

**Parent Tutorial on the**  
*Anti-bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR)*

**Part 4: Harassment, Intimidation and  
Bullying (HIB) Intervention**

## About this tutorial...

- This is the fourth of four tutorials designed to help parents understand *the Anti-bullying Bill of Rights Act*. Part 1 provides information on the requirements in the ABR. Part 2 focuses on some HIB issues. Part 3 addresses HIB prevention.
- This tutorial is intended to help parents with children in public schools understand the requirements in the ABR for HIB intervention and to learn strategies for responding to HIB incidents.
- This tutorial is organized in a question and answer format.
- The following topics are covered in this tutorial:
  - The role of parents in HIB intervention.
  - The HIB definition in the ABR.
  - The effects of HIB.

## Tutorial, cont.

- These topics are also covered:
  - Children who are at-risk for being bullied and for bullying others.
  - Signs that a child is being bullied or is bullying others.
  - Responding to electronic HIB.
  - Ideas for parents to address HIB incidents.
  - Required school, school district and board of education responses to HIB incidents.
- Each tutorial includes resources and questions to test your knowledge.

# Introduction

- The ABR requires specific school procedures for identifying and intervening with HIB behavior.
- Reductions in HIB can happen in schools where teachers and students are willing to intervene with HIB, treat each other fairly and care about how all students are treated.
- Parents, students and school staff should know the signs of HIB and the procedures for intervening with HIB to be sure that students are protected.

## What is the role of parents in addressing bullying?

- Parents who are concerned about HIB should be armed with information on their rights and ideas for positive actions.
- Parents can use this information to keep an eye on the procedures for HIB investigations.

## What is the HIB definition in the ABR?

- It is important to understand the type of behavior that is considered HIB under the ABR. The ABR only applies to HIB as it is defined below:
- HIB means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or series of incidents, that:
  - Is reasonably perceived as being motivated 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 disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and
  - Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or off school grounds as provided for in *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3*; and

## HIB Definition, cont.

- Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students, and that:
- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, 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; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

# What can I do if I think my child is being bullied?

- Approach your child in a calm manner.
  - Express concern and be clear that you want to help.
  - Ask questions about the incident(s) and keep a record of “where” and “when” it occurred and “who” was involved.
  - Work together to find solutions by asking your child for his or her input.
- Ask for help from school staff (the principal or assistant principal, the school anti-bullying specialist, a school counselor or a teacher) and cooperate with them to resolve the concerns.

# What can I do if I think my child is being bullied electronically?

## Cyberbullying

If you know or suspect your child is being cyberbullied, take quick action, such as:

- **Talking with your child.** Do not ignore the bullying problem or hope it will go away. Tell your child that you are concerned and that you would like to help.
- **Telling your child not to respond to cyberbullying.** Responding can sometimes make the situation worse.
- **Empathizing with your child.** Tell your child that cyberbullying is wrong, that it is not their fault if they are being bullied, and that you are glad he or she had the courage to tell you about it. Do not assume that your child did something to cause the bullying. For instance, do not ask things such as “What did you do to make Mary mad?”

## Electronic bullying, cont.

- **Working together to find solutions.** Ask your child for his or her ideas on keeping the bullying from happening and assure him or her that the situation can be handled.
- **Documenting ongoing cyberbullying.** Work with your child to record bullying incidents. Write down answers to the following questions: What happened? Where did it happen? Who was involved? When did it happen? Find out the way your child reacted and the ways the bullies, bystanders and adults reacted. Keep all evidence; do not destroy files.
- **Blocking the person who is cyberbullying your children.** Many websites and phone companies allow you to block people. Cyberbullying often goes against the terms of service established by social media sites and internet service providers. Consider filing a complaint.

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## Electronic bullying, cont.

- **Contacting law enforcement.** Police can respond if the behavior involves a criminal offense. The following are examples of crimes that might be associated with cyberbullying:
  - Threats of violence;
  - Child pornography and “sexting;”
  - Taking a photo image of someone in a place where he or she would expect privacy;
  - Harassment, stalking or hate crimes;
  - Obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages; and
  - Extortion.
  
- **Being Persistent.** Talk regularly with your child to see whether the cyberbullying has stopped. If the bullying continues or gets worse, you may need to contact the appropriate people again or talk with a lawyer. Do not give up.

## What should I do if I think my child may be bullying others?

- Speak calmly with your child; be objective and listen.
- Be clear that you view bullying as a serious matter.
- Set and enforce clear and consistent rules and fair consequences for your child's behavior.
- Develop strategies in collaboration with the school to prevent future HIB incidents.
- Talk with a professional about additional help for you and your child.
- Spend more time with your child.
- Know your child's friends.
- Build on your child's strengths and positive qualities.

