



Revised August 2022

A. Dating Violence at School (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.23a)

Sage Alliance believes in creating a safe, small, therapeutic and academically challenging community of learning for all students. A student who is a victim of dating violence suffers academically and the student's safety at school is jeopardized. Acts or incidents of dating violence at school whether they are verbal, sexual, physical, or emotional will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with the Sage Alliance Code of Conduct.

All school staff members (administrative staff, instructional staff, clinical staff and volunteers) shall take all reasonable measures to prevent acts or incidents of dating violence at school involving a student. All acts or incidents of dating violence at school shall be reported to the Clinical Director or designee. A verbal report shall be made to the Clinical Director or designee as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the student's school day when the staff member witnesses or learns of an act or incident of dating violence at school. The reporting staff member shall submit a written report regarding the act or incident to the Clinical Director or designee no later than one day after the act or incident occurs.

School staff members are required to report all acts or incidents of dating violence at school they witness or upon receiving reliable information concerning acts or incidents of dating violence at school. Acts or incidents may include, but are not limited to: those characterized by physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse; digital or electronic acts or incidents of dating violence; and/or patterns of behavior which are threatening or controlling.

Dating violence statements and investigations shall be kept in files separate from student academic and discipline records to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of confidential information. Every act or incident of dating violence at school that is reported shall be documented in an appropriate manner. This should include statements, planning actions and disciplinary measures as well as counseling and other support resources that are offered and prescribed to the victim or aggressor.

School administrators shall implement discipline and remedial procedures to address acts or incidents of dating violence at school consistent with the Sage Alliance Student Code of Conduct. The policies and procedures specific to acts or incidents of dating violence at school shall be used to address the act or incident as well as serve as remediation, intervention, education, and prevention for all individuals involved. The responses shall be

tiered with consideration given to the seriousness and the number of previous occurrences of acts or incidents in which both the victim and alleged aggressor have been involved.

Consequences may include, but are not limited to: admonishment, temporary removal from the classroom, classroom or administrative detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, reports to law enforcement, reports to DCPD, and/or termination of placement. Retaliation towards the victim of any act or incident of dating violence shall be considered when administering consequences to the alleged aggressor based on the severity of the act or incident. Given the complexity of dating violence situations, site administrators shall consult with the RVP of Operations in planning their responses.

Remediation/intervention may include, but is not limited to: parent conferences, student counseling (all students involved in the act or incident), peer support groups, corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experiences, supportive student services, behavioral management plans, and/or alternative placements.

A pattern of behaviors may be an important sign a student is involved in an unhealthy or abusive dating relationship. The Board of Directors shall make available to students and their families information on safe, appropriate, family, peer, and community resources available to address dating violence. Upon written request to the principal, a parent/guardian shall be permitted to examine the dating violence education program materials developed by Sage Alliance.

The Board of Directors shall incorporate age-appropriate dating violence education in grades seven through twelve through the health education curriculum in alignment with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Health and Physical Education. The educational program shall include, but is not limited to, a definition of dating violence, recognizing the warning signs of dating violence, and the characteristics of a healthy relationship.

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B. Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Prevention Policy

A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation or bullying (“HIB”), like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers at Sage Alliance should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate HIB. (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 to -19).

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-31, the State encourages all nonpublic schools to comply with the provisions of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 *et seq.* (“Act”). In accordance with this statute, Sage Alliance prohibits all acts of HIB, and adopts the following

HIB procedures, which are based upon the provisions of the Act. School employees are expected to adhere to all aspects of the policy contained herein, to enforce all aspects of the policy contained herein and to model appropriate conduct at all times.

Definition of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, 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 disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that: (1) 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; (2) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or (3) 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. In determining whether certain conduct meets this definition, staff are encouraged to take into consideration the fact that bullying is considered “unwanted, aggressive behavior that may involve a real or perceived power imbalance.”

The definition of HIB shall include incidents occurring on a sending district board of education bus, at a sending district board of education school sponsored event, or off school grounds. If Sage Alliance becomes aware of an incident occurring on a sending district board of education bus, at a sending district board of education school sponsored event, or off school grounds, the incident will be reported by the principal to the appropriate administrators of the sending school district (verbally the same day as reliable information was received about the incident and in writing within two school days) so that Sage Alliance and the sending district can decide whether an investigation will be most effectively conducted by Sage Alliance or by the sending district. Notwithstanding this collaboration, in circumstances where the off-school conduct involves Sage Alliance students from different sending school districts, Sage Alliance reserves the right to conduct its own investigation into any incident occurring on a sending district board of education bus, at a sending district board of education school-sponsored event, or off school grounds in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3.

