



SHIPMAN

Connecticut Bullying Update: *What Administrators Need to Know*

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Hebron Public Schools

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2019 Changes to Bullying Law Effective July 1, 2021 – Public Act 19-166



- No longer a requirement that both the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim be students attending school in the same district.
- Removes requirement that the act be “repetitive.”
- Establishes a new harassment-like standard, which requires that the act be **“severe, persistent, or pervasive.”**

“Bullying” in Connecticut

- “
- An act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive, which (A) causes physical or emotional harm to an individual, (B) places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, or (C) infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

This new definition was part of changes to the bullying law in 2019 and became effective on July 1, 2021

”

“Bullying” includes:



A written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture



based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.



“Cyberbullying”

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Cyberbullying is explicitly defined as “...any act of bullying using the internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices, or any electronic communications.”

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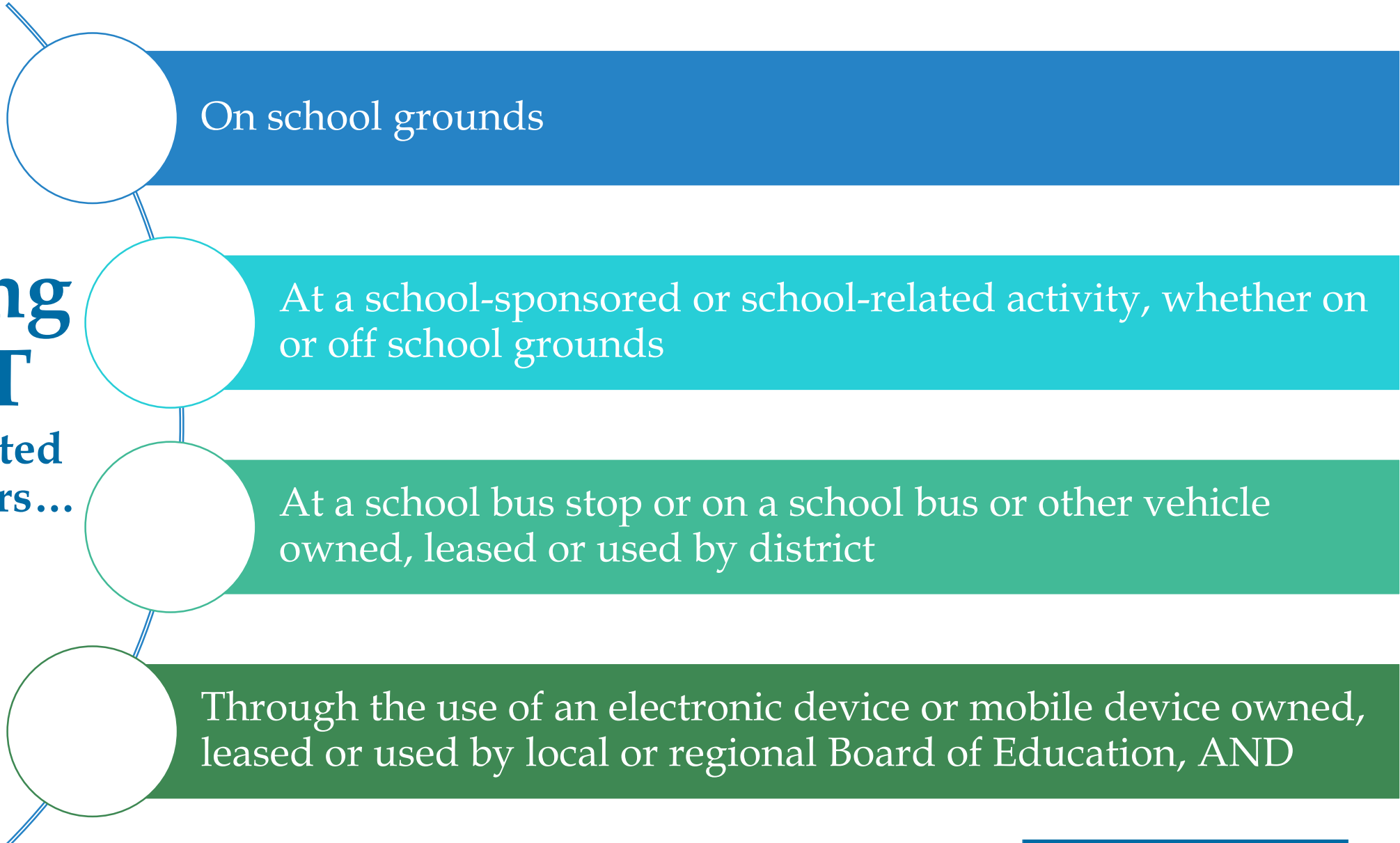
“Teen Dating Violence”

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Teen dating violence means “any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.”

