

# Anti-Bullying Parent Program



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# Important Facts



- Most common form of violence in children
- Number ONE reason for carrying a weapon in school
- Traumatic experience with lasting effects
- One of out of every 10 students who drops out of school does so because of repeated bullying (Thull, 2008)
  - Students use truancy as a means of escape!
- Emotional stress from bullies can create shortfalls in a child's intellectual capacities (Goleman, 1995)
- Bullying also interferes with academic, social and personal development (Craig and Peplar, 1996)

# Simply stated, bullying...



- Is intimidating or subjecting a person to hostility or ill treatment.
- Involves actions which cause another person to feel afraid, humiliated, embarrassed, threatened or shamed.
- Occurs in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power.
- Is repeated over time.

# Characteristics of Bullying

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Ancestry
- National origin
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity of expression
- Mental/physical/sensory disability
- Socio-economic status
- Adoption
- Other distinguishing characteristics

# Bullying Happens in Four Ways



- **Verbal**
  - Teasing, jokes, ignoring/isolation, gossip, threats
- **Physical**
  - Blocking someone's path, physical restraint, pushing/kicking, hazing
- **Sexual**
  - Teasing, touching, slapping, pictures, emails, graffiti, sexual assault
- **Property**
  - Hiding belongings, theft, arson, extortion, vandalism, destruction

# Bullying is NOT...



- A normal childhood activity
- A rite of passage
- The target's fault

# Differentiating Bullying from Normal Peer Conflict/Mean Behavior



- **Normal conflict/mean behavior**

- Equal power or are friends
- Happens occasionally
- Accidental
- Not serious
- Equal emotional reaction
- Not seeking power
- Remorse-will take responsibility
- Effort to solve the problem

- **Bullying**

- Imbalance of power
- Repeated negative actions
- Intentional
- Physical or emotional harm
- Unequal emotional reaction
- Seeking control/material things
- No remorse-blames target
- No effort to solve the problem

# Impact



## Students Who Are Bullied

- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Health problems
- Poor grades
- Suicidal thoughts

## Students Who Bully

- Drink alcohol and smoke
  - Difficult relationships at home
  - Have authoritarian parents
- BUT...**
- Have good self-esteem
  - Adequate academic performance
  - Have good social skills/often popular



# Warning Signs That Your Child May Be a Target of Bullying



- Frequently teased, taunted belittled, ridiculed, intimidated threatened, dominated or subdued
- Has a derogatory nickname
- Regularly has bruises or injuries that can't be explained
- Has belongings taken or damaged
- Few or no close friends at school

## Warning Signs Cont.



- Frequently socially isolated
- Less assertive or lacks the skills to respond to others' teasing or harassment
- Appears weak or easily dominated
- Tries to stay close to a teacher or other adult at recess or breaks

Talk with your child about bullying!

# What To Do

## If You Suspect Your Child is Being Bullied



- **Talk with your child**
  - If your child is being bullied, they need to have a voice in how the situation is handled.
- **Contact the school**
  - Set up a meeting with your child's teacher or counselor.
  - Develop a plan for keeping your child safe, particularly during vulnerable times (lunch, recess).
  - Find out what activities or counseling options are available for your child.
- **Contact police...**
  - If the actions are criminal (assault, theft, serious threats, vandalism)

# Warning Signs that your child may be bullying others



- Frequent name-calling
- Regular bragging
- A need to always get his/her own way
- Spending more time with younger or less powerful kids
- A lack of empathy for others
- A defiant or hostile attitude; easily takes offense
- Frequent misbehavior at school (e.g. name calling, teasing, intimidating, physical aggression)

# What To Do If You Suspect Your Child May Be Bullying Others



- **Talk with your child**
  - Never condone bullying behavior; speak up and tell your child that the behavior they are engaging in is considered bullying.
- **Encourage empathy for others**
  - Remind your child that everyone has a right to be themselves, to choose their own friends and to feel safe at school.
- **Review consequences of bullying behavior**
  - Both discipline consequences and relationship consequences
- **Reinforce respectful behaviors at home**
- **Help your child deal with feelings in positive ways**
- **Contact the school for help**
  - Set up a meeting with your child's teacher(s) or counselor.
  - Develop a plan for change.

# New Jersey Anti-Bullying Law



- Passed on Nov. 22, 2010 & signed by Gov. Christie on Jan. 5, 2011
- Makes NJ the state with the strongest stance against school bullying in the nation
- Applies to public schools and universities
- Three areas: School Climate Issues, Investigation Issues, Miscellaneous
- Incidents which take place off school grounds are included in this law

# Anti-Bullying Law



- Bullying program implemented September 2011
  - Effects:
    - Students
    - All school personnel
    - Administration
    - Board of Education

# Reasons Behind the Anti-Bullying Legislation



- Reports in 2010 the “chronic persistence of school bullying has led to student suicides across the country, including New Jersey”
- Identified a need “to strengthen the standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students that occur in school and off the school premises”



# Phoebe Prince & Tyler Clementi



Phoebe Prince, a 15 year old from Massachusetts, committed suicide on January 10, 2010 after relentless bullying by classmates over a period of several months. The students accused of bullying were indicted as adults in the case.

