

# Parent Tutorial about Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)

Belvidere High School  
March 4, 2015  
6:00 p.m.

Some content from the New Jersey Department of  
Education:  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/tutorials/>

# Presenters

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# Presenters

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# HIB: The Statutory Definition

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as **being motivated either 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, that 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 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 severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

# What are some effects of HIB?

- While it is not uncommon for adults to view HIB as "just part of being a kid," HIB is a serious problem that can lead to many serious and lasting negative effects for victims.
- Research studies report HIB has significant effects on those who are bullied, those who bully others and those who witness bullying.
- Most victims remain silent for fear of retaliation or shame, which can lead parents and school and law enforcement officials to underestimate the extent of HIB.
- Student witnesses often do not report incidents.

# Effects of HIB, cont.

- People who are bullied may:
  - Suffer from a wide range of psychological problems, including the following that may continue into adulthood: Increased feelings of sadness and loneliness;
  - Depression;
  - Changes in sleep and eating patterns;
  - Low self-esteem; and
  - Loss of interest in activities.
- Have increased thoughts about suicide that may continue into adulthood. In one study, adults who recalled being bullied in youth were three times more likely to have suicidal thoughts or tendencies.
- Are more likely to have health complaints. In one study, being bullied was associated with physical health status three years later.

# Effects of HIB, cont.

- People who are bullied may suffer from a wide range of school problems, including:
- Trouble concentrating;
- Decreased academic achievement (lower GPA and standardized test scores);
- Decreased school participation;
- Missing or dropping out of school;
- Retaliation through extremely violent measures.
  - In 12 out of 15 school shooting cases in the 1990s, the shooters had a history of being bullied.

Questions?



Which characteristics of students place them at greater risk for being bullied?

Generally, children, teens and young adults who are bullied:

- Do not get along well with others;
- Are less popular than others;
- Have few to no friends;
- Do not conform to gender norms;
- Have low self esteem; or
- Are depressed or anxious.

# What are some signs that my child might be bullied?

Children who are being bullied might:

- Come home with damaged or missing clothing or other belongings;
- Report losing items, such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry;
- Have unexplained injuries;
- Complain frequently of headaches, stomachaches or feeling sick;
- Have trouble sleeping or have frequent bad dreams;
- Have changes in eating habits;
- Hurt themselves;
- Be very hungry after school from not eating their lunch;
- Run away from home;
- Lose interest in visiting or talking with friends;

# Signs of being bullied, cont.

- Be afraid of going to school or other activities with peers;
- Lose interest in school work or begin to do poorly in school;
- Suddenly have fewer friends;
- Avoid certain places;
- Act differently than usual;
- Often feel they are not good enough;
- Blame themselves for their problems;
- Appear sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed when they come home;
- Feel helpless; or
- Talk about suicide or “giving up.”

# HIB: Breaking it Down

**What:** Any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication.

## Verbal

- Name calling;
- Taunting;
- Constant teasing; or
- Making threats.

## Physical

- Hitting;
- Punching;
- Shoving;
- Spitting; or
- Taking or damaging personal belongings.

## Psychological

- Spreading rumors;
- Purposefully excluding people from activities; and
- Breaking up friendships or other relationships.

## Electronic Communication “Cyberbullying”

- Communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including e-mail, text messages, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, other social networking sites and the like.

Bullying may occur in a single incident or a series of incidents.

# HIB: Breaking it Down (cont.)

## Who and Why:

That is reasonably perceived as being motivated either 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.**

# “Any Other Distinguishing Characteristic”

*Most Likely YES*



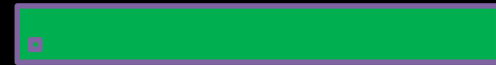
- Hair Color
- Piercings
- Braces
- Glasses
- Intelligence (*nerds*, *“sped” kids*)
- Weight
- Physical features (*big ears*)

*Possibly YES*



- Grade level
- Political affiliation
- Social standing
- Popularity
- Socio-economic status

*Probably NOT*



- Comparative** strength between students
- Comparative** age between students
- Comparative** popularity between students

# HIB: Breaking it Down (cont.)

## Where and when:

It must take 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*, in cases in which a school employee is made aware of such actions and subject to the following restrictions:

- Only when discipline is *reasonably necessary* for the student's physical or emotional safety, security and well-being or for reasons relating to the safety, security or well-being of other students, staff or school grounds, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:25-2* and *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2*; and
- Only when the conduct which is the subject of the proposed consequence *materially and substantially* interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.

# HIB: Breaking it Down (cont.)

## How:

It must substantially disrupt or interfere with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of students;

**and**

It must meet at least one of the following **three additional criteria**:

- If the actions are such that a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will either: (1) have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student; (2) damaging the student's property; OR (3) placing the student in *reasonable fear* of physical or emotional harm; 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.



