

SOMERSET HILLS SCHOOL
Policy Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

The Somerset Hills School Board and School Administrators prohibit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the Somerset Hills Schools' ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Since students learn by example, all administrators, staff and volunteers shall be accountable for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation and bullying. Further, all Somerset Hills' school personnel will be responsible for adhering to the following procedures, as per N.J.S.A. 18A: 37-15 (3)(b)(1).

N.J.S.A. 18A: 37-14 defines harassment, intimidation, or bullying as any gesture, or written (which includes cyber-bullying), verbal, or physical act, 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, a mental, physical or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, or because of a power differential 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)

The Somerset Hills School Board and School Administrators expect students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

Standards for student behavior will be determined cooperatively with students, parents/guardians, staff and community members to encourage students to grow in self-discipline. Behavioral expectations will be:

1. Outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Posted in each classroom and common places within the school.
3. Provided to parents/guardians.

Acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying as well as any active or passive support of these behaviors will be handled in accordance with the Somerset Hills School's behavioral management plan, which details the consequences and appropriate remedial actions for infractions of the School's Code of Conduct. Consequences are dependent upon the developmental levels of the involved parties, the level of harm, context and circumstances of the offense and consideration of possible prior offences.

Standard Somerset Hills School policy for investigating and reporting behavioral incidents will be followed in cases of harassment, intimidation and bullying. The behavioral Incident Report form will be used for reporting by staff. Students may verbally report incidents to any staff member and may remain anonymous if they so desire. The staff member will then report to their supervisor. A thorough investigation will be conducted of all reports promptly.

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying will be strictly prohibited and consequences and remedial action will be determined in accordance to our behavioral management plan, which may range from positive behavioral interventions on up to and including in-school suspension.

Consequences and remedial action for false accusations used as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying will be determined in accordance to our behavioral management criteria.

This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students and parents/guardians with a letter explaining that it applies to all acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions or on a school bus.

This policy will be included in the annual classroom discussions of school and classroom policies, rules and student code of conduct led by each classroom teacher at the start of the school year. Each student will be required to sign a form which indicates they have been fully informed of all school and classroom policies, rules and the student code of conduct and their intent to comply with such.

This policy will be included in the review of all school policies and procedures conducted annually prior to the start of the new school year with all school staff. Each staff member will be required to sign a form indicating they have been fully informed and will comply with the policies as set forth.

Somerset Hills School will provide on-going training and in-services to all staff members incorporating Bullying & Harassment workshops, Social Skills training, Conflict Resolution, and Character Education.