

# *Lodi Public Schools*



## **Harrassment, Intimidation, and Bullying**

### *A Handbook for Parents and Students*

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*Lodi School District's HIB Policy and Regulations may be found on the district website:*  
<https://www.lodinjschools.org/domain/337>

## **Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying**

### **Policy Statement**

The Lodi Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a pupil. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe and disciplined environment. Since pupils 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.

For the purposes of this Policy, the term "parent," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3, means the natural parent(s) or adoptive parent(s), legal guardian(s), foster parent(s), or parent surrogate(s) of a pupil. Where parents are separated or divorced, "parent" means the person or agency which has legal custody of the pupil, as well as the natural or adoptive parent(s) of the pupil, provided such parental rights have not been terminated by a court of appropriate jurisdiction.

## **Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Definition**

### **Types of behaviors include:**

- 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 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\*;

### **Takes place on school property, or**

- at any school-sponsored function,
- or off school grounds\*\* as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3;
- 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

That 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.

*\*A personal characteristic is not "Harmful or demeaning conduct motivated only by another reason, for example, a dispute about a relationship or personal belongings, or aggressive conduct without identifiable motivation does not come within the statutory definition of bullying." K.L. v. Evesham School District (App. Div. 2011)*

*\*\*The bully/victim relationship must be within the same district for the district to have HIB jurisdiction.*

*\*\*\*A "reasonable person" is any adult member of the school community*

### **Types of Bullying Behaviors**

**Verbal** – Includes taunting, name calling, malicious teasing or making threats (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001);

**Psychological** – Includes spreading rumors, purposefully excluding people from activities, breaking up friendships (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001);

**Physical** – Includes hitting, punching, shoving, spitting or taking personal belongings (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001); and

**Cyber-Bullying** is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not be limited to, e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:

1. Deliberately threatens, harasses, or intimidates an individual or group of individuals; or
2. Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual's property; or
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

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

**“School district owned, operated, or supervised technologies”** is any computer, networking system, electronic equipment, or any other equipment or device that may be used by a person to communicate to another, that is owned, leased, operated, or under the control or supervision of the school district and/or school district staff.

### **Conflict vs. Bullying**

Bullying is not a conflict between students or among groups of students.

Conflict is a mutually competitive or opposing action or engagement, including a disagreement, or an argument 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).

## **Pupil Expectations**

### **Policy No. 5512 Section C.**

The Board expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities and the care of school facilities and equipment consistent with the Code of Pupil Conduct.

The Board believes that standards for pupil behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the pupils, parents, school employees, school administrators, school volunteers, and community representatives, producing an atmosphere that encourages pupils to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school district and community property on the part of pupils, staff, and community members.

Pupils are expected to behave in a way that creates a supportive learning environment. The Board believes the best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of staff to use instances of violations of the Code of Pupil Conduct as opportunities to help pupils learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with pupils shall apply best practices designed to prevent pupil conduct problems and foster pupils' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

The Board expects that pupils will act in accordance with the pupil behavioral expectations and standards regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying, including:

1. Pupil responsibilities (e.g., requirements for pupils to conform to reasonable standards of socially accepted behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to those who hold that authority);
2. Appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, and good citizenship;
3. Pupil rights; and
4. Sanctions and due process for violations of the Code of Pupil Conduct.

The district prohibits active or passive support for acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Pupils are encouraged to support other pupils who:

1. Walk away from acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying when they see them;
2. Constructively attempt to stop acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
3. Provide support to pupils who have been subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
4. Report acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying to the designated school staff member.

## **Parent's/Guardian's Role in Preventing Bullying**

Parents/Guardians can play a pivotal role in assisting the school district in preventing bullying. School staff and parents/guardians can and should work together to create a school that is free of bullying.

There are certain behaviors a child may exhibit at home that may be a warning sign or symptom that they have been bullied at school.