Tyler Clementi, a Rutgers University student, committed suicide by jumping to his death from the George Washington Bridge on September 22, 2010. Clementi was videotaped by his roommate and another student in a sexual encounter and the video was streamed live. Dharun Ravi has been charged with invasion of privacy, bias intimidation, witness tampering and evidence tampering . The criminal trial has not yet taken place.

# HIB Definition Adopted by the UBOE



- “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, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either 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 [handicap] disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic**, that takes place on school property\*, at any school-sponsored function [or], on a school bus, or off school grounds\* as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, CHAPTER 122, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students

# HIB Definition Cont.



- 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]**
- 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]; or**
- 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.

# Safety Team Members



- Principal
- *Teacher(s) in the school*
- School anti-bullying specialist (serves as chair)
- Parent(s) of a student in the school
- Other community members determined by the principal

# *New School District Staff Functions*



- **Anti-Bullying Coordinator (District)**
  - Nicole Ahern
- **Anti-Bullying Specialist (School)**
  - Ingrid Soares , M.A. – Battle Hill School  
(908)851-6390
- **School Safety Team (School)**
  - Mark Hoyt– Principal
  - *\*Teachers*
  - *\*Parent*

## *School Safety Team (cont.)*



- Receives any HIB complaints reported to principal\*
- Receives copies of any HIB investigation reports\*
- Identifies and addresses patterns of HIB in the school\*
- Reviews and strengthens school climate and policies in order to prevent and address HIB

*\*Parent team members may only participate in activities that do not compromise student confidentiality.*

## *School Safety Team (cont.)*



- Educates the community (i.e., students, teachers, administrators, parents) to prevent and address HIB
- Participates in training (both required and requested)
- Collaborates with anti-bullying coordinator in data collection and development of policies to prevent and address HIB
- Other duties related to HIB requested by principal or anti-bullying coordinator

# *Anti-Bullying Coordinator (District)*

*Nicole Ahern*



- Appointed by superintendent and approved by the Union Board of Education
- Coordinates and strengthens district HIB policy to prevent, identify, and address HIB collaborates with anti-bullying specialists, board of education and superintendent
- Meets at least twice a school year with the anti-bullying specialists and school safety team
- Provides data, in collaboration with the superintendent to the NJDOE
- Review data trends by school and by district for needs assessment



# *Anti-Bullying Specialist (School)*



**Assigned by the principal and approved by the Union Board of Education . This individual has been trained as the anti-bullying specialist and is assigned as follows:**

***Elementary: School Counselor***

***Middle School : SAC Substance Awareness Coordinator***

***High School: SAC Substance Awareness Coordinator***

## *Anti-bullying Specialist (School) cont.*



- Chairs the school safety team
- Leads the investigation of reported HIB incidents
- Acts as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of HIB in the school
- Assists the principal in appropriately applying the range of ways for responding to HIB established by the school board

# Reporting to BOE:



- Twice a year, once each semester, the superintendent of schools shall report to the board of education, in an open meeting, all acts of violence, vandalism, and harassment, intimidation, or bullying which occurred during the previous reporting period. This information will be provided to the NJDOE. The NJDOE will issue a score to the district based on the number of reported incidents

# Reporting Protocol for Incidents of HIB



- All incidents of HIB shall be reported verbally to the principal the on the same day when the school employee witnesses or receives reliable information regarding a HIB incident
  - Principal must inform parents of all students involved in the alleged incident. The building principal may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services
  - Principal initiates the investigation with the anti-bullying specialist. The reporting of an incident of bullying does not preclude any consequences for behavior that warrants the punishment as indicated in the Code of Conduct or Board Policy

# *New: Reporting Procedures*



- All acts of HIB also must be reported in writing to the principal within 2 school days of when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information

## *New: Reporting Expectations*



- *A member of a board of education, a school staff member, or a student who has witnessed, or has reliable information that a student has been subjected to, harassment, intimidation or bullying shall report the incident to the appropriate school official designated by the school district's policy, or to any school administrator or anti-bullying specialist, who shall immediately initiate the school district's procedures concerning school bullying.*

## *New: Reporting Expectations (cont.)*



- A member of a board of education or a school employee who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying to the appropriate school official designated by the school district's policy, or to any school administrator or safe schools resource officer, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in the district's policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident

