

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING
Policy and Procedures

CENTRAL JERSEY COLLEGE PREP
Charter School



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PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY, AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED FUNCTIONS AND ON SCHOOL BUSES
Statute N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15 and Administrative Code N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.9

Statement of Purpose:

The CJCPCS board of trustees prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (HIB). The board believes that a safe, secure and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. The paramount goal of the Board with this policy, here after referred to as the HIB Policy, is to ensure a safe, civil and respectful learning environment for all students upon which every member of the learning community can depend. 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 environment; and 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.

Definitions:

The CJCPCS board establishes that "**harassment, intimidation or bullying**" means any gesture or written, verbal or physical act, or any use of electronic communication* that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus and that:

- is 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; and
- 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
- 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. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14.

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

Expected Behavior:

The CJCPCS 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.

The Board believes that standards for pupil behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the pupils, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), staff and community members, 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.

The Board believes the best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of school district staff to use disciplinary situations 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 the best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage pupils' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

The school prohibits active and passive support for harassment, intimidation or bullying. Pupils are encouraged to support other pupils who are victims of these acts when they see them by acting as a defender to constructively attempt to stop them and report these acts to the Dean of Students, Assistant Dean of Students, or other adult at school and an adult at home.

Pupils are required to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to school district teaching, support and administrative staff. The school's Dean of Students and Assistant Dean of Students will develop and provide a school-based program for appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship, acting as a defender in incidences of HIB, and academic success.

Consequences and Appropriate Remedial Actions:

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:

- a) the developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved,
- b) the levels of harm,
- c) the surrounding circumstances,
- d) the nature of the behaviors,
- e) past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior,
- f) 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 the school's Student Code of Conduct. Corrective actions for systemic harassment, intimidation or bullying are handled as other repeat offenses according to steps outlined in the school's Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) and in accordance with the school's Student Code of Conduct. The response to students who commit one or more acts in violation of this policy should be determined based on the totality of the circumstances. OBPP procedures require reporting of the incident on the CJCPCS School Bullying Incident Report form and individual interventions of all those involved by the school's Bullying Incident Referral Subcommittee. Parents of victims and offenders are notified and may be called in for private discussions at the school with subcommittee members or administrators. In this way parents of offenders are involved in active remediation of the behavior(s) of concern and parents of victims are informed of the incident and the school's efforts to address it and protect their child. Staff is also notified to be extra attentive toward prevention of repeat incidences for students who have been involved in confirmed cases of HIB.

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. Efforts will be made to help the offender prevent any repeat offenses through a complete understanding of the psychological causes for action in him or herself and the effects endured by the victim.

Reporting Procedure:

The board is committed to establishing and maintaining an environment where individuals may easily report cases of harassment, bullying or intimidation free from the fear of retaliation.

The OBPP Bullying Incident Referral Subcommittee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy. Students and volunteers shall report any act that may be a violation of this policy, and all other members of the school community, including parents and visitors, are encouraged to report such acts as well. While submission of the report form is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use the report form available from the OBPP School Committee. Oral reports also shall be considered official reports as long as they are put in writing by the officer for evidence. Provisions for anonymous reporting of acts of HIB will be available through an electronic drop box on the school's website that does not require personal identification. Formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-46 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.3 all confirmed incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying, including the related offender and victim details will be reported on the NJDOE's Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System by authorized personnel.

Whenever a suspected hate or bias-related act has occurred that is of a serious nature or is suspected of being a part of a wider pattern it will be reported to local law enforcement by school officials.

Investigation:

The Chief Education Officer (CEO), the CEO's designee, and/or the school's OBPP Bullying Incident Referral Subcommittee are responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this HIB Policy. They shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of the alleged incident. Such personnel will maintain a record of each investigation regarding allegations of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Response to an Incident of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying:

Initially reports of incidences of HIB will be handled by school's OBPP Bullying Incident Referral Subcommittee, the CEO and/or the CEO's designee as detailed in the reporting section of the HIB Policy.

Confirmed victims of a harassment, intimidation or bullying act will be given help in the way of supportive actions which may include but is not limited to any of the following:

- a) Providing ongoing support through our school counselor to aid the victims in developing skills to improve social and conflict resolution skills and to control their tendencies to become emotionally triggered by other people's comments.
- b) Aid them in developing social connections within the school, usually in the form of an extracurricular club or activity.

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

Some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring the school to respond appropriately to the individual(s) committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation or bullying that require a response either at the classroom level or the school wide level and could possibly require involvement by law enforcement officials. In considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, the administrator will consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the level of harm, the nature of the behavior, past incidences, past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

The school's responses to the issue of HIB in general 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. The school's responses may include participation of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) 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 acceptable student behavior or the consequences of such actions and involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers.

Reprisal or Retaliation Prohibited:

The school 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 CEO or his/her designee after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, Federal and State statutes and regulations and the school's Student Code of Conduct.

Consequences for False Accusation:

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a pupil found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion as permitted under N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 and in accordance with the school's Student Code of Conduct.

Any allegations of falsification of data in reporting of any HIB incident against a school employee will be reviewed by the administration and handled according to the requirements and procedures detailed in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.3(g). Board action will take into account the nature of the conduct, surrounding circumstances, and the employee's prior history with the school.

HIB Policy Publication:

This HIB Policy will be disseminated annually to all school staff, pupils, parent(s) or legal guardian (s). This HIB Policy applies to all acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or on a school bus. It will be posted on the school's internet website for easy downloadable access by parents, students, and community members.

The CEO will provide annually to pupils and their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) the rules of the school regarding pupil conduct, pupil's due process and other rights. This Policy will appear in all publications of the school's comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct.

The CEO shall develop a process for the Dean of Students to discuss the school's policy on harassment, intimidation and bullying with pupils on an annual basis as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.9(d)2..

Employee Training and HIB Prevention

Pursuant to N.J.S.A.18A:37-17.c. information regarding the school's Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy shall be incorporated into the school's employee training program. Employee training about HIB will also include elements of Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). OBPP has been established at CJCPCS and full implementation reached in the 2009-2010 school year. This program will remain a part of the school climate going forward and used in conjunction with the HIB Policy. It provides explicit guidelines for both the preventing and remediating of HIB occurrences some of which has been referred to in previous sections of the HIB Policy. The OBPP employee training educates staff about what bullying is, how to recognize it, and how to intervene in instances of it. OBPP training makes extensive usage of experiential learning techniques, such as role playing, for staff and for students also. OBPP provides a mechanism to provide

data on the nature of HIB present in the school through an annual student survey. This procedure brings the school in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.9(d)3.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(a)3 the CEO or the CEO's designee will perform an annual review of the training needs of staff in connection with the effectiveness of the HIB Policy and the OBPP . The CEO will implement with the approval of the board any local HIB training deemed necessary as a result of the review.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.9(d)1 the CEO or the CEO's designee will conduct an annual review and then update of the school's Student Code of Conduct as deemed required by the board.

Last updated November, 2009

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 11/20/09.