian may request a confidential hearing before the Board of Education, which must occur within ten (10) calendar days of the request.

## **Board Decision:**

- Board must issue decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify Superintendent's decision, at next board meeting, following receipt of report. Board's decision may be appealed to Commissioner of Education within ninety (90) calendar days.

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## Civil Rights Complaint:

- Parents / Guardian may file a complaint with the NJ Division on Civil Rights within one hundred eighty (180) calendar days of incident, based on membership in a protected group as enumerated in the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, or in state or federal court.

## ECS Investigation:

- Executive County Superintendent shall investigate a complaint of a violation by a school district when the complaint is not adequately addressed on a local level.

## Anti-Bullying Contact Information

<b>Superintendent,</b> Dr. Chari Chanley	732-521-1500	<a href="mailto:Chari.Chanley@monroe.k12.nj.us">Chari.Chanley@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Anti-Bullying Coordinator,</b> Dr. James Cernansky, Director of Guidance and Student Support Services	732-521-2882	<a href="mailto:James.Cernansky@monroe.k12.nj.us">James.Cernansky@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Monroe Township High School-ABS</b> Brooke Messinger, Dana Green-Witter & Vanessa Kartsanis	732-521-2882	<a href="mailto:Brooke.messinger@monroe.k12.nj.us">Brooke.messinger@monroe.k12.nj.us</a> <a href="mailto:Dana.greenwitter@monroe.k12.nj.us">Dana.greenwitter@monroe.k12.nj.us</a> <a href="mailto:Vanessa.Kartsanis@monroe.k12.nj.us">Vanessa.Kartsanis@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Monroe Township Middle School-ABS</b> Sarah Levine & Meghan Granger	732-521-6042	<a href="mailto:Sarah.Levine@monroe.k12.nj.us">Sarah.Levine@monroe.k12.nj.us</a> <a href="mailto:Meghan.Granger@monroe.k12.nj.us">Meghan.Granger@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Applegarth - ABS</b> Ania Shanholtzer	609-655-0604	<a href="mailto:Ania.shanholtzer@monroe.k12.nj.us">Ania.shanholtzer@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Barclay Brook - ABS</b> Brittney Ragusa	732-521-1000	<a href="mailto:Brittney.ragusa@monroe.k12.nj.us">Brittney.ragusa@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Brookside - ABS</b> Donna Colossi	732-521-1101	<a href="mailto:Donna.colossi@monroe.k12.nj.us">Donna.colossi@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Mill Lake - ABS</b> Nicole Mascola	732-251-5336	<a href="mailto:Nicole.mascola@monroe.k12.nj.us">Nicole.mascola@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Oak Tree - ABS</b> Lauren Brenner	609-655-7642	<a href="mailto:Lauren.brenner@monroe.k12.nj.us">Lauren.brenner@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>
<b>Woodland - ABS</b>	732-251-	<a href="mailto:Jamie.newcomb@monroe.k12.nj.us">Jamie.newcomb@monroe.k12.nj.us</a>

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## Implementation of HIB Policy and Legislation

### Anti-Bullying Assignments

- The Superintendent shall appoint a district Anti-Bullying Coordinator.
- The Principal in each school shall appoint a school Anti-Bullying Specialist(s).
- A School Safety Team shall be formed in each school in the district to develop, foster and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the on-going, systemic process and practices in the school, and to address school climate issues such as harassment, intimidation and bullying.

### Anti- Bullying Coordinator Responsibilities

The District Anti-Bullying Coordinator shall:

- Be responsible for coordinating and strengthening the school district's policies to prevent, identify and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils;
- Collaborate with school Anti-Bullying Specialists in the district, the Board of Education, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils in the district;
- Provide data, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education regarding harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils;
- Execute such other duties related to school harassment, intimidation, or bullying as requested by the Superintendent;
- Meet at least twice a school year with the school Anti-Bullying Specialist(s) to discuss and strengthen procedures and policies to prevent, identify, and address harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the district;

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- Provide training on the HIB Policy to employees, contracted service providers, BOE, and volunteers who have significant contact with pupils; and
- Shall annually conduct a reevaluations, reassessment, and review of the HIB Policy with input from the Schools Anti-Bullying Specialists, and recommend revisions and additions to the Policy as well as to harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention programs and approaches based on findings from the evaluation, reassessment and review.

