

POLICY GUIDE

RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OPERATIONS
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8465 Hate Crimes and Bias-Related Acts (M)

8465 HATE CRIMES AND BIAS-RELATED ACTS

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children in the school district. Hate crimes and bias-related acts involving pupils can lead to further violence and retaliation. Hate crimes and bias-related acts, by their nature are confrontational, inflame tensions, and promote social hostility and will not be tolerated by the school district. The school district employees will work closely with local law enforcement and the county prosecutor's office to report or eliminate the commission of hate crimes and bias-related acts.

Definitions

A "hate crime" is any criminal offense where the person or persons committing the offense acted with a purpose to intimidate an individual or group of individuals because of race, color, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.

A "bias-related act" is an act directed at a person, group of persons, private property, or public property that is motivated in whole or part by racial, gender, disability, religion or sexual orientation, or ethnic prejudice. A bias-related act need not involve conduct that constitutes a criminal offense. All hate crimes are also bias-related acts, but not all bias-related acts will constitute a hate crime.

Required Actions

Whenever any school employee in the course of his/her employment develops reason to believe that (1) a hate crime has been committed or is about to be committed on school property, or has been or is about to be committed by any pupil, whether on or off school property and whether or not such offense was or is about to be committed during operating school hours, or (2) a pupil enrolled in the school has been or is about to become the victim of a hate crime, whether committed on or off school property or during operating school hours, the school employee shall immediately notify the Building Principal and Superintendent, who in turn shall notify the River Vale Police Department and Bias Investigation Officer for the county prosecutor's office. The Principal shall notify the River Vale Police Department and the county prosecutor's office immediately if there is reason to believe that a hate crime that involves an act of violence has been or is about to be physically committed against a pupil or there is otherwise reason to believe that a life has been or will be threatened.

Whenever any school employee in the course of his/her employment has reason to believe that a bias-related act has been committed or is about to be committed on school property, or has been or is about to be committed by any pupil, whether on or off school property and whether or not such bias-related act was or is to be committed during operating school hours, the school employee should immediately notify the Building Principal and Superintendent, who in turn should promptly notify the River Vale Police Department.

In deciding whether to refer the matter of a bias-related act to the River Vale Police Department or the county prosecutor's office, the Building Principal and the Superintendent, should consider the nature and seriousness of the conduct and the risk that the conduct posed to the health, safety and well-being of any pupil, school employee or member of the general public. The Building Principal and Superintendent should also consider the possibility that the suspected bias-related act could escalate or result in some form of retaliation which might occur within or outside school property.

It is understood a referral to the River Vale Police Department or county prosecutor's office is only a transmittal of information that might be pertinent to a law enforcement investigation and is not an accusation or formal charge.

Unless the River Vale Police Department or the county prosecutor's office request otherwise, the school district may continue to investigate a suspected hate crime or bias-related act occurring on school property and may take such actions as necessary and appropriate to redress and remediate any such acts.

School officials will secure and preserve any such graffiti or other evidence of a suspected hate crime or bias-related act pending the arrival of the River Vale Police Department or the county prosecutor's office. The school officials, when feasible, will cover or conceal such evidence until the arrival of the River Vale Police Department or county prosecutor's office.

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6.1 et seq.; 6A:16-6.3(e)
State Memorandum of Agreement approved by the Department
of Law & Public Safety and the Department of Education

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