**Some examples of these behaviors may be:**

**Possible signs and symptoms of a bullied child:**

- Is the child afraid to walk to or from school?
- Does the child not want to ride the school bus?
- Does the child appear apprehensive about going to school, complain of headaches or feeling ill prior to leaving for school in the morning?
- Does the child come home with clothing or personal items damaged?
- Does the child appear sad or depressed about going to school?
- Does it appear the child is either losing money or frequently requesting money?
- Does the child seem socially isolated with few, if any, friends?
- Does it appear the child is sleeping more than usual, or does the child appear tired as if they have not gotten enough sleep?

**Warning signs that child may be bullying at school:**

- Does the child have a strong need to dominate and subdue others?
- Is the child intimidating his siblings or children in the neighborhood?
- Does the child brag about his actual or imagined superiority over other children?
- Is the child hot-tempered, easily angered, and impulsive with a low frustration level?
- Does the child have difficulty conforming to rules and tolerating adversity or delays?
- Does the child cheat on games or while playing with friends?
- Is the child defiant or aggressive towards adults including teachers or their own parents?
- Is the child anti-social?
- Is the child hanging out with the "wrong crowd"?

**The school can also provide direction and guidance to parents on positive approaches they can take to help address bullying in their child's school.**

**We suggest that Parents/Guardians:**

1. Take time each day to have a conversation with their children about their day-to-day lives and activities. If children are comfortable talking to their parents/guardians about school, friends, and activities, they will feel comfortable talking to their parents/guardians if they become a target of bullying.
2. Spend time at school and volunteer and be part of the school community.
3. Lead by example with signs and expressions of kindness. Children learn from watching and observing their parents/guardians.
4. Learn the signs and symptoms of bullying and the signs and symptoms of a bully.
5. Establish and enforce family rules that let children know bullying behavior is harmful to others and is not acceptable.
6. Encourage their children to stand-up to help those who are being bullied. We know bystander students can be very effective in stopping bullying behavior.
7. Teach their children about cyber-bullying and the impact of sending mean, cruel, or threatening internet messages.

**Ways parents/guardians can respond to children who are bullied:**

**If a child tells his/her parent/guardian they have been bullied at school, there are several suggestions for parents on how to react to their child's situation.**

1. Parents/Guardians should not over-react or under-react when told that their child may have been bullied at school. The parent/guardian should not dismiss the child's experience. If a child has the courage to tell someone they have been bullied – it could be devastating to be told to “work it out for yourself” or “they are just teasing you.”
2. Parents/Guardians should not place the blame for the incident on their child.
3. Parents/Guardians should expect the child to have a difficult time dealing with being a target of bullying.
4. Parents/Guardians should encourage their child to keep talking about the incident if the child feels the need to discuss. They should also ask him/her how things are going at school. Parents/Guardians need to provide extra support and encouragement to the child during these times.
5. If a child is reluctant to talk to his/her parent/guardian, the parent/guardian should encourage the child to talk to another adult, such as a family member, or a trusted teacher.
6. Research indicates responding to a bully in an aggressive manner will not make the bully go away. The parent/guardian should encourage the child to stay away from the alleged bully and let the school investigate and remedy the problem.



**Upon receiving a report from school that their child may have bullied another child, parents/guardians need to be informed what they can do to help:**

**Tips for parents/guardians of an alleged bully:**

1. A parent/guardian should be encouraged to take the problem as a serious matter.
2. Parents/Guardians should question and listen carefully to their child during the investigation of the allegations.
3. A parent/guardian should try to find out the reasons for their child's bullying behavior and seek help from the school.
4. Upon receiving a report that their child has been bullying at school, parents/guardians should make it clear that this conduct must stop immediately.

**Tips to avoid/deal with cyber-bullying:**

1. Parents/Guardians should be advised to keep computers in an area of the home where the child's actions on the computer can be supervised.
2. Parents/Guardians should establish and enforce reasonable limits for the amount of time children spend on the computer.
3. Parents/Guardians should have access to their children's online accounts including passwords and other security measures for websites.
4. Parents/Guardians should inform their children to report to them if they feel they are a victim of cyber-bullying.
5. Parents/Guardians should have some basic knowledge of the internet sites their child uses.
6. Parents/Guardians should discuss online chat rooms and what is appropriate for their child to post on these Internet sites.
7. Parents/Guardians should occasionally sit with their child while the child is working or communicating online.