# Subtle differences to be considered

## *Direct*

- Physical - hitting, kicking, pushing, stealing, hiding or ruining someone's things. Making someone do something they don't want to do
- Verbal - name calling, teasing, insulting, threats.

## *Indirect*

- Relationship bullying - gossiping, spreading rumors and lies about someone or making someone feel left out, excluded, or rejected.

Questions?

# What is the difference between conflict and HIB?

- Conflict between two or more students is sometimes confused with HIB. However, conflict and HIB are very different.

**Conflict** most often involves *mutual engagement* in a disagreement between individuals.

- Conflict, which occurs in everyday life, can range from a simple disagreement over an idea to a verbal argument or a physical fight. During a conflict, name calling, threats and other behavior that may look like HIB can occur.
- Determining whether an incident is a conflict or HIB requires an examination of the individual facts of each incident. If a conflict results in damaging, violent or disruptive or other behavior, it may be prohibited under a school's code of student conduct and some form of discipline may occur, but the ABR does not apply.

**HIB** usually involves one or several individuals intentionally committing a mean or violent act against another person or persons who have a hard time defending themselves.

- When HIB occurs, there is *not* mutual engagement between individuals, but a one-sided victimization of another person or group.
- The intention is to cause physical or emotional harm to the person.

# What can I do if I think my child is being bullied?

- Approach your child in a calm manner. Express concern and be clear that you want to help.
- Ask questions about the incident(s) and keep a record of “where” and “when” it occurred and “who” was involved.
- Work together to find solutions by asking your child for his or her input.
- Ask for help from school staff (the principal or assistant principal, the school anti-bullying specialist, a school counselor or a teacher) and cooperate with them to resolve the concerns.
- Encourage your child to report incidents of HIB to any members of the school staff.

# What should I do if I think my child may be bullying others?

- Speak calmly with your child; be objective and listen.
- Be clear that you view bullying as a serious matter.
- Set and enforce clear and consistent rules and fair consequences for your child's behavior.
- Develop strategies in collaboration with the school to prevent future HIB incidents.
- Talk with a professional about additional help for you and your child.
- Spend more time with your child.
- Know your child's friends.
- Build on your child's strengths and positive qualities.

# What can I do about cyberbullying?

## Cyberbullying

- If you know or suspect your child is being cyberbullied, take quick action, such as:
- **Talking with your child.** Do not ignore the bullying problem or hope it will go away. Tell your child that you are concerned and that you would like to help.
- **Telling your child not to respond to cyberbullying.** Responding can sometimes make the situation worse.
- **Empathizing with your child.** Tell your child that cyberbullying is wrong, that it is not their fault if they are being bullied, and that you are glad he or she had the courage to tell you about it. Do not assume that your child did something to cause the bullying. For instance, do not ask things such as “What did you do to make Mary mad?”

# Cyberbullying, cont.

- **Working together to find solutions.** Ask your child for his or her ideas on keeping the bullying from happening and assure him or her that the situation can be handled.
- **Documenting ongoing cyberbullying.** Work with your child to record bullying incidents. Write down answers to the following questions: What happened? Where did it happen? Who was involved? When did it happen? Find out the way your child reacted and the ways the bullies, bystanders and adults reacted. Keep all evidence; do not destroy files.
- **Blocking the person who is cyberbullying your children.** Many websites and phone companies allow you to block people. Cyberbullying often goes against the terms of service established by social media sites and internet service providers. Consider filing a complaint.

# Cyberbullying, cont.

- **Contacting law enforcement.** Police can respond if the behavior involves a criminal offense. The following are examples of crimes that might be associated with cyberbullying: Threats of violence;
- Child pornography and “sexting;”
- Taking a photo image of someone in a place where he or she would expect privacy;
- Harassment, stalking or hate crimes;
- Obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages; and
- Extortion.
  
- **Being Persistent.** Talk regularly with your child to see whether the cyberbullying has stopped. If the bullying continues or gets worse, you may need to contact the appropriate people again or talk with a lawyer. Do not give up.



# Who should I contact at my child's school for help?

- Contact the building principal or the school's anti-bullying specialist (ABS). We're all required to have contact posted on our schools' websites.
- Your child's teacher or school counselor also can help.

# Resources

- [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)
- [www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying/what-parents-can-do](http://www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying/what-parents-can-do)
- [www.thebullyproject.com/parents](http://www.thebullyproject.com/parents)
- [www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/collection/bullying-teasing/parent-guide-to-bullying](http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/collection/bullying-teasing/parent-guide-to-bullying)
- [www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/parentguide.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/parentguide.pdf)
- [www.njbullying.com](http://www.njbullying.com)

Questions?