



Midland Park Public Schools

# WEEK OF RESPECT

OCTOBER 5-9, 2020

OCTOBER 2020



Take Action Peer Leaders 2019

## ANTI-BULLYING BILL OF RIGHTS LEGISLATION

BY DR. MARIE CIRASELLA - SUPERINTENDENT

The New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) website provides information for parents with regard to Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) and our state's Anti-Bullying Statute (ABS), "The ABS was established in March 2012 as part of an amendment to, the "Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act," (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13.2)...offering guidance to the NJDOE for educators, principals, chief administrators, anti-bullying specialists, anti-bullying coordinators, and others in the field regarding a clearer understanding of the complexities in the ABR."

In these challenging times for public education, we know that addressing incidents of HIB in virtual capacities is yet another dimension of this critical work. Our district collaborates with students, staff, and community partners to develop a greater understanding of what accurately defines HIB incidents and those which are more correctly addressed under the student Code of Conduct.

Keeping students safe while online is a primary objective and to help support parents with reinforcing online safety practices, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) provides important information to answer the question, "What is the best way to protect your kids online?"

The FTC emphasizes that talking to your children is the first and best way to help them with online safety practices, noting, "While kids value the opinions of their peers, most tend to rely on their parents for help on the issues that matter most."

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### October 5th

"Week of Respect"  
Motivational Morning  
Announcements (K-12)

#### October 7th

Keynote Presentation  
(Virtual)  
By Mr. David J. Flood (7-12)

#### October 8th

"Do the Right Thing" Assembly  
Highland School

FTC resources may be found on this link:  
<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0002-parents>

This year, we reaffirm our shared commitment to ensuring all incidents, whether identified as HIB or Code of Conduct violations, are swiftly and appropriately addressed. Ongoing staff training, survey analyses, and the support of our School Safety Committees, make our district schools instructional environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and welcomed.

For more information on HIB and the ABS, please refer to the NJDOE website:  
<https://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib>

Harassment, intimidation and bullying are serious offenses that will not be tolerated in the Midland Park Public Schools. To report an incident of alleged harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, please contact the school principal, the school's Anti-Bullying Specialist, and/or the District Anti-Bullying Coordinator. Contact information for these staff members may be found on our district website: [www.mpsnj.org](http://www.mpsnj.org)



## A MESSAGE FROM MR. CRAIG RUSH DISTRICT ANTI-BULLYING COORDINATOR

We are entering our tenth school year since the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act was signed into law. Our school district continues its mission to maintain a climate that fosters a caring and inclusive community for all of our students.

In 2011, Midland Park Public Schools set the goal to become a New Jersey school of excellence in the area of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) prevention. For many years, the district partnered with Dr. Paula Rodriguez-Rust, Sociologist and Bullying Prevention Specialist. Dr. Rust created the School Climate Survey that our district conducts on an annual basis. Dr. Rust retired in the fall of 2019 and sold the rights to her survey to Saint Elizabeth University – School Culture and Climate Initiative.

Dr. Patricia Heindel, Director, will serve as our consultant on best-practices program implementation when addressing school climate. In the spring of 2020, students (with parental consent) participated in a school climate survey for the ninth year in a row. Dr. Heindel was able to interpret the data and compare and contrast the results of the 2020 survey with the data from the previous eight surveys. Dr. Heindel will be making a virtual presentation to the community on the results of the School Climate Survey later this fall as part of our annual HIB Community presentation. All parents and interested community members are invited to tune in.

As the district Student Assistance Counselor and Anti-Bullying Coordinator, I am proud to say that Midland Park remains committed to expanding its prevention efforts and initiatives. During the 2019-2020 school year, our members of the elementary and secondary School Safety/Climate Committees created Action Plans for each building. Our high school Take Action Peer Leaders held “Open Meetings” for High School and Middle School students and made prevention-based presentations on the topics of “Leadership” and “Addiction.” Our high school Spectrums Diversity Club created a safe and caring environment for our students to celebrate the diversity of all students.

Our middle school students participated in the annual “Cyberbullying” assembly provided by the Bergen County Prosecutors Office. Our seventh grade students had an opportunity to work

directly with disabled students at the Children’s Therapy Center. In the classroom, our teachers used curriculum-based infused lessons to provide “teachable moments” in bullying prevention throughout the academic disciplines. We also had our eighth grade students participate in CAP (Child Assault Prevention) training sessions. Our students are exposed to powerful and thought-provoking learning opportunities as they formulate their philosophies and prepare to be the leaders of tomorrow.

During adolescence, students make “social mistakes.” These mistakes are developmental and part of maturing. As educators, we will always dedicate ourselves to addressing these issues as they arise and strive to continue to raise expectations for tolerance, acceptance and kindness towards one another. The Week of Respect serves to remind our community that kindness does matter as we celebrate our diversity and treat one another with dignity throughout the year.