## Who should I contact at my child's school for help?

- Contact the building principal or the school's anti-bullying specialist (ABS). The ABS' contact information is required to be posted on the school's website. This information also can be found on the NJDOE's website at:  
<http://www.education.state.nj.us/directory>.
- Your child's teacher or school counselor also can help.

# School Responsibilities for HIB Complaints

This page and the next page include summaries of the school's and district's reporting and investigation responsibilities.

**1. Principal receives HIB report.**

**2. Principal notifies parents of suspected student offenders and victims.**

**3. Principal receives written report from staff who first reported.**

**4. Anti-bullying specialist investigates the report.**  
- Started within 1 day of the first report -  
- Completed within 10 days of the written report -

**5. Investigation results reported to the superintendent.**

# School District Responsibilities for HIB Complaints

**1. Superintendent may decide to take other actions based on the investigation report.**

**2. Superintendent reports results to board of education (BOE) at its meeting after the investigation is completed.**

**3. Superintendent provides parents with information from the investigation.**  
**- Within 5 days of the report to BOE -**

**4. Parent may request BOE hearing.**  
**- Held within 10 days of request -**

**5. BOE issues written decision to support, disagree or change the superintendent's decision.**  
**- At the meeting after the superintendent's report -**

# If my child is involved in a HIB incident, how can I expect the school to respond?

## *The Path of a HIB Complaint*

School administrators must apply the steps in the ABR and in the BOE's HIB and other policies. These actions are summarized below:

- ***Verbal Report*** – School staff are required to make a verbal report on the same day the HIB is observed or information is received.
  - The principal must take action to protect students and implement the BOE's policies and procedures.
- ***Parent Notification*** – The principal must inform parents of suspected HIB offenders and suspected victims.
- ***Written Report*** – The staff member making the verbal report must submit a written report within two school days of the verbal report.

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## School Response

- ***Investigation*** – An investigation must be started by the principal or his or her designee within one school day of the verbal report.
  - The investigation must be carried out by the ABS in cooperation with the principal and other staff appointed by the principal.
  
- ***Investigation Report*** – A written investigation report must be completed within 10 school days of the written report of the incident.
  - The written report must be submitted to the CSA within two school days that the investigation ended.

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# School District Response

## ➤ *Chief School Administrator (CSA) Report*

- The CSA must do the following:
  - Consider other appropriate actions, based on the report.
  - Report the results of the investigation to the BOE at its regularly scheduled meeting after the end of the investigation.
  - Provide parents with the following information, in writing, within five school days of the report:
    - The nature of the investigation;
    - Whether evidence of HIB was found; and
    - Whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the HIB.

# Board of Education Response

If a parent has concerns either about the way a HIB case was handled by the school; or he or she has information to give to the board of education (BOE); or he or she wants the opportunity to be heard by the BOE:

- The parent may request a **hearing** before the BOE.
  - The hearing must be held within 10 days of the request.
  - The hearing must take place in executive session.
  
- The BOE must issue a written decision at the regularly scheduled BOE meeting following its receipt of the CSA's report.
  - The decision must affirm, reject or modify the CSA's decision.

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## *Optional Parent Actions*

- If a parent's concerns have not been resolved, he or she may contact the county office of education for assistance. The county office can investigate complaints of non-compliance with the ABR and the BOE's HIB policy. The directory of county offices of education can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/counties>.
- A parent may **appeal** a BOE decision to the Commissioner of Education no later than 90 days after the BOE decision.
- A parent may file a complaint with the Division on Civil Rights, New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety within 180 days of the occurrence of HIB based on membership in a protected group.
- A parent may file an appeal of the Commissioner of Education's decision with the Appellate Division of the Superior Court.
- Information on these options can be found in Chapter 3 of the NJDOE's [Guidance for Schools on Implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act](http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/guidance.pdf).
- <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/guidance.pdf>

## What types of school responses to HIB incidents are required?

The ABR requires a *range of responses to be used*. The responses are determined by the BOE, and implemented, as appropriate, by the principal in cooperation with the ABS.

- The responses must include an appropriate combination of counseling, support services, intervention services and other programs.
- The responses must include both *remedial actions* and *consequences* that take into account the seriousness of the offenses and consider the developmental ages of the offenders and their histories of problem behaviors and performance.
- Schools are encouraged to develop and implement a range of responses that include individual, classroom, school and district responses.

## Final Points

- HIB intervention responses should be swift, fair and consistently enforced.
- These responses should be guided by the BOE's HIB policy, which must be made available each year to parents.
- School efforts that are developed among parents, community members, students and staff is an effective way to reduce HIB incidents.
- Your children can benefit from a positive working relationship between you and school staff .