In the event that any incident meeting the definition of HIB is deemed to materially and substantially interfere with the requirement of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school, the individual(s) involved in such incident shall be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial action to the extent reasonably necessary to protect the physical or emotional safety, security and/or well-being of any student, staff member or school

grounds. It must be emphasized that the definition of HIB includes communications and gestures made via any type of electronic device or medium.

Anti-Bullying Chain of Command

The RVP will appoint a Sage Alliance Anti-Bullying Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating and strengthening Sage Alliance HIB policies and providing data regarding the same. The Principal at each site shall receive all initial reports of HIB and shall ensure that investigations are completed within the ten (10) school day timeframe set forth in the Act, unless the Principal determines that the facts reported, if deemed true, could not constitute an act of HIB. The Principal at each site shall also appoint an Anti-Bullying Specialist who will lead the investigation of incidents/allegations of HIB and be the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and addressing incidents of HIB in the school.

Each school will form a school safety/school climate team comprised of the principal, teacher, therapist and parent* in the school with the school anti-bullying specialist who will serve as the chairperson. This team will:

- Receive copies of complaints and investigation reports on HIB.
- Identify patterns of HIB in the school,
- Participate in training on HIB
- Strengthen the school's policy on HIB.

***Since parents are part of the school safety/school climate team, the Act protects the privacy rights of students by limiting the participation of parent members of school safety/school climate teams to the activities of the team which do not involve confidential matters involving students.**

Anti-Bullying General Protocols

At administrative meetings once before, and once after January 1, the Anti-Bullying Coordinator will report on acts of violence, vandalism and HIB which occurred during the previous reporting period, including the number of incidents of bullying and the discipline imposed, and all HIB programs and training with breakdown by school. Once during each reporting period, the RVP of Operations may submit to the Department of Education both school wide HIB data and a categorical breakdown of HIB by school.

The week of the first Monday in October each year will be designated as a "Week of Respect" by providing age appropriate instruction on HIB instruction.

School administrators shall develop and implement procedures that ensure both appropriate consequences and remedial responses to a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. In determining the appropriate consequences, school administrators shall consider the following factors:

the age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved, the levels of harm, the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behaviors, past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved, the levels of harm, the surrounding circumstances the nature of the behaviors, past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred and the nature of the student's disability, if any, and the extent to which this disability is relevant. In determining appropriate remedial measures, school administrators shall consider the personal and environmental factors surrounding the incident.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of HIB may be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. This may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or termination. In all cases, Sage Alliance will attempt to actively involve parents in the remediation of behavior (s) of concern.

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.b(4), the consequences for a student who commits a act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may vary depending on whether it is the first act of harassment, intimidation or buying by a student, the second act, or third or subsequent acts. If it is the third or subsequent act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying by a student, the Principal, in consultation with appropriate school staff, shall develop an individual student intervention plan which shall be approved the RVP of Operations, or designee, and may require the student, accompanied by a parent, to complete in a satisfactory manner a class or training program to reduce harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior.

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

Reporting an Act of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

At each school, the Principal is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Principal verbally on the same day when the individual witnessed or received reliable information regarding the incident and in writing within two school days of the incident on a numbered form developed by the NJDOE. A copy of the form shall be promptly submitted by the Principal to the RVP of Operations. The form shall be completed even if a preliminary determination is made that the incident is outside the definition of HIB. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers and visitors, shall report any act that may be a violation of this policy. The principal shall keep a written record of the date, time, and manner of notification to the parents/guardians on a numbered form developed by the NJDOE. A copy of the form shall be promptly submitted by the Principal to the RVP of Operations. Oral reports also shall be considered official reports, but they should be supplemented by written reports where possible. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal

disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Sage Alliance will provide a means to complete an online form for confidential reporting of HIB.

HIB Procedures

1. After notifying the staff member, or the parents or guardians of the students involved, the Principal shall ensure that the Anti-Bullying Specialist conducts an investigation in consultation with the Principal. However, before referring the matter to the Anti-Bullying Specialist for an investigation, the Principal may, in consultation with the Anti-Bullying Specialist, make a preliminary determination as to whether, assuming all facts reported are deemed true, a reported incident or complaint could be considered an act of HIB. If the principal fails to report an incident that could be considered HIB if all facts reported are deemed true, he or she may be subject to discipline.
2. The Principal shall report to the RVP of Operations if a preliminary determination is made that the reported incident or complaint is a report outside the scope of the definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The RVP of Operations may require the Principal to conduct an investigation of the incident if the Direction of Operations determines that an investigation is necessary because the incident is within the scope of the definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The RVP of Operations shall notify the Principal of this determination in writing. An investigation required by the RVP of Operations must be completed as soon as possible, but not later than ten school days from the date of the written notification from the RVP of Operations to the Principal.
3. A school administrator who receives a report of HIB, or who determines a reported incident or complaint, assuming all facts presented are true, is a valid HIB report, but fails to initiate or conduct an investigation, or who should have known of an incident of HIB and fails to take sufficient action to minimize or eliminate the HIB, may be subject to disciplinary action.
4. The Anti-Bullying Specialist may appoint additional personnel to assist in the investigation.
5. The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than ten (10) school days from the date of the written report of the incident of HIB, if there is one, or ten (10) school days from the processing of an official oral report.
In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated but not yet received by the end of the ten (10) school day period, the Anti-Bullying Specialist may amend the original report to reflect the information.
6. The result of the investigation shall be reported to the RVP of Operations within two days of the completion of the investigation.
7. The RVP of Operations may decide to provide intervention services, establish training programs to reduce HIB and enhance school climate,