### DISTRICT ANTI-BULLYING SPECIALIST

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#### MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL SAFETY & CLIMATE TEAM 2020-2021

*Nick Capuano, Principal*  
*Craig Rush, Anti-Bullying Coordinator*  
*Liz Wall, Anti-Bullying Specialist*  
*Chessie Owens - Anti-Bullying Specialist*  
*Maureen Fister, MS/HS Teacher*  
*Morgan Altemus, MS Teacher*  
*Hanora Bellucco, HS Teacher*  
*Karen Corcoran, MS/HS Nurse*  
*Kristen Rainbolt, SHIP Representative*  
*Jason Tillson, School Resource Officer*  
*Padma Dhalwani, Parent*  
*Corin Sonderfan, Parent*



## A MESSAGE FROM MR. CAPUANO, PRINCIPAL MIDLAND PARK JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL

This year we embark on the "Week of Respect" under very unique circumstances. Our school has a combination of hybrid school days and fully virtual school days. Our building is at half capacity and social distancing and masks are the order of the day. In the middle of this global pandemic however, I can't help but feel very proud. I am proud of our students and proud of our staff. I am proud of our high school community. Under the most unusual of circumstances, we are pulling together. We are supporting one another through an uncharted journey together. We are cautious and careful and we are taking it one day at a time.

As a proud Principal, I could speak to our pride regarding our physical improvements to the building, our new Family and Consumer Sciences class and course offerings, our academic performance, our athletic accomplishments, and our dedication to the arts and music. This "Week of Respect" however, I am going to keep the message short and simple. I simply want to say "thank you." Thank you Midland Park Jr./Sr. High School for being the kind and caring community you are. Thank you for being inclusive of everyone who enters this building and attends this school, virtually or otherwise. This school community is a very special place to be, even during a great pandemic.

During the "Week of Respect," let's reflect on what we can be thankful for. Let's reflect on what really matters in our lives. Let's be proud of the unconditional respect and dignity that we can all share with one another during this difficult and unprecedented time.

### MIDLAND PARK WELCOMES ATHLETIC DIRECTOR & ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, MR. GLENN STOKES

I am excited to be the Athletic Director/Assistant Principal at Midland Park Jr./Sr. High School. I look forward to working with all of our students, staff and parents. In leading the athletic department, it is my hope to help promote teams that proudly represent Midland Park with sportsmanship, respect and enthusiasm. These qualities are the foundation for successful competition.

For the Week of Respect, we should all take a few minutes to reflect on how we can continue to build a positive school culture. In developing this culture, we should always remember the importance of showing kindness, building confidence and being fair. When we practice this on a daily basis the positive spirit becomes contagious.

As we are now in our second month of school, I wanted to compliment everyone on a successful opening and first month. I thank everyone for the warm welcome to Midland Park. I have already experienced and seen many of the kind and respectful acts that we like to highlight for the Week of Respect and throughout the year. Let's continue this! Go Panthers!

Sincerely,  
Mr. Stokes

#### Parent Resources on Bullying

[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

[www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

### NEW SCHOOL YEAR BRINGS ABOUT CHANGE, BOTH BIG AND SMALL

BY MICHAEL GACCIONE - MPHS ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The 2020-2021 school year is a year of change, both big and small. On a large scale, school days are far different than any other year. Some students are physically moving from class to class on a hybrid schedule, while some attend virtually, and extra attention is given to health and safety.

On a smaller scale, a new school year ushers in new classes, friends, activities, and more. For me, I am privileged to begin a new job, as Assistant Principal. Change can be scary and exciting at the same time. Much like our students are feeling nervous, anxious, eager, motivated, and more, I find myself having many of the same feelings.

It is important to remember that working with colleagues and classmates will help ease any negative feelings and help everyone achieve a successful school year.



## HELLO & WELCOME BACK!

### BY CHESSIE OWENS & LIZ WALL MPHS ANTI-BULLYING SPECIALISTS

The School Climate & Safety Team is always looking for ways to make MPHS a safe and inviting environment for our students. The 2019-2020 school year got off to a positive start and students and staff members were enjoying a typical school year. Our circumstances however, changed in an interesting and uncertain way beginning in March. The global pandemic struck almost every corner of the nation.

In a moment's notice, our students and staff members needed to quickly adapt to the "new normal" of online education and a virtual end to the school year. As Guidance Counselors, we were both so proud and impressed with the way our students made this difficult adjustment.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLIMATE COMMITTEES

#### MR. GALASSO, MS. BACHE, AND MRS. SCALA

The Climate Committees at Highland/Godwin have been working with the staff, parents and students for several years now to improve the school climate.

The team works hard on maintaining the positive climate in Godwin. Ms. Bache works hard to make sure the focus is always on "Kindness and Respect." Each year she adds new posters, murals and inspirational quotes for the kids to enjoy as they walk through the hallways. Throughout the year, assemblies, read-aloud, and direct lessons are taught to emphasize the ideals of good character using the motto Godwin PRIDE, with each letter of pride representing the various ways to show pride.

