



Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

The New Jersey legislature has passed an act concerning bullying behavior in schools. Consistent with this law, we are asking that parents/guardians immediately inform school personnel (e.g., your child's teacher, school administrator) of suspected bullying behavior directed against your child or another child. This law defines "bullying" as any repeated overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, harass or intimidate the other student while on school grounds including on school buses or at school sponsored activities. Inclusive in this new law is text messaging. If a student texts anything that can be construed as harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, your son/daughter may be reported to school administration and/or local law enforcement.

You may formally notify the school personnel in writing or feel free to call your School Administrator. I have attached the form that can be used and downloaded on www.hcesc.com. It is also important for you to know that, consistent with this law, your child may anonymously report acts of bullying to our teachers, other educational personnel (e.g., school social worker) and/or school administrators.

When possible, please encourage your son/daughter to make such reports if they feel they have been bullied or if they have witnessed another student being bullied. Bullying behavior is prohibited by our student discipline policy/codes of conduct and may lead to disciplinary action, including suspension from school (or in more severe cases, expulsion by your child's school district).

The new proposed law requires us to notify parents/guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents/guardians of students against whom such acts were directed. We are aware that incidents of bullying are rarely committed in view of supervising adults. Victims are most vulnerable in situations beyond the eyes of staff, such as the playground, buses, restrooms, and bus stops. The most likely adult to be informed by a victim is the parent.

Parents are often reluctant to inform the school due to the student's fear of retaliation. Without parent input, the school personnel will be uninformed and unable to intervene to stop this behavior. It is vital that school staff and parents continue to work together to protect the safe environment of our school programs.

Sincerely,

Marie Kisch
Superintendent