# Where can additional information on the ABR and HIB be found?

- The NJDOE's resources on HIB can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/>.
- The NJDOE's resources on the ABR can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/#si>.  
These resources include:
  - [\*Anti-bullying Bill of Rights Act\*](#).
  - [\*Questions and Answers Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act P.L.2010, c.122\*](#).
  - *Guidance for Schools on Implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/guidance.pdf>.
- Contact and additional information is available on the Division on Civil Rights Website at [www.NJCivilRights.gov](http://www.NJCivilRights.gov).

# Resources

- The following resources include information on the prevention of HIB:
  - StopBullying.Gov – A federal government website managed by the [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#) 200 Independence Avenue, S.W. - Washington, D.C. 2020,1 <http://www.stopbullying.gov/> .
  - Cyberbullying Research Center, <http://www.cyberbullying.us/>.
  - National Parent Teacher Association – The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) provides parents and families tools to help their children be safe, healthy, and successful in school and in life, <http://pta.org/bullying.asp> .
  - [Guidance for Schools on Implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act](#) - This document provided by the New Jersey Department of Education includes information on best practices for HIB prevention, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/guidance.pdf>.

# Test

## For the Tutorial on Intervention for Parents

- On the following slides are 10 true or false statements designed to test your knowledge of key points made in this tutorial.
- A slide with each true or false statement is followed by a slide that includes:
  - The true or false answer;
  - An explanation for the answer; and
  - The associated slide number in the tutorial.

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# Test Your Knowledge

## Parent Tutorial on Intervention

1. The ABR requires specific procedures for reporting and intervening with HIB.

True or False?

*(Answer on next slide.)*

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# Test Your Knowledge

## Parent Tutorial on Intervention

**1. True.**

See slides #4 and #14 – #19.

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

2. HIB can be reduced in schools when teachers and students are willing to intervene with HIB, treat each other fairly and care about how all students are treated.

True or False?  
*(Answer on next slide.)*

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# Test Your Knowledge

## Parent Tutorial on Intervention

**2. True.**

See slide #4.

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

3. The definition of HIB in the ABR is irrelevant. What matters is how my child is affected by an HIB incident.

True or False?

*(Answer on next slide.)*

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

#### 3. **False.**

The requirements in the ABR only apply to HIB as it is defined in the ABR. However, when bullying and other student behavior of concern occurs, codes of student conduct and other BOE policies apply.

See slides #6 and #7.

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

4. If you think your child is being bullied, wait until he or she comes to you about the problem.

True or False?

*(Answer on next slide.)*

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

#### 4. **False.**

If you think your child is being bullied, approach the concern with your child in a calm manner. Express concern and be clear that you want to help.

See slide #8.

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

5. If you think your child is bullying others, the best thing to do is to bully him or her to show your child how it feels to be bullied.

True or False?

*(Answer on next slide.)*

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

#### 5. **False.**

Speak calmly with your child, be objective and listen. Be clear that bullying is a serious matter. Set and enforce clear and consistent rules and fair consequences for your child's behavior.

See slide #12.

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

6. If your child is being cyberbullied, it is important to keep records of these bullying incidents.

True or False?

*(Answer on next slide.)*

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# Test Your Knowledge

## Parent Tutorial on Intervention

### 6. **True.**

It is important to keep as much evidence as possible. Do not destroy files.

See slide #10.

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

7. If I need help with an HIB incident involving my child, I should contact the building principal or the school anti-bullying specialist (ABS).

True or False?

*(Answer on next slide.)*

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# Test Your Knowledge

## Parent Tutorial on Intervention

**7. True.**

See slide #13.

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

8. The principal should not contact parents about a report of their children's involvement in a HIB incident until the investigation is ended.

True or False?  
*(Answer on next slide.)*

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

#### 8. **False.**

The principal is required to inform the parents of suspected HIB offenders and suspected victims at the time a HIB incident is reported.

See slide #14.

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# Test Your Knowledge

## Parent Tutorial on Intervention

9. HIB investigations are carried out by the ABS in cooperation with principal.

True or False?  
*(Answer on next slide.)*

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# Test Your Knowledge

## Parent Tutorial on Intervention

**9. True.**

See slide #17.

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

10. Only consequences are required to be imposed for a person who commits an act of HIB.

True or False?

*(Answer on next slide.)*

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## Test Your Knowledge

### Parent Tutorial on Intervention

#### 10. **False.**

The ABR requires the responses to include *remedial actions and consequences*. These actions must take into account the seriousness of the offenses and consider the developmental ages of the offenders and their histories of problem behaviors and performance.

See slide #21.

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