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**Bullying
MUST
be investigated
when it occurs...**





Outside of the school setting if any of such bullying fulfills any of the following 3 characteristics:

**AND
Bullying
MUST**
be investigated
when it occurs...

Creates a hostile school environment for the victim

Infringes on the rights of the victim at school OR

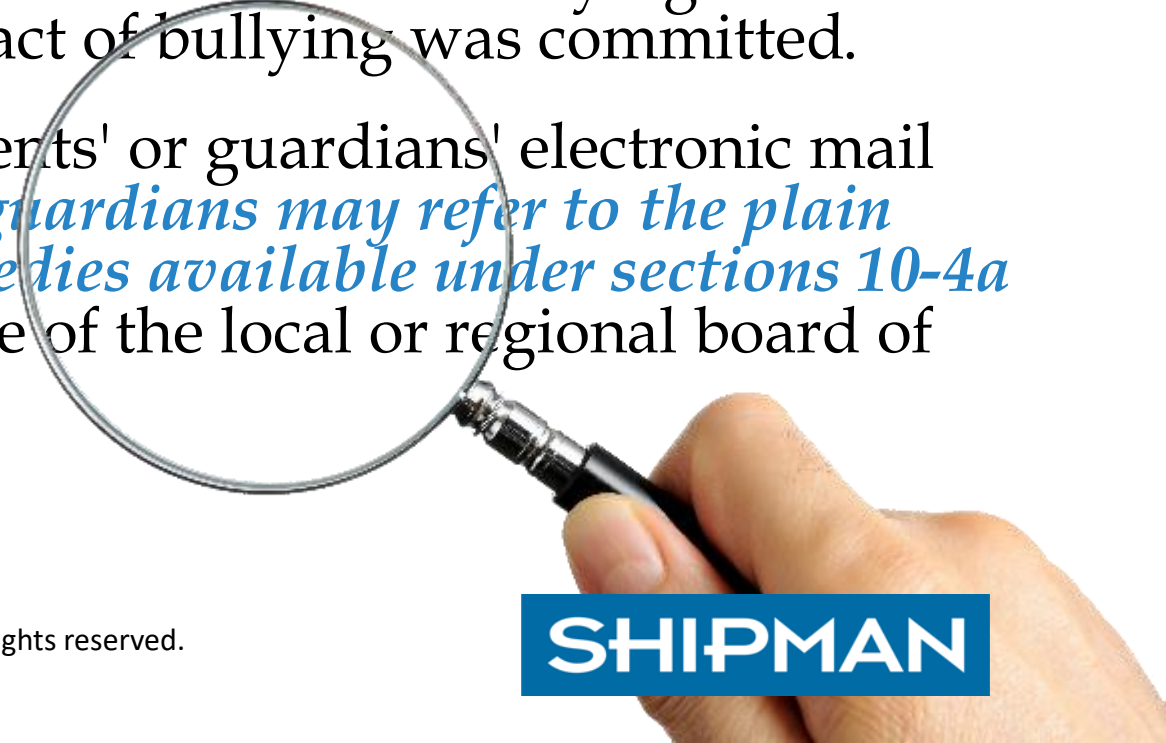
Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Anonymous Reports By Students

- Must be investigated, while maintaining the student's name and identity confidential
- Investigation may be limited, as appropriate in view of anonymity
- Anonymous victim should be informed of this at start of investigation
- Must be investigated to the extent possible
- No discipline may be implemented based *solely* on the basis of an anonymous report

