

DISTRICT/SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING SPECIALISTS

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Mahwah Township Public Schools

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Information



**Back to School Night
September 2019**

"The level of our success is limited only by our imagination and no act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted." - Aesop

Mahwah Public Schools is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all of our students. Our intentions remain to provide a positive learning environment for all. The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, P.L. 2010, Chapter 122, was signed by Governor Christie to establish procedures for the effective investigation of reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

You can find the Mahwah Board of Education's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy on the district web site at: www.mahwah.k12.nj.us

“‘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**
2. By any other distinguishing characteristic; and that
3. 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, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other pupils; and that
4. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
5. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils; or
6. Creates a hostile educational environment for the pupil by interfering with a pupil's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the pupil.

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

What is the difference between teasing and bullying?

Answer: Teasing is poking fun at and laughing with somebody when there is no intent to insult or demean, and the receiver does not consider it to be insulting or demeaning. Bullying is solely directed and motivated by an actual or perceived characteristic.

When may a single incident be considered an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying?

Answer: The Anti-Bullying Specialist must consider the target's level of distress in response to a single incident. New Jersey's law is more extensive than most laws in other states and allows for a finding of harassment, intimidation, and bullying for even a single act.

Is it possible to retaliate against a student with a claim after my child has been accused? Answer: Retaliation claims serve no purpose except to extend this process and place students in a needless investigation. Retaliation accusations also delay the students' opportunities to work on resolutions.



Our commitment to you is the same as it has always been. We investigate all reports of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Not every incident will be deemed a confirmed incident of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. When actions are deemed as issues of harassment, intimidation, and bullying, we will investigate, report, discipline, and remediate consistent with our Code of Conduct and the requirements of the law.

Our district is committed to creating a safe environment by participating in various programs, including Responsive Classroom, Restorative Practices, Operation Respect, and the Bully Busting curriculum from the New Jersey State Bar Association. Additionally, all schools in Mahwah will be incorporating activities and events during New Jersey's Week of Respect in October.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal, or the building principal.