

Watchung Hills Regional High School

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

Policy Statement

The 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 pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in 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 purpose 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.

Definition

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 mental, physical or sensory disability; or
2. By any other distinguishing characteristic; 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; 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 damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear physical or emotional harm 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 a 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.

Pupil Expectations

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 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 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 in 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 pupil's 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 Conduct.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15 (a) and N.J.C. 6A:16-7.1 (a) 1, the district has involved a broad-base of school and community members, including parents, pupils, instructional staff, pupil support services staff, school administrators, and school volunteers, as well as community organizations, such as faith-based, health and human service, business and law enforcement, in the development of this Policy. Based on locally determined and accepted core ethical values adopted by the Board, pursuant to N.J.C. 6A: 16-7.1 (a) 2, the Board must develop guidelines for pupil conduct pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-7.1 . These guidelines for pupil conduct will take into consideration the developmental ages of pupils, the severity of the offences and pupils' histories of inappropriate behaviors, and the mission and physical facilities of the individual school (s) in the district. This Policy requires all pupils in the district to adhere to the rules established by the school district and to submit to the remedial and consequential measures that are appropriately assigned for infractions of these rules.

Please do not hesitate to call the District Anti-Bullying Coordinator with any questions or concerns.

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator – Nicholas Serritella (nserritella@whrhs.org), 908-647-4800 ext. 4970

School Anti-Bullying Specialist- Cathy Angelastro (cangelastro@whrhs.org), 908-647-4800 ext. 4860