

HIB

What Parents Really Need to Know

Understanding HIB • Conflict • What happens when a concern is reported

Voorhees Township Public Schools

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A parent-friendly conversation about a not-so-exciting law.

Let's start with a quick question...

Two students argue on the bus.
One asks the other to stop.
The argument continues, and one student shoves the other.

HIB?

CONFLICT?

NOT SURE?

Keep your answer in mind — we'll come back to it.

Tonight's goal

No legal lecture required.

1

Know what HIB actually means

2

Understand what is not HIB

3

Know what happens after a report

And most importantly: know who to contact when you have a concern.

The big idea

Not every mean, hurtful, or inappropriate behavior is legally HIB.

But that does NOT mean the school ignores it.

Behavior that does not meet the HIB definition may still violate the student code of conduct and require intervention.

The label matters for the legal process. The behavior still matters to us.

So... what makes something HIB?

WHAT happened?

Gesture, written/verbal/physical act, or electronic communication

WHY?

Motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic

WHERE?

School property, school-sponsored function, or qualifying off-school conduct

IMPACT?

Substantial disruption/interference and harm, fear of harm, insult/demeaning conduct, or hostile educational environment

HIB, conflict, or other conduct?

HIB

- Often one-sided / imbalance of power
- Distinguishing characteristic is involved
- Meets the legal impact criteria
- Triggers the HIB investigation process

CONFLICT

- Mutual disagreement
- Both students participate
- Similar degree of power
- Can often be resolved through problem-solving

OTHER CONDUCT

- May look like HIB
- May still be unkind or inappropriate
- Does not meet every legal HIB criterion
- Code of conduct may still apply

Remember our bus example?

Back-and-forth exchange • no imbalance of power • no distinguishing characteristic • no substantial disruption

CONFLICT

Still needs attention — just not the HIB legal process.

Scenario: when it IS HIB

A student is repeatedly targeted in a group chat with comments about her weight. She stops eating lunch and begins refusing to come to school.



Distinguishing
characteristic



Repeated /
one-sided



Emotional harm &
school impact

This meets the necessary HIB criteria.

Scenario: hurtful, but NOT HIB

A classmate calls a student "weird" because of her short hair. The comment is hurtful, but the student reports that she has moved past it and it did not substantially disrupt school.

YES

A distinguishing characteristic is present.

BUT

The required substantial disruption/interference criterion is not met.

Not HIB ≠ acceptable behavior.

What happens after a concern is reported?

- 1 REPORT** Staff reports reliable HIB information to the principal.
- 2 START** Principal asks the ABS to begin the investigation within 1 school day.
- 3 INVESTIGATE** ABS completes the investigation/report within 10 school days.
- 4 REVIEW** Principal → Superintendent → Board of Education.
- 5 NOTIFY** Parents receive notification of findings.

Who does what?

PRINCIPAL

Receives reports, works with the ABS, communicates with families, and submits the investigation report.

ANTI-BULLYING SPECIALIST

Leads the HIB investigation with the principal and chairs the School Safety Team.

DISTRICT ABC

Supports schools, procedures, training, data, and building Anti-Bullying Specialists.

SUPERINTENDENT

Reviews and reports investigation findings to the Board.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Reviews HIB matters and hears parent appeals when requested.

What parents can expect

- ✓ Notification that your child was reported as an alleged aggressor or recipient in an HIB investigation.
- ✓ Information about findings and appropriate consequences/remedial actions, within confidentiality limits.
- ✓ Written notification following Board review.
- ✓ The right to request a Board of Education hearing after receiving the written findings.

What can I do as a parent?

STAY CONNECTED

Keep in contact with teachers and school staff. Share concerns early.

PRACTICE SAFETY

Help your child identify trusted adults and practice how to seek help.

TALK TECH

Set expectations and monitor phones, group chats, social media, and other electronics.

The goal is not simply to label behavior — it is to keep students safe, supported, and able to learn.

If your child says, "I'm being bullied..."

- ✓ Listen first. Ask what happened, who was involved, where it happened, and whether it has happened before.
- ✓ Save screenshots, messages, or other relevant information.
- ✓ Contact the classroom teacher, school staff member, principal, or Anti-Bullying Specialist.
- ✓ Avoid promising a particular label or outcome before the school has reviewed the facts.

Your school contacts

E.T. Hamilton

Derek Myers

Kresson

Maureen Boyle

Osage

Auda Aquino

Signal Hill

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The takeaway

HIB is a specific legal definition.

Not every conflict or unkind act is HIB —
but every concern deserves to be heard and addressed.

Questions?

Thank you for partnering with us to keep our schools safe, supportive, and civil.