# *New: Investigation Procedures*



- Initiated by the principal or designee within 1 school day of the verbal report
- Conducted by the anti-bullying specialist in consultation with the principal
- Principal may appoint additional personnel to assist with investigation
- Investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but **not later than 10 days from date of written report**
- If additional, anticipated information relevant to the investigation is not received within 10 days, anti-bullying specialist may amend original report to reflect the information



## *New: Results of Investigation*



- **Results shall be reported to the superintendent within 2 days of completing the investigation**
  - Superintendent may decide to: Provide intervention services
  - Establish training programs to reduce HIB and enhance school climate
  - Impose discipline
  - Order counseling
  - Take or recommend other appropriate action

# Result of Investigation Cont.



- Parents or guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation shall be entitled to receive information about the investigation within five days after the results of the investigation are reported to the board
- Results reported to the board of education (BOE) no later than the date of the next board meeting following the completion of the investigation, along with information on action taken or recommended by superintendent

## *New: Results of Investigation (cont.)*



- Parents of the students who are parties to the investigation are entitled to receive information about the investigation in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation including:
- Nature of the investigation and whether evidence of HIB was found
- Whether discipline was imposed or services provided
- Provided in writing within 5 school days after results are reported to the BOE

A parent may request a hearing before the BOE Must be held within 10 days of request

- BOE shall meet in executive session for the hearing
- BOE may hear from school anti-bullying specialist about the incident, recommendations for discipline or services, or programs instituted

## *New: Results of Investigation (cont.)*



- At the next BOE meeting following its receipt of the report the board shall issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject or modify the superintendent's decision.
- The BOE's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education, no later than 90 days after the issuance of the board's decision
- A parent, student, guardian, or organization may file a complaint with the Division on Civil Rights (DCR) within 180 days of the occurrence of any incident of HIB

# Reprisal, Retaliation, and False Accusation Prohibited New Law:



- A member of a board of education, a school staff member, or a student shall not engage in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness or one with reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying

# *Bullying Prevention Programs*



- New Law: Schools and school districts must annually establish, implement, document, and assess these approaches
- The approaches must be designed to create school-wide conditions to prevent and address HIB

## *Bullying Prevention Programs (cont.)*



- New Law: A “Bullying Prevention Fund,” is to be created in the NJDOE, to offer grants to school districts to provide training on HIB and on the effective creation of positive school climates

## *Bullying Prevention Programs (cont.)*



- ***New Law: Instruction and the “Week of Respect”***
- Each year the “Week of Respect” will begin on the first Monday in October
- School districts must observe the week by providing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing HIB
- Throughout the school year the school district must provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction on preventing HIB in accordance with the core curriculum content standards



## *Bullying Prevention Programs (cont.)*



- ***Discussions with Students***
- Schools must develop a process for *discussing the district's HIB policy with students*
- *Assemblies take place during the month of September for the students*
- *Student Survey conducted to assess the “real feel” of the climate of the school building*

## *Training -Staff*



- Districts are responsible for training requirements:
  - In-service training for all staff of each school district must provide training on the school district's HIB policies to school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students **and ensure that the training includes instruction on preventing bullying on the basis of the protected categories as enumerated in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14 and other distinguishing characteristics that may incite incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying.**

# *Public Reporting*



- NJ School Report Cards
- Superintendent to Board of Education
- Superintendent to NJDOE
- NJDOE to Senate and Assembly Committees

## *Public Reporting –School Report Cards*



- Adds to the School Report Card data –requires schools to report the number and nature of all reports of HIB

## *Public Reporting –Public Hearing*



The superintendent must report at *two public hearings* –

- One between 9/1 and 1/1; and
- One between 1/1 and 6/30

## *Public Reporting –Public Hearing (cont.)*



- Requires that HIB data be disaggregated by the enumerated classes, and adds HIB information:
- the status of all investigations
- the nature of the bullying (based on the enumerated categories)
- the names of the investigators
- any other non-disciplinary measures imposed
- training conducted or programs implemented, to reduce HIB
- The district must put a link to the report on its Website

## *Public Reporting – Superintendent to NJDOE*



- The information reported to the BOE must be reported once during each reporting period to the NJDOE
- Verification of the reports on violence, vandalism, and HIB must be part of the State's monitoring of the school district
- The report must be used to grade each school for the purpose of assessing its effort to implement policies and programs

## *District and School Grades*



- The Commissioner must establish guidelines for a program to grade each school to assess its efforts to implement policies and programs consistent with the law
- District grade is determined by averaging the grades of all the schools in the district
- The school's and the district's grades must be posted on the homepage of the school's Website within 10 days of the assignment of the grade
- The grade for the district and each school shall be posted on the homepage of the district's website



# Parent Resources



**National PTA (Parent Teacher Association)**

<http://www.pta.org/bullying.asp>

**Education.com**

<http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/>

**No Bully**

<http://www.nobully.com/parents.htm>