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Dear Parent and Guardians:

We are writing to you regarding the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act and Piscataway School District's adoption of this policy. Since the policy took effect in September 2011, there have been questions and concerns. Through this letter we hope to clarify the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy, the difference between conflict and bullying, and the school's role.

HIB means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or series of incidents that:

- Is reasonably perceived as being 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 by any other distinguishing characteristic

AND

- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L. 2010, c122

AND

- Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students

AND THAT

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, 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 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.

Conflict vs. bullying

Bullying is not a conflict between two students or among groups of students. Conflict is a mutually competitive or opposing action or engagement, including a disagreement, an argument or a fight which is a normal part of human development. 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).

Everyone in our school community is required to report all instances of HIB and every report triggers an intense investigation and review process starting at the school level and working its way up to the full Board of Education. We are making every effort to ensure that everyone is familiar with the definition of HIB so that the reporting and investigation process is reserved for the type of misbehavior that the law is intended to address.

Of course, we do not condone meanness or insensitivity between students just because it does not meet the criteria for HIB. Please know that our staff is always prepared to maintain an open dialogue with you about any conditions or events at school, or elsewhere, that are negatively affecting your child's safety or comfort level at school. We do ask, however, that the HIB reporting process itself be reserved for the type of harmful misbehavior that it was intended to address and not become a "catch all" for incidents that are dealt with more appropriately at the school level by a teacher, counselor, or principal.

With your help, we can ensure that the substantial resources we have put in place to eradicate HIB from our schools are put to their most effective use.



Richard Hueston
Principal



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