

## Northern Valley Old Tappan

# Parent Information

## Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

#### Definition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)

#### How to report an incident

#### Tips on how to prevent and address HIB with your children

#### School Contact Information

#### Myth: Bullying is the same thing as conflict.

Wrong. **Bullying** is aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Often, bullying is repeated over time.

#### Myth: Bullied kids need to learn how to deal with bullying on their own.

Some children have the confidence and skills to stop bullying when it happens, but many do not. Moreover, children shouldn't be expected to deal with bullying on their own. Bullying is a form of victimization or peer abuse. Just as society does not expect victims of other types of abuse (e.g., child maltreatment or domestic abuse) to "deal with it on their own," we should not expect this from victims of bullying. Adults have critical roles to play in helping to stop bullying, as do other children who witness or observe bullying.

#### Myth: Most bullying is physical.

Physical bullying may be what first comes to mind when adults think about bullying. However, the most common form of bullying—both for boys and girls—is verbal bullying (e.g., name-calling, rumor-spreading). It is also common for youth to bully each other through social isolation (e.g., shunning or leaving a child out on purpose).

#### Myth: Children and youth who bully are mostly loners with few social skills.

Children who bully usually do not lack friends. In fact, some research finds that they have larger friendship networks than other children. Importantly, they usually have at least a small group of friends who support and encourage their bullying behavior. Bullies also generally have more leadership skills than victims of bullying or children not involved in bullying.

On September 1, 2011 the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, which addresses harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) of school-aged children, went into effect. The bill requires schools to; implement policies addressing HIB, train all school employees, educate students; establish stringent investigating and reporting procedures; and establish a school safety team to evaluate school safety and climate in the building. The new law also expands the rights of students/parents and has changed how we define HIB in schools. For complete details please visit <http://oths.nvnet.org>

#### Definition:

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" (HIB) 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, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- A. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) 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;
- B. 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 education environment at school for the student or infringes on the rights of the student at school by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

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

#### Reporting

Although we prefer parents/students report incidents to their Assistant Principals and Guidance Counselors, reports can be made to any school employee who must report it to the building Principal. Detailed investigation procedures can be found in the BOE HIB policy located at [www.nvnet.org](http://www.nvnet.org). If at any time you feel a student is in immediate danger, call 911.

Reports can also be made anonymously by calling the **HIB Hotline at 201-784-1600 ext.22000**. If you choose to use the Hotline, please make sure you provide the name and grade of the alleged victim, name of the alleged perpetrator or perpetrators, description of the incident, and any other information you feel will assist the investigation.

**Myth: Bullying isn't serious. It's just a matter of "kids being kids."**

Bullying can be extremely serious. Bullying can affect the mental well being, academic work, and physical health of children who are targeted. Children who are bullied are more likely than other children to have lower self-esteem; and higher rates of depression, loneliness, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. They also are more likely to want to avoid attending school and have higher school absenteeism rates. Recent research on the health related effects of bullying indicates that victims of frequent bullying are more likely to experience headaches, sleeping problems, and stomach ailments. Some emotional scars can be long-lasting. Research suggests that adults who were bullied as children are more likely than their non-bullied peers to be depressed and have low self-esteem as adults. Children who bully are more likely than other children to be engaged in other antisocial, violent, or troubling behaviors. Bullying can negatively affect children who observe bullying going on around them—even if they aren't targeted themselves.

## What Parents Can Do

Children often do not tell their parents that they are being bullied because they are embarrassed or frightened. If you suspect your child is being bullied or your child brings it up, consider these steps:

- **Talk with your child.** Focus on your child. Express your concern and make it clear that you want to help.
- **Empathize with your child.** Say bullying is wrong, that it is not their fault, and that you are glad they had the courage to tell you about it.
- **Work together to find solutions.** Ask your child what they think can be done to help. Reassure them that the situation can be handled privately.
- **Document ongoing bullying.** Work with your child to keep a record of all bullying incidents. If it involves cyberbullying, keep a record of all messages or postings.
- **Help your child develop strategies and skills for handling bullying.** Provide suggestions for ways to respond to bullying, and help your child gain confidence by rehearsing their responses.
- **Be persistent.** Bullying may not be resolved overnight.
- **Report incidences** of HIB to the appropriate authorities
- **Check your emotions.** A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Although it is difficult, step back and consider the next steps carefully.
- **Stay vigilant to other possible problems that your child may be having.** Some of the warning signs may be signs of other serious problems. Share your concerns with a counselor at your child's school.

Lydia Greco, Student Assistance Coordinator ext. 24430  
Kerri Hubbard, District Lead Counselor - ext. 24100  
Laura Cavanaugh, Guidance Counselor - ext. 24120  
Matthew Corso, Guidance Counselor - ext. 24160  
Amanda Fitzpatrick, Guidance Counselor - ext. 24360  
Heather MacRae, Guidance Counselor - ext. 24380  
Laura Rupp, Guidance Counselor - ext. 24170  
Melissa Vion, Guidance Counselor - ext 24110

## Tips for Parents

### Look for signs: Being Bullied

- Loses interest in visiting or talking with friends
- Is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers
- Loses interest in school work or begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed when they come home
- Suddenly has fewer friends
- Comes home with damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- Reports losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry
- Has unexplained injuries
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- Has changes in eating habits
- Hurts themselves
- Are very hungry after school from not eating their lunch
- Runs away from home
- Talks about suicide
- Feels helpless
- Often feels like they are not good enough
- Blames themselves for their problems
- Avoids certain places
- Acts differently than usual

### Bullying Others

- Becomes violent with others
- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others
- Gets sent to the principal's office or detention a lot
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions
- Has friends who bully others
- Needs to win or be the best at everything

### What Not to Do

- **Never tell your child to ignore the bullying.** What the child may "hear" is that you are going to ignore it. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying. Often, trying to ignore bullying allows it to become more serious.
- **Do not blame your child for being bullied.** Do not assume that your child did something to provoke the bullying.
- **Do not encourage your child to harm the person who is bullying them.** It could get your child hurt, suspended, or expelled.
- **Do not contact the parents of the students who bullied your child.** It may make matters worse. School officials should contact the parents of the children involved.
- **Do not demand or expect a solution on the spot.** Indicate you would like to follow up to determine the best course of action.

#### School Contact Information: 201-784-1600

Dr. Bruce Sabatini, Principal ext. 24000 or [sabatini@nvnet.org](mailto:sabatini@nvnet.org)

Dr. Robert Hyman, Assistant Principal, ext 24070 or [hymanr@nvnet.org](mailto:hymanr@nvnet.org)

Dr. Jennifer Mezzina, Assistant Principal ext. 24040 or [mezzina@nvnet.org](mailto:mezzina@nvnet.org)

#### District Anti-Bullying Coordinator

Matthew Spatz, Director of Guidance, ext. 24150

#### Anti-Bullying Specialist:

Laura Cavanaugh, Guidance Counselor, ext. 24120  
Matthew Corso, Guidance Counselor, ext. 24160  
Dr. Joseph Graybill, School Psychologist, ext 24175  
Lydia Greco, Student Assistance Coordinator, ext 24360  
Jonathan Hallerman, School Psychologist, ext 24080