

## HIB Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **What is the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act ?**

New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act was signed into law on January 5, 2011. The provisions of this law take effect on September 1, 2011. The law requires that:

- Every school district must adopt a new harassment, intimidation and bullying policy that is in compliance with the Act by September 1, 2011.
- Every school district must have an Anti-Bullying Coordinator and every school must have an Anti-Bullying Specialist and School Safety Team.
- Each of these has specific responsibilities under the law.

### **What has RVS done to comply with the law?**

Rockaway Valley School has established policy and procedures to respond to state legislation. Our school has a full-time School Counselor, School Psychologist and Assistant Principal. A School Climate Team has been established and teacher training will be ongoing throughout the school year. The school has dedicated a daily time in the student's day (FLEX "Falcon Leadership Excellence" Time) to focus on character education, anti-bullying campaigns and positive school community activities.

### **What should I do if my child is being bullied?**

First, determine if the problem is truly "bullying," or if it is another form of unacceptable or mean behavior. The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act offers a specific definition of bullying which is described in school policy. Bullying behavior...

- Must be motivated by an "actual or perceived characteristic," (for example, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or other distinguishing characteristic) and bullying "substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students."
- A reasonable person should know this behavior would "have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm."
- Bullying behavior "has the effect of insulting or demeaning a pupil or group of pupils," and "creates a hostile educational environment for the pupil by interfering with a pupil's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the pupil."
- If you are not sure whether or not a particular behavior is bullying, contact your school principal or Anti-Bullying Specialist to discuss your concern. Even if the behavior is not considered "bullying," the situation should be discussed and the behavior addressed if it is a cause for concern.

### **What if the behavior is something I believe is covered by the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act?**

Acts of bullying, intimidation or harassment are reported using the school's HIB Initial Report. A copy of this report can be found on the school website, or in the main office of your school, and should be returned to the school assistant principal when complete. A report can be made anonymously; mail or return the form to the attention of the school principal if you wish to report anonymously. Generally, it is suggested that you contact the school assistant principal who is the Anti-Bullying Specialist to discuss the concern prior to completing the written report.

**What will happen if I make a report?** Once a report is made, the school will take specific steps as outlined in school policy to investigate and resolve the issue. The school assistant principal or Anti-Bullying Specialist will discuss this in more detail when a report is made.

### **What is being done by our school to prevent my child and other children from being bullied?**

The Board believes that standards for pupil behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among

the pupils, parents, school employees, school administrators, school volunteers, and community representatives, producing an atmosphere that encourages pupils to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school district and community property on the part of pupils, staff and community members.

Rockaway Valley School has a strong tradition of character education with policies and school procedures that place respect for self and others at the center of school activities. This firm foundation for the development of personal responsibility for one’s behavior will be further enhanced through the provisions of the new Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.

**What if I have other questions about the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act?**

For additional questions, or to learn more about the new law, please review Board Policy regarding Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying, or contact the District Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Cira Giarratano or the school’s Anti-Bullying Specialist, Lia Lendis.

**What is the difference between a conflict and HIB?**

<b>Conflict vs. HIB</b>	
<b>Conflict</b>	<b>HIB</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involves people with similar degrees of power where everyone is more or less involved in the issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involves an imbalance of power</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involves a mutual disagreements or difference in interests or goals. Includes arguments and fights.</li> <li>▪ Can range from simple disagreement to a verbal arguments, or physical fight.</li> <li>▪ During a conflict, name calling, threats, and other behavior that may look like HIB can occur</li> <li>▪ Spontaneously and unintentional</li> <li>▪ Based in thoughtlessness or poor manners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One or more students are victims of one or more person’s aggression, needs, or interest.</li> <li>▪ Planned and done to hurt others</li> </ul> <p>Verbal – Includes name calling, taunting, constant teasing or making threats</p> <p>Physical – Includes hitting, punching, shoving, spitting, or taking or damaging personal belongings</p> <p>Psychological – Includes spreading rumors, purposefully keeping people from activities and breaking up friendships or other relationships</p> <p>Electronic/Cyber – Includes using the internet, mobile phone or other electronic equipment to intentionally harm others.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is reciprocal; both parties participate in the conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is one-sided; one party instigates and perpetuates</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Both parties are responsible for wrongdoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One individual is responsible for wrongdoing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A normal part of growing up and of life. The intent is not to hurt.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The intent is to physically or emotionally hurt someone.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can be fairly resolved by compromise or negotiation. If necessary, a violation of the student code of conduct may be administered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A fair resolution involves a change in behavior of the bully; the target has no concession to make. In addition to any disciplinary action, counseling and other interventions can be used to help insure the student does not harm the victim again. The victim can also receive support and intervention resources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May not be serious; no threat of harm</li> <li>▪ May be accidental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serious with threat of physical or emotional harm</li> <li>▪ Purposefully and calculated</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parties will accept responsibility and show some remorse</li> <li>▪ Social skills building or some type of mediation can help the situation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cannot be resolved with mediation and one party does not openly show remorse</li> </ul>

**What if my concern does not meet the qualification of a HIB violation but is still something that the school should know?**

Parents should always communicate with the school administration regarding concerns that affect their son or daughter.