

Statement Regarding Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying and Violations of the Student Code of Conduct

Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying (HIB) allegations and investigations involving students have been a source of recent passionate discussion in our community. While the Cherry Hill Public School District is prohibited by FERPA and other relevant privacy and confidentiality statutes from commenting on specific situations, our top priority is and always has been the health and safety of our students and staff. Our commitment to maintaining a healthy, safe learning environment includes:

- Clear communication with parents at the beginning of each school year, with follow-up communication as needed, explaining the expectations of appropriate behavior of students. Parents are required to submit a signature verifying that they have read the [Student Code of Conduct](#) for their child's grade level, stating that they understand the consequences for a child not adhering to the Code of Student Conduct. Incidents which do not satisfy every element of the NJ Law governing Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying often fall within the Student Code of Conduct and violations are addressed accordingly. This is particularly true because the specific, statutory definition of "harassment," "intimidation" and "bullying" differs significantly from the commonly understood definitions of those terms.
- Clear communication with students by building administration and staff regarding the expectations of appropriate behavior while on school grounds, on school buses, on school-sponsored field trips and at school-sponsored off-site events.
- Consistent messages and modeling of appropriate behavior in our school buildings and at school events. The promotion of positive consequences for students who demonstrate appropriate behavior and who demonstrate kindness.
- The STOP-it App, a resource for students to report anonymously about inappropriate behavior. Information about the app is shared by the schools to their communities every year.
- Readily available anti-bullying specialists in each school building; FAQ documents in five languages regarding Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying (HIB), including the HIB complaint process; Cherry Hill Board of Education Policy 5512 – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying; and more, all available on the [Anti-Bullying Information](#) page of the District website, linked from the bottom of the website's home page, www.chclc.org

HIB determinations follow the strict parameters of [New Jersey state statutes](#). The school district takes every complaint very seriously and follows the statutes in every consideration. When an investigation determines a situation does not fall under the definition of HIB, the issue is always addressed further within the [Student Code of Conduct](#), as is appropriate. For privacy reasons, the details of the consequences for HIB or for a lack of adherence to the Student Code of Conduct cannot be shared.