



## **WHAT IS HIB?** 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,
- is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic (race, religion, gender, "other," etc.);
- 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.
- In addition, a claim of HIB **MUST** include **AT LEAST ONE** of the following:

- Did the alleged act(s) substantially disrupt or interfere with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students?
- Did the alleged act(s):
  - 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/her person or damage to his/her property;
  - have the effect of demeaning or insulting any student or group of students;
  - create 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?

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/overview.pdf>

## **HOW PARENTS CAN TAKE ACTION TO HELP STOP BULLYING**



- Build empathy (help children understand and accept all people)
- Teach respect (for differences among people)
- Be a role model (behave the way you want your children to behave)
- Show interest in your children's life and be an empathetic listener (ask about their days at school and school work, not just grades)
- Actively supervise your children (helps to set clear, reasonable, consistent, and age-appropriate rules and guidelines)

- Know your children's friends (meet them/get to know them and their parents, know their activities, etc.)
- Become involved in your community (communicate with neighbors, schools, safety officials, etc.)
- Encourage positive problem solving (encourage solving conflict with words and seek help when self-solving strategies are unsuccessful)
- Ask questions (ask child questions about the way they handle social situations, ask schools staff about things they see in your child's social relations to confirm whether there is a need for concern...or not.)
- Teach your children to be upstanders, rather than bystanders (upstanders are people who take some action when they see bullying...here are some actions you can suggest to your children that will prevent them from being bystanders)

- Do not laugh or encourage the bully in any way;
- Stay at a safe distance and help the target of the bullying get away;
- Do not give the bully attention and support by watching;
- Reach out to the victim in friendship
- Tell an adult, and;
- Only take actions that are SAFE.

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## **CYBERBULLYING: HOW TO HELP AVOID IT?**

- Discuss all things "online" (the internet, chat features, online games, social networking sites, etc.) with your children. Check the age in the site's user agreement (i.e. most sites say "13+"). Talk to your kids about how something FUN can also be dangerous. If they're too young or you do not like the look of something, remove it. If you've decided it's okay, monitor the site regularly.
- Review the facts about being online with your children. Tell them anything they create online is NOT truly private as some information is always visible. Anything posted online is PUBLIC. If they wouldn't want it on a billboard, they shouldn't post it online.
- Tell them at least 25% of colleges regularly check for perspective students online and that there are many cases of people who are denied college admission or jobs because of their online profile or web page.
- Review cell phone rules with your children and enforce your own rules. Bullying and cheating happens via cell phone, and they are NOT okay. Consider blocking all messaging for children under 15.
- Discuss values and general principles with your child regarding online communication. Help teach good "digital citizenship" and model it yourself when online.

Elizabeth K. Englander, Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State College



## **ONLINE ISSUES: HOW TO RESPOND**

- Encourage your children to spend less time online.
- If it's a web page, look up and review the hosting site's policy. Send the host a copy of the Web page and a copy of its own policy. Demand that the host remove the page immediately.
- If the child who posted online is under 13, the host must remove the site immediately as per COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act).
- Always monitor your children's site and any friend's sites on which they might be posting.
- If someone is doing something abusive online, tell your children not to respond and to save the message. Tell them to tell an adult. If physical threats or violence are part of the message, contact the police.
- If it's spilling over into school, notify the school immediately so that the school can take action and help resolve the problem.

## **CELL PHONE ISSUES: HOW TO RESPOND**

- Have your children block people who have sent abusive messages.
- Consider removing messaging from your child's cell phone account.
- Tell your children never to give out personal information about him/herself or friends.
- Tell your children to limit their "buddy" list, and tell them to ask their friends not to distribute their screen name to others.
- If a perpetrator makes a threat of violence, tell your children not to respond and to save the evidence. Tell them to tell an adult. If physical threats or violence are a part of the message, contact the the police.
- Prevention, prevention, prevention! Just talking about these issues will help your children.



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