- impose discipline, order counseling as a result of the findings of the investigation, or take or recommend other appropriate action.
8. The principal shall report to the appropriate sending district board(s) of education the following: (1) the students who are parties to the HIB investigation, (2) the results of each investigation; and (3) information on any service(s) provided, training establishing, and/or discipline imposed. This report shall be made no later than two (2) school days following the investigation's completion.
 9. Parents or legal guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation shall be entitled to receive information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation, including the nature of the investigation, whether the school found evidence of HIB or whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the incident of HIB. The information shall be provided in writing within five (5) school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the RVP of Operations.
 10. The parent or legal guardian may request a hearing before the RVP of Operations after receiving the information.
 - a. This hearing shall be held within ten (10) days of the request.
 - b. At the hearing the RVP of Operations may hear from the Anti-Bullying Specialist about the incident, recommendations for discipline or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such incidents.
 11. A parent, student, legal guardian, or organization may file a complaint with the Division of Civil Rights within one hundred eighty days of the occurrence of any incident of HIB Based on membership in a protected group as enumerated in "Law Against Discrimination."
 12. RVP of Operations shall review annually to the information on the number of times a preliminary determination was made that an incident or complaint was outside the scope of the definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.
 13. A redacted copy of the completed written report form developed by the New Jersey Department of Education that removes all student identification information shall be confidentially shared with the RVP of Operations after the conclusion of the investigation if a hearing with the RVP of Operations is requested by the parents.

Responses to HIB

Some acts of HIB may be isolated incidents requiring that the school respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation or bullying that they require a response at the classroom, school building or school-wide levels, or by law enforcement officials.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to

and including suspension or termination from Sage Alliance. When determining the appropriate remedial action and consequences for a student who commits HIB, Sage Alliance will take into account the nature of the student's disability, if any, and the extent to which this disability is relevant.

Moreover, in recognition that parental notification could inadvertently result in the "outing" of students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, Sage Alliance will take into account the circumstances of the incident when providing notification to parents, and when conveying the nature of the incident, including the actual or perceived protected category motivating the alleged offense.

Classroom responses can include class discussions about an incident of HIB, role plays, research projects, observing and discussing audio-visual materials on these subjects and skill-building lessons in courtesy, tolerance, assertiveness and conflict management. School responses can include theme days, learning station programs, parent programs and information disseminated to students and parents. school-wide responses can include community involvement in policy review and development, professional development programs, adoption of curricula and coordination with community-based organizations (e.g., mental health, health services, health facilities, law enforcement, faith-based).

In addition, Staff Clinicians are available to provide support to individual victims of HIB, and are trained to respond in a manner that does not stigmatize victim(s). Social skills training can be provided for all students as a response for addressing victimization.

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

Since some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be bias-related acts and potentially hate or bias crimes, school officials must report to law enforcement officials either serious acts or those which may be part of a larger pattern.

Retaliation or Reprisals for Reporting Acts of HIB Prohibited

Sage Alliance prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of HIB. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature

and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, federal and state statutes and regulations and Sage Alliance policies and procedures.

A school employee, student, or volunteer shall not engage in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness or one with reliable information about an act of HIB.

Consequences for False Accusation of HIB

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspensions or termination from the Sage Alliance. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with Sage Alliance policies, procedures, and agreements. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have falsely accused another as a means of HIB shall be determined by the RVP of Operation after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

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Additional Resource

The RVP of Operations shall post the contact information for the New Jersey School Climate State Coordinator on Sage Alliance websites in the same location as this Policy is posted.

The RVP of Operations shall post on Sage Alliance website the current version of “Guidance for Parents on the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act” developed by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Reports to Law Enforcement

The RVP of Operations and the Principal shall consult law enforcement, as appropriate, pursuant to the provisions of the Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials, if the student’s behavior may constitute a possible violation of the New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice.

Some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be bias-related acts and potentially bias crimes and school officials must report to law enforcement officials any bias related acts, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6.3(e), either serious acts or those which may be part of a larger pattern in accordance with and pursuant to the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials.

