

PENNSAUKEN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PENNSAUKEN, NEW JERSEY

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING

The Pennsauken Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. 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; and 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.

"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:

- a. is motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, race, color, creed, age, national origin, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, English proficiency, socio-academic status, disability, handicap, ancestry, marital status; or
- b. by any other distinguishing characteristic; and
- c. 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 person or damage to his property; or
- d. 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.

The Pennsauken Board of Education expects students to 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.

The Pennsauken Board of Education believes that 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 district and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members.

The Pennsauken Board of Education believes that the best discipline is self-imposed, and that 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.

Based on broad community involvement, each school shall develop general guidelines for student conduct and shall direct development of detailed regulations suited to the age levels of the students and the mission and physical facilities of the individual schools. Board policy requires all students in the district to adhere to the rules and regulations established by the school district and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infraction of these rules.

The chief school administrator shall provide annually to students and their parents/guardians the rules of the district regarding student conduct, and the policy shall appear in all publications of the school district's comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools within the school district, including the student handbook. Provisions shall be made for informing parents/guardians whose primary language is other than English.

It is the Pennsauken Board of Education's intent that this policy shall:

- a. Describe student responsibilities, including the requirements for students to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property, and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to those who have that authority;
- b. Address appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship, and academic success.
- c. Explain student rights; and
- d. Identify disciplinary sanctions and due process.

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. Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. It is only after meaningful consideration of these factors that an appropriate consequence should be determined, consistent with the case law, Federal and State statutes, regulations, and policies, and district policies and procedures. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

At each school, 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 a report form is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use an official report form available from the principal of each building or available at the school district 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.

The principal and/or the principal's designee is 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.

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 so serious or parts of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that they require a response either at the classroom, school building, or school district levels or by law enforcement officials.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils*.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, the administrator should 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. Institutional (i.e., classroom, school building, school district) responses can range from school and community surveys, to mailings, to focus groups, to adoption of research-based bullying prevention program models, to training for certificated and non-certificated staff, to participation of parents and other community members and organizations, to small or large group presentations for fully addressing the actions and the school's response to the actions, in the context of the acceptable student behavior and the consequences of such actions and to involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers.

The Pennsauken School District 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 administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, federal and state statutes and regulations and district policies and procedures.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils*. 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 district 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 administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or on a school bus. The chief school administrator shall develop an annual process for discussing the school district policy on harassment, intimidation, and bullying with students.

Statutory Provisions

Pursuant to *N.J.S.A.: 37-17(5)(c)*, information regarding the district's policy against harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall be incorporated into a school's employee training program.

Pursuant to *N.J.S.A.: 37-17(5)(a)*, the district and all schools are required to establish bullying prevention programs, and other initiative involving school staff, students, administrators, volunteers, parents, law enforcement, and community members.

Pursuant to *N.J.S.A.: 37-17(5)(b)*, the school district is required to provide training on the school district's harassment, intimidation, and bullying policies to school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students.

Pennsauken Township Public Schools
Pennsauken, New Jersey

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING REPORT FORM

COMPLAINANT: _____

SCHOOL: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

DATE(S) OF ALLEGED INCIDENT(S): _____

Name of the person(s) whom you allege committed an infraction against you:

DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT(S):

LIST ANY WITNESSES: _____

SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT: _____

DATE OF SUBMISSION: _____

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL: _____

DATE OF RECEIPT: _____