

## **Sage Day Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Prevention Policy:**

Sage Day prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (hereinafter known as HIB). Though the HIB Prevention Policy generally outlines rules and consequences for student conduct, it must be understood that school employees are expected to adhere to all aspects of the policy contained herein, to enforce all aspects of the policy contained herein and to model appropriate conduct at all times.

A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards; harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment; and since students 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.(N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 to -19).

### **Definition of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying:**

*“Gestures or written, verbal, electronic\* or physical acts, that a reasonable person should know will cause physical and/or emotional harm or fear of harm to one or more targets or their property, or insults or demeans any student or group of students usually unprovoked, and involving an imbalance of physical, psychological and/or social power (perpetrator over target/victim) occurring usually, but not necessarily, repeatedly and over time.*

**In the event that any incident meeting the definition of HIB occurring either on or away from school grounds is deemed to materially and substantially interfere with the requirement of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school, the individual (s) involved in such incident shall be subject to appropriate consequences and remediation to the extent reasonably necessary to protect the physical or emotional safety, security and/or well being of any student, staff member or school grounds. \*It must be emphasized that the definition of HIB includes communications and gestures made via any type of electronic device or medium whether on or off school grounds.**

### **Consequences and Appropriate Remedial Actions for Committing an Act of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying:**

The Director of School Operations will appoint a Sage Day Anti-Bullying Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating and strengthening our HIB policies and providing data regarding the same. An anti-bullying specialist will be appointed at each school site that will lead the investigation of incidents of HIB and be the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and addressing incidents of HIB in the

school.

Each school will form a school safety team comprised of the principal, teacher, therapist and parent\* in the school with the school anti-bullying specialist who will serve as the chairperson. This team will:

- Receive copies of complaints and investigation reports on HIB.
- Identify patterns of HIB in the school,
- Participate in training on HIB
- Strengthen the school's policy on HIB.

***\*Since parents are part of the school safety team the Act protects the privacy rights of students by limiting the participation of parent members of school safety teams to the activities of the team which do not involve confidential matters involving schools.***

At administrative meetings once before, and once after January 1<sup>st</sup> the Anti-Bullying Coordinator will report on acts of violence, vandalism and HIB which occurred during the previous reporting period, including the number of the bullying discipline imposed, and all HIB programs and training with breakdown by school. Once during each reporting period, the Director of Clinical and Educational Programs must submit to the Department of Education both school wide HIB data and a categorical breakdown of HIB by school. Based on the data, the Commissioner of Education will assign each school a grade for its efforts to implement the policies of the Act, which grade must be prominently placed on the homepage of the school districts web site within (10) days of receipt.

The week of the first Monday in October each year will be designated as a "Week of Respect" by providing age appropriate instruction on HIB.

School administrators shall develop and implement procedures that ensure both appropriate consequences and remedial responses to a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. In determining the appropriate consequence, school administrators shall consider the following factors: the age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved, the levels of harm, the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behaviors, past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved, the levels of harm, the surrounding circumstances the nature of the behaviors, past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. In determining appropriate remedial measures, school administrators shall consider the personal and environmental factors surrounding the incident.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of HIB may be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the development age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. This may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. In all cases, Sage Day will attempt to actively involve parents in the remediation of behavior (s) of concern.

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

**Reporting an Act of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying:**

At each school, the Principal or the Anti-Bullying Specialist is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or the Anti-Bullying Specialist. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers and visitors, shall report any act that may be a violation of this policy. While submission of the report form is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use the report form available from the Principal of each campus. Oral reports also shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

After an allegation of HIB:

1. After informing parents or guardians of students involved, an investigation shall be initiated and conducted by the school's Anti-Bullying Specialist in consultation with the principal.
2. The Anti-Bullying Specialist may appoint additional personnel to assist in the investigation.
3. The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible but not later than 10 school days from the date of the written report of the incident of HIB.
  - a. In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated by not yet received by the end of the 10-day period, the school Anti-Bullying Specialist may amend the original report of the results of the investigation to reflect the information.
4. The result of the investigation shall be reported to the Director of School Operations within two days of the completion of the

investigation, and in accordance with regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act, “P.L. 1968, c.52: 14B-1 et seq.)

5. The Director of School Operations may decide to provide intervention services, establish training programs to reduce HIB and enhance school climate, impose discipline, direct to counseling as a result of the findings of the investigation, or take or recommend other appropriate action.
6. Parents or legal guardians of the pupils who are parties to the investigation shall be entitled to receive information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation, including the nature of the investigation, whether the school found evidence of HIB or whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the incident of HIB. The information shall be provided in writing within five school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the Director of School Operations.
7. The parent or legal guardian may request a hearing before the Director of School Operations after receiving the information.
  - a. This hearing shall be held within ten days of request.
  - b. At the hearing the Director of School Operations may hear from the Anti-Bullying Specialist about the incident, recommendations for discipline or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such incidents.
8. A parent, pupil, legal guardian, or organization may file a complaint with the Division of Civil Rights within one hundred eighty days of the occurrence of any incident of HIB Based on membership in a protected group as enumerated in “Law Against Discrimination,” P.L.1945, c.169 (C.10:5-1 et seq.)

### **Response to**

### **HIB:**

Some acts of HIB may be isolated incidents requiring that the school respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or parts of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation or bullying that they require a response either at the classroom, school building or school district levels or by law enforcement officials.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including Short Term Suspensions N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2, Long Term Suspensions N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3 or Expulsion N.J.A.C. 6A:7.5.

Individual responses can include positive behavioral interventions (e.g., peer mentoring, short-term counseling, life skills groups) and punitive actions (e.g., in-school suspension, expulsion). Classroom responses can include class discussions about an incident of HIB, role plays, research projects, observing and discussing audio-visual materials on these subjects and skill-building lessons in courtesy, tolerance, assertiveness and conflict management. School responses can include theme days, learning station programs, parent programs and information disseminated to students and parents. District-wide responses can include community involvement in policy review and development, professional development programs, adoption of curricula and coordination with community-based organizations (e.g., mental health, health services, health facilities, law enforcement, faith-based).

In addition, Staff Clinicians are available to individual victims of HIB and respond in a manner that does not stigmatize victim(s). Social skills training can be provided for all students as a response for addressing victimization.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, the administrator should consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the level of harm, the nature of the behavior, past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred. Institutional (i.e., classroom, school building, school district) responses 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, to participation of parents 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 the acceptable student behavior and the consequences of such actions and to involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers.

Since some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be bias-related acts and potentially hate or bias crimes, school officials must report to law enforcement officials either serious acts or those which may be part of a larger pattern.

### **Retaliation or Reprisals for Reporting Acts of HIB Prohibited:**

Sage Day 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 administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, federal and state statutes and regulations and district policies and procedures.

A school employee, student or volunteer shall not engage in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness or one with reliable information about an act of HIB.

**Consequences for False Accusation of HIB:**

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including Short Term Suspensions N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2, Long Term Suspensions N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3 or Expulsion N.J.A.C. 6A:7.5. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with district policies, procedures and agreements. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer found to have falsely accused another as a means of HIB shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.