

September 2015

Dear Parents and Students,

It is important for you to know that on January 5, 2011, New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act was signed into law. There are many components of the Act requiring:

- Every school district to adopt a new harassment, intimidation, and bullying policy (available to view on our district website.)
- Every school district have an Anti-Bullying Coordinator and every school to have an Anti-Bullying Specialist and School Safety Team (also available to view on the district website.) The Coordinator, Specialists, and School Safety Teams have very specific responsibilities.
- The school district to provide training to current and new school employees, volunteers, and contracted service providers who have significant contact with students.
- Every teacher to complete at least two hours of instruction in harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention during professional development training days.

On the reverse side of this letter is the timeline to show the path the school district follows when any school personnel member receives a report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Some guidelines to recognize normal peer conflict vs. bullying are also highlighted.

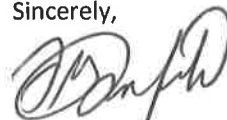
The first week of October is mandated by the state to be a "Week of Respect" in all NJ schools. Age-appropriate lessons and activities will be conducted to focus on preventing harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Throughout the school year, the district will provide similar instruction in accordance with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.

- The law defines harassment, intimidation, or bullying as "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 either by any actual or perceived characteristic...that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds...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 a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage his property."

Code of Conduct regulations can be found in the Student Planner which contains all WHS policies and procedures. The Code of Conduct was designed to coincide with the NJ Anti-Bullying law.

Thank you for taking the time to read this very important information regarding the initiatives intended to create a positive school climate and culture.

Sincerely,



Mr. Michael Fromfield

Principal, Wallington High School

BULLYING INVESTIGATIVE FLOWCHART PROCESS

All acts must be reported verbally to school principal the **same day** school employee or contracted service provider witnesses event or receives reliable information. Employee must submit written report to principal **within two days**.



Principal informs parents or guardians of **all students** involved in alleged incidents and may discuss availability of counseling and other intervention services.



Within one day of reported incident — Principal initiates investigation. Anti-bullying specialist conducts investigation.



Investigation must be completed as soon as possible. Written report **within 10 days** of incident to principal.



Superintendent must receive report **within two days** of completion. Superintendent may suggest an intervention service, establish training programs, impose discipline, order counseling or take other appropriate actions.



School board must receive the report at its **first meeting** following the investigation along with information on actions taken to address the incident or incidents.



Parents of students are entitled to information about the investigation and may request a hearing with the school board in its executive session. The board may also hear from the anti-bullying specialist at the hearing.

At its next hearing, the board must issue a **written decision** affirming, rejecting or modifying the superintendent's decision.

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RECOGNIZING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NORMAL PEER CONFLICT AND BULLYING

Normal Peer Conflict	Bullying
Equal power or friends	Imbalance of power; not friends
Happens occasionally	Repeated negative actions
Accidental	Purposeful
Not serious	Serious with threat of physical or emotional harm
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction from victim and little or no emotional reaction from bully
Not seeking power or attention	Seeking power, control, or material things
Not trying to get something	Attempt to gain material things or power
Remorse – will take responsibility	No remorse – blames victim
Effort to solve the problem	No effort to solve problem

How to Help: Steps to Bully-Proof Your Child

(from: *Bully-Proofing Your Child: A Parent's Guide* by Garrity, Baris, and Porter)

1. Let the school know your safety worries immediately.
2. Keep a record of time, date, names and circumstances to show a pattern of harassment.
3. Teach your child self-respect – confident kids are less likely to become a victim.
4. Let your child know it is okay to express anger if done appropriately.
5. Encourage friendships – there is strength in numbers.
6. Arrange weekend play dates to promote friendships.
7. Build social skills early.
8. Help shy kids with social skills training – role play together situations that have occurred previously.
9. Explain the difference between telling and tattling. Tattling is when you report something just to get someone in trouble. Telling is when you report that you or someone else is in danger. (Verbal abuse and being excluded are dangers too.)
10. Stress the importance of body language – a “victim stance” may attract bullies.
11. Teach your child effective skills for making friends such as how to share, compromise, apologize, use “I” statements, change the topic to avoid conflict, and use a “diplomatic” approach.
12. Teach your children alternative responses – **HA HA, SO (Help, Avoid, Humor, Assert yourself, Self-talk, Own -it)**.
13. Don't advise physically attacking the bully.