#### GODWIN SCHOOL SCHOOL SAFETY & CLIMATE TEAM 2020-2021

Ms. Bache, *Principal*  
Mr. Rush, *Anti-Bullying Coordinator*  
Mrs. Scala, *Anti-Bullying Specialist*  
Ms. Soderman, *Elementary Counselor*  
Ms. Dispoto, *HIP Representative*  
Mr. Winters, *Teacher*  
Mrs. Martinez, *Teacher*  
Mrs. DeBoer, *Parent*  
Mrs. Kakolewski, *Parent*  
Officer Jason Tillson, *SRO*

This school year, we are excited to be back in the building. Each day, we notice the respect and attention our students are giving to the practice of healthy safety measures, mask wearing and social distancing. Our students are making a great effort to ensure that our school is safe and healthy. The School Climate & Safety Team will continue to develop initiatives to improve our school climate. We are looking forward to a kind, respectful and healthy school year at Midland Park Jr./Sr. High School!

### MPHS Anti-Bullying Specialists

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Liz Wall  
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Mrs. Scala further enhances the character education program through the Second Step Program. Direct lessons are taught in first and second grades to help children understand how to interact and deal with conflict. The team also decided to invite a puppeteer to come in and highlight the important message of the power of kindness.

Throughout the year, Ms. Bache would also meet with the lunch aides to discuss ways of changing the climate on the playground and in the lunchroom to reinforce positive behavior. She and the staff tend to focus on "teachable moments" throughout each day to reinforce the proper behavior which encourages the students to continue to strive to do it themselves.

Mr. Galasso informed his team he would be conducting "Do the Right Thing" assemblies several times a year.

*Cont. on page 5*





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Students and teachers reward other students who exhibit positive character traits and can be seen as role models. Students are recommended by their teachers for this prestigious program. A mentor program was also implemented in Highland with the 3rd and 6th grades to foster positive role model relationships and staff is looking for ways to continue this program in a safe manner.

Furthermore, the morning show, which has become a staple of the Highland School culture, will continue unabated, as students are still working together to create the weekly morning show, the first one being released on Friday 9/11. Though the students wear gloves while operating the cameras and are in a much smaller group, it was imperative for the 6th graders to be a part of this program as it is a significant experience for their culminating year at Highland.

### HIGHLAND SCHOOL SCHOOL SAFETY & CLIMATE TEAM 2020-2021

Mr. Galasso, *Principal*  
Mr. Rush, *Anti-Bullying Coordinator*  
Mrs. Scala, *Anti-Bullying Specialist*  
Ms. Dispoto, *HIP Representative*  
Mrs. Chase, *Teacher*  
Mrs. Mullady, *Teacher*  
Mrs. McCarthy, *Parent*  
Mrs. Tarleton, *Parent*  
Officer Jason Tillson, *SRO*

Mrs. Scala developed an “intergenerational” program with a fifth grade class which consisted of monthly trips to the Mill Gardens Assisted Living home. She will also launch a program with the fifth grade this year where they will visit the senior center in town on a monthly basis to foster positive relationships with the seniors living in the community. Throughout the year, she facilitates several charitable fundraisers at both schools, to support various causes in an effort to enhance the positive ideals of good character. At the annual HIB Community Presentation, parents had the opportunity to review the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act and to review the results of the School Climate Survey.

Unfortunately, in Mid-March teachers were told they would be teaching remotely until the end of the year. In addition to learning and adjusting to the technical piece of our new situation, teachers were faced with the social and emotional impact on the entire Community. Mrs. Scala, Ms. Bache and Mr. Galasso continued to look for ways to shift their approach and re-create the warmth and openness they strive for during the school year.



2019

Mrs. Scala created different groups with various new emotional needs while adjusting her methods to meet those individual needs. Godwin and Highland staff worked alongside students, parents and teachers to ensure students received the best education they could virtually by adapting their curriculum to meet the needs of their students.

Furthermore, Wellness days were implemented where students could step outside of traditional school to build forts, do yoga, draw self-portraits, participate in Field Day, etc. This was perhaps the most fun we had during virtual time. This outreach continued into the summer with Mrs. Scala conducting virtual sessions to support students and provide a “safe” place to meet with friends.

### Godwin/Highland Anti-Bullying Specialist

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## GODWIN SCHOOL

# WEEK OF RESPECT

*October 5th through October 9th is our Week of Respect at Godwin School! We will be celebrating each day with different themes and challenges.*

**WHETHER LEARNING IN SCHOOL OR  
VIRTUALLY, FEEL FREE TO PARTICIPATE!**

See below for our daily clothing themes during our  
Week of Respect:

### **Tuesday 10/6**

*"Orange you glad we are a respectful school?"*

Wear **ORANGE**

### **Wednesday 10/7**

*"Let's sock it to bullying!"*

Wear **crazy** or **mismatched socks**

### **Thursday 10/8**

*"Let's team up against bullying!"*

Wear a **sport** or **team** related shirt

### **Friday 10/9**

*"Uniting as one is much more fun!"*

Wear our Godwin School color: **GREEN**