

Harassment/ Intimidation/ Bullying/Bias Incidents/ Cyber-Bullying/ Sexual Harassment/

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (according to NJ State File Code: 5131.1)

Policy Statement

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying for all students. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe environment; and since pupils 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.

Definition

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any gesture or written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication 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, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus and that:

- a. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student's property or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- 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. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(3)(b)(2) and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.9(a)2ii.

“Electronic communication” means a communication that is transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager, that takes place on school property at any time, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus **OR** at home and consequently causes a disruption in the educational environment in the subsequent school day(s).

Acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may also be a pupil exercising power and control over another pupil, in either isolated incidents (e.g., intimidation, harassment) or patterns of harassing or intimidating behavior (e.g., bullying).

Expected Behavior

The Board expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment, consistent with the code of student conduct.

The Board believes that standards for pupil behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the pupils, staff, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), staff and community members, 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.

The Board believes the best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of school district staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities to help pupils learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with pupils shall apply the best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage pupils' abilities to grow in self-discipline. General guidelines for pupil conduct will be developed by the Superintendent, in conjunction with school staff, and approved by the Board. These guidelines will be developed based on accepted core ethical values from broad community involvement with input from parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and other community representatives, school employees, volunteers, pupils and administrators. These guidelines for pupil conduct will be suited to the age level of the pupils and the mission and physical facilities of the individual school(s) in the district. This Policy requires all pupils in the district to adhere to these rules and guidelines and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infraction of these rules and guidelines.

The district prohibits active and passive support for harassment, intimidation or bullying. Pupils are encouraged to support other pupils who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, and report these acts to the Building Principal or his/her designee.

Pupils are required to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to school district teaching, support and administrative staff. Each school Principal will develop and provide a school-based program for appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship and academic success. The Superintendent will provide annually to pupils and their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) the rules of the district regarding pupil conduct, pupil's due process and other rights. This Policy will appear in all publications of the school district's comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for school(s) within the district, including pupil handbooks. Provisions will be made for informing parent(s) or legal guardian(s) whose primary language is other than English.

Reporting Procedure

Complaints alleging violations of this Policy shall be reported to the Principal or his/her designee appointed as the Safety Team Chairperson. All school employees are required to report in writing, either electronically or hand written, alleged violations of this Policy to the Principal or his/her designee. All other members of the school community, including pupils, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), volunteers and visitors are required to report any act that may be a violation of this Policy. Submission of a written statement is required and the reporting party is encouraged to use the *High School Incident Report Form* available from the Administration/Office. Oral reports will also 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. If the alleged act is determined to have constituted a violation; the policy and consequences will be followed.

The district board of education requires the principal and/or the principal's designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of each alleged incident.

Response to an Incident of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

Some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring the school to respond appropriately to the individual(s) committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation or bullying that require a response either at the classroom, school building or school district level or by law enforcement officials.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for pupils who commit an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils, and as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2, Short-term suspensions, N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3, Long-term suspensions and N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-7.5, Expulsions.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, the administrator will consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the level of harm, the nature of the behavior, past incidences, past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred. The school district's 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. The district's responses may include participation of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and other community members and organizations, to small or large group presentations for fully addressing the actions and the school district's response to the actions in the context of acceptable student behavior or the consequences of such actions and involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers.

False Accusation, Reprisal or Retaliation Prohibited

The district board of education prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Furthermore, the school district prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Cyber-Bullying

“Cyber Bullying” is defined as: the act of communicating harmful, intimidating, violent and/or malicious words and or pictures through the means of technology.

Cyber-bullying is taken very seriously at Roselle Park High School and no form of bullying/harassment/intimidation will be tolerated. Anything that disrupts the normal flow of the day will be investigated by administration and may result in disciplinary action.

In 2007, the cyber-bullying laws in New Jersey were amended to include bullying via “electronic communication.” These laws give additional power to the school system to

enforce bullying-related punishment for actions that may not take place while on school grounds.

Any student who uses cameras, Facebook, Myspace, or any other Internet service or texting device that directly affect or threatens the safety and/or well-being of another student/teacher, will result in disciplinary action by school administration and referral to the Roselle Park Police Department.

Any student found to be posting to Twitter, Facebook, Vine, Instagram or other social media site during school hours will have their phone confiscated by administration and a parent or guardian must pick it up. Habitual offenders will lose the privilege of having a phone in school. Additionally, any student involved in a bullying investigation pertaining to inappropriate comments made on any social media site will be required to turn their phones in at the beginning of each school day and pick it up at the end of each day from the school office. They will lose the privilege of having electronics in school until the investigation is resolved and cleared by the Board of Education.

The school is required by law to look into inappropriate postings on social media sights. If a child can not say anything nice, do not say anything at all. All information posted on any social media site that the school deems inappropriate will be reported to local authorities.

Acceptable Use Policy - The Internet

Technology is used to support teaching and learning. Networks, including the Internet, allow people to communicate with others through the use of technology. It is the policy of the Roselle Park Schools that all technology used to access the Internet will be used in a responsible, legal and ethical manner. Failure to do so will result in the termination of Internet privileges for the user. Remember, the use of the network is a privilege, not an entitlement.

Since Internet communication is often public, staff and students are responsible for behaving appropriately on the network, as they are in school. The Internet is provided for student and faculty to conduct research and communicate with others concerning schoolwork.

Individual users of the Internet are responsible for their use of the Internet. The use of the Internet must be in support of both education and research and must be consistent with academic actions of the Roselle Park Schools and will be under the supervision of Roselle Park staff. Use of other organizations networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Use of the network for any illegal or commercial activities is prohibited.

A responsible Internet user will:

- Use language that is considered appropriate
- Be polite
- Send information that other users will not find offensive
- Conform with copyright laws
- Never reveal personal information about any user such as address, telephone number, credit card numbers, social security number, etc.
- Never tamper with the system
- Never alter, delete or destroy any files or data that is not the user's

A responsible Internet user must be aware that:

- Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right.
- E-mail is not guaranteed to be private
- Violation of this policy will result in the possible loss of Internet privileges, or where appropriate, disciplinary action
- Persons issued an account are responsible for its use at all times

Some appropriate uses of the Internet are:

- Researching classroom projects
- Communicating with other students and educators throughout the world
- Visiting foreign countries

NOTE: Students deemed habitual offenders of the Internet Policy will be Suspended, as determined by the Administration.

