

5512 PROHIBITING, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING

The Board of Directors of Hawkwood School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(1) 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 environment. Students learn by example and school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers demonstrate appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect; and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Hawkwood School is a safe place. In a safe place, people are kind. There is no place for gossip. Sarcasm, fighting, backbiting, and name-calling are exceptions rather than the rule. Kindness, consideration and forgiveness are the usual way of life. In a safe place, there is laughter. Not just the canned laughter of radio and television, but real laughter that comes from sharing meaningful work and play. In a safe place, there are rules. The rules are few and fair and are made by the people who live and work there, including the children. In a safe place, people listen to each other. They care about each other and show that they do with words and also body language. In a safe place, adults are the models for the others.

Definition

"Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means any gesture or written, verbal or physical act that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus and that:

1. Is motivated 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,
2. By any other distinguishing characteristic; and
3. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
4. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(2)



This policy includes the motivating factors set forth in the authorizing statute (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14). Not all acts of bullying, however, are motivated by characteristics such as the target's race, color, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Some acts of bullying are simply one child exercising power and control over another either in isolated incidents (e.g., intimidation, harassment) or patterns of harassing or intimidating behavior (e.g., bullying). Such behavior is managed according to guidelines of behavior management as described in the "Standards and Practices Manual".

Appropriate Student Behavior

Students shall conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development; maturity and demonstrated capabilities with a 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. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(3)

Standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/guardians, staff and community members, 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 and community property on the part of students, staff and community members.

The best discipline is self-imposed and it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations 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 discipline problems and encourage students' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

The school community and its educational practices positively reinforce sharing, kindness, cooperation, self-discipline, good citizenship and academic success.

Consequences and Remedial Action

Hawkswood School requires that, in determining the appropriate response to students who commit one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, school administrators should consider the following factors: the developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved, the levels of harm, the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behaviors, past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(4)



Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall ordinarily be positive behavioral interventions and rarely involve suspension.

Responses shall be consistent with the framework of the existing Federal and State case law, statutes, regulations and policies and school policies and procedures. In all cases, the school shall attempt to actively involve parents in the remediation of the behavior(s) of concern.

Reporting Procedure

Reports of an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be made to the Principal and may be made anonymously; however, formal disciplinary action shall not be permitted solely on the basis of an anonymous report. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(5)

The Principal or the Principal's designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Principal or the Principal's designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. While submission of the report form is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use the report form available from the Principal or available at the school office. Oral reports also shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Investigation

The Principal or the Principal's designee shall promptly investigate reports of violations and complaints. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(6)

The Principal and/or the Principal's designee are responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the Principal and/or the Principal's designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of the alleged incident.

School Response

The policy shall contain the range of ways in which a school will respond once an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying is identified. NJ.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(7)

Some acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring that the school respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be parts of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that require a response at the classroom level.



Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying are ordinarily positive behavioral interventions, but may include suspension as permitted under N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, the Principal will consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the level of harm, the nature of the behavior, past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

Every incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying requires an appropriate response to the individual who committed the act. Individual responses can include positive behavioral interventions (e.g., peer mentoring and life skills groups). Suspension in this school is rarely appropriate. Classroom responses can include class discussions about an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, role plays, observing and discussing audio-visual materials on these subjects and skill-building lessons in courtesy, tolerance, assertiveness and conflict management. School responses can include parent programs, information disseminated to students, parents and staff, and professional development for staff.

The Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6.2(b)(12) defines the conditions by which school officials are required to report suspected hate crimes or bias-related acts to law enforcement authorities. Since some acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be bias-related acts and potentially hate or bias crimes, school officials must report to law enforcement officials either serious acts or those which may be part of a larger pattern.

Reprisal and Retaliation

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying is prohibited. The Principal shall establish consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(8)

The school prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Principal after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, Federal and State statutes and regulations and school policies and procedures.

Inconsistent applications of appropriate responses to acts of reprisal or retaliation can contribute to a culture of incivility that this policy is intended to prevent.



False Accusations

The Principal sets the consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(9)

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying can include positive behavioral interventions (e.g., peer mentoring and life skills groups). Suspension in this school is rarely appropriate. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures and agreements. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be determined by the school Principal after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Decisions about consequences and appropriate remedial action shall be consistent with existing case law, Federal and State statutes and regulations and school policies and procedures.

Dissemination

The policy is disseminated annually to all school staff students and parents. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(10)

The goal of this policy is to foster a safe and disciplined environment that is conducive to learning, where individuals treat one another with civility and respect. To accomplish this goal, the policy is disseminated to inform everyone in the school community of its provisions.

Establishment of Bullying Prevention Programs

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-17(5)(c), professional development may include training to support students in developing socially appropriate behavior.

Staff members are trained in skills and strategies for developing student self-discipline and for applying best practices for positive behavioral interventions.

Classroom teachers use experiential learning techniques in life skills curriculum to support students in developing appropriate social and interpersonal skills.

Adopted: 01 September 2017