## Principal's Responsibilities

The principal shall:

- Initiate the investigation by the Anti-Bullying Specialist;
- Contact parent(s)/guardian(s) and inform them of the incident;
- Keep abreast of the situation;
- Keep in close contact with the Anti - Bullying Specialist. Update him/her with current information;
- In conjunction with the Anti-Bullying shall determine the "range" of ways to address the incidents of harassing and / or bullying behavior. These may include: training, disciplinary actions, counseling or intervention programs;
- Be an active participant of the School Safety Team;
- The Principal shall proceed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct;
- Submit the report to the Superintendent; and
- Post to the school website the name, school phone number, address and email address of the School Anti-Bullying Specialist(s).

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## Anti-Bullying Specialist Responsibilities

- Chair the School Safety Team as provided in N.J.S.A. 18A: 37-21;
- Lead the investigation of incidents of potential harassment, intimidation, or bullying in the school;
- Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and addressing incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying in the school;
- Execute other duties related to school harassment, intimidation or bullying as requested by the principal and/or the Anti-Bullying Coordinator to discuss and strengthen procedures and policies to prevent, identify, and address harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the district; and
- Provide training on the School HIB Policy to school staff.

## School Safety Team Responsibilities

The School Safety Team shall:

- Receive any complaints of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils that have been reported to the Principal\*;
- Receive copies of any report prepared after an investigation of an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying\*;
- Identify and address patterns of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils in the school;
- Review and strengthen school climate and the policies of the school in order to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils;
- Participate in the training required pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A: 37-13 et. seq. and other training which the Principal or the district Anti-Bullying Coordinator may request;

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- Collaborate with the Anti-Bullying Coordinator in the collection of district-wide data and in the development of district policies to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils; and
- Execute such other duties related to harassment, intimidation, or bullying as requested by the Principal or district Anti-Bullying Coordinator.

\* Parent team members may only participate in activities that do not compromise student confidentiality.

## 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 standard for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents, school employees, school administrators 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.

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. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent student conduct problems and foster students' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

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

1. Student responsibilities (e.g., requirements for students to conform to reasonable standards of socially accepted behavior; respect the person,

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- property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to those who hold that authority);
2. Appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, and good citizenship;
  3. Student rights; and
  4. Sanctions and due process for violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

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

1. Walk away from acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying when they see them;
2. Constructively attempt to stop acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
3. Provide support to students who have been subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
4. Report acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying to the designated school staff member.

## Consequences and Appropriate Remedial Actions

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.

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## Factors for Determining Consequences

1. Age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved and their relationship to the school district;
2. Degrees of harm;
3. Surrounding circumstances;
4. Nature and severity of the behavior(s);
5. Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior;
6. Relationships between the parties involved; and
7. Context in which the alleged incidents occurred.
8. School culture, climate, and general staff management of the learning environment;
9. Social, emotional, and behavioral supports;
10. Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
11. Family community, and neighborhood situations; and Alignment with Board policy and regulations/procedures.

## Factors in Determining Remedial Measures

### Personal

1. Life skill deficiencies;
2. Social Relationships;
3. Strengths, talents, hobbies, and interests;
4. Extra-curricular activities;
5. Classroom participation; and
6. Relationship to students and the school district

### Environmental

1. School culture and climate;
2. Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
3. General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments;
4. Staff ability to prevent and manage difficult or inflammatory situations;
5. Social-emotional and behavioral supports;
6. Social relationships;
7. Community activities;
8. Neighborhood situation; and
9. Family situations

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## Examples of Remedial Measures

School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation, or bullying;  
School culture change;  
School climate improvement;  
Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs;  
Modifications of schedules;  
Adjustment in hallway traffic;  
Modifications in pupil routes or patterns traveling to and from school;  
Supervision of pupil before and after school, including school transportation;  
Targeted use of monitors (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, locker room, playground, bus, etc.);  
Teacher's aides;  
Small or large group presentations for fully addressing the behaviors and the responses for the behaviors;  
Professional development plans for staff;  
Disciplinary action for school staff who contributed to the problem;  
Parent conferences;  
Family counseling;  
Involvement of parent-teacher organizations; School Safety Team;  
Involvement of community-based organizations;  
Peer support groups;  
School transfers and Alternative Placements; and  
Law enforcement

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**Dear Colleagues,**

**It is now mandatory that all personnel be trained regarding the new regulations on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying. Please read the attached HIB Handbook and sign below, indicating completion.**

## **Purpose**

To ensure an environment that prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a pupil. To cultivate a safe and civil environment in school which is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying like other disruptive or violent behaviors is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe and disciplined environment.

Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

**I have read and understand the Monroe Township Public School's Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Handbook.**

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**Signature**

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**Print Name**

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**Date**