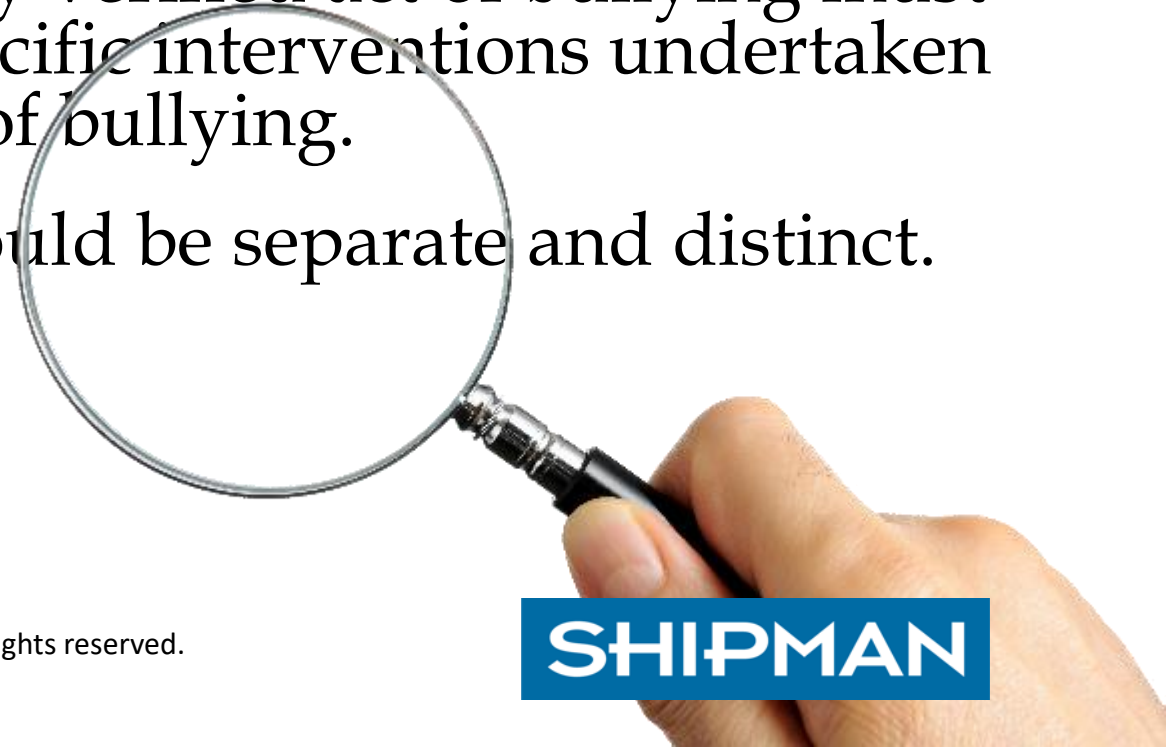
When the Investigation is Complete...

- No written report required. However, district must have procedures to document and maintain records of complaints and investigations.
- Must have list of verified incidents.
- Within *48 hours of the completion of the investigation*, school officials must notify parents of any student who commits a verified act of bullying and the parents of any student against whom such act of bullying was committed.
- Verbally and by electronic mail, if such parents' or guardians' electronic mail addresses are known, that such *parents or guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under sections 10-4a and 10-4b* published on the Internet web site of the local or regional board of education.



When the Investigation is Complete...

- Parents of a student whom such act was directed must be invited to a meeting where the school communicates the measures being taken by the school to ensure student safety and prevent further acts of bullying.
- Parents of a student who commits any verified act of bullying must be invited to a meeting to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying.
- Meetings with each set of parents should be separate and distinct.





What are my responsibilities for intervention?

- When acts of bullying are verified, school officials must develop “**student safety support plans** for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address **safety measures** the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying.”
- When there are repeated verified acts of bullying against a single individual student or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual, school officials must develop **case-by-case interventions** that may include both counseling and discipline.



What are appropriate consequences for bullying?

- The notification to parents of a student who committed a verified act of bullying must include **“a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying.”**
- Consider need for:
 - Increased supervision
 - Separation of students involved
 - Computer restrictions/loss of privileges
 - Counseling
 - Formal discipline (ISS, OSS, expulsion)
- Be mindful of students with disabilities/IEP requirements



How should I handle allegations that could require both a Title IX and a bullying investigation?

- Use the more prescriptive/protective procedures
- Inform parents that you will be investigating under both Title IX and Connecticut's bullying law
- Remember to adhere to the specific procedural requirements of the bullying law
 - List of verified incidents.
 - Within *48 hours of the completion of the investigation*, school officials must notify parents of any student who commits a verified act of bullying and the parents of any student against whom such act of bullying was committed.
 - Notify published on the Internet web site of the local or regional board of education.
 - Parents of a student whom such act was directed must be invited to a meeting where the school communicates the measures being taken by the school to ensure student safety and prevent further acts of bullying.
 - Parents of a student who commits any verified act of bullying must be invited to a meeting to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying.