



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL HARASSMENT / BULLYING POLICY

HARASSMENT / BULLYING

It is imperative to maintain an educational environment that encourages optimum human growth and development. Respect for the dignity of each person is essential to Catholic tradition. It is vital that our school maintains learning and working environment free from any form of harassment/bullying.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as an imbalance of power by which the behavior of a student or a group of students is hurtful, threatening, or frightening to another individual or group while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity, or on a school bus. Additionally, the school principal may address bullying outside of the school setting if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety at school.

Bullying is more than misconduct. Bullying behavior is intentional and repeated against the same student or group over time. An isolated incident is not bullying and will be addressed under the school's discipline policy.

Harassment/Bullying includes but is not limited to the following:

Verbal Harassment – includes a pattern of name calling, teasing and

put-downs, spreading gossip/rumors, racial insults, sexual comments/jokes, or threats

Indirect Harassment – includes a pattern of social exclusion and isolation, intimidation through actions and gestures, or making hurtful written comments

Being an Active Bystander – a pattern of accepting, assisting, or reinforcing the bullying/harassing behavior of an individual or a group

Physical Violence or Threat of Physical Violence – a pattern of hitting, shoving, kicking, throwing items at someone, taking items from someone, threatening behavior or angry body language, destructive behavior with or towards objects, intimidation, forcing someone to do something, unwelcomed sexual advances/touching, or other use of violence

Cyber-bullying – includes a pattern of using technology to intimidate, embarrass, harass, threaten, or gossip

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any student who feels she/he has been subjected to bullying/harassment should contact any adult at the school.

The person who has been notified of the incident must report this information in a timely manner to the principal, teacher, pastor, or appropriate supervisor.

Appropriate action could include but is not limited to:

- Written documentation of the incident
- Disciplinary actions
- Professional counseling
- Referral to outside agencies
- Probation/Suspension/Expulsion

All decisions will be at the discretion of the school principal.

When harassment/bullying behavior is reported, the initial action will be for the teacher, guidance counselor, and/or principal to talk with the students involved in the incident. Then, at a minimum, the following actions will be taken:

1st Step: Written documentation of the incident will be sent home and returned with a parent's signature. When a pattern is evident, the 2nd Step will be implemented.

2nd Step: A parent/student conference will be scheduled with the teacher and principal to determine the course of action.

3rd Step: The minimum action will be a detention and the maximum action would be expulsion at the discretion of the principal.

In addition, based on behavior, the following may occur:

- Student may be denied recess time or participation in other activities.
- Student may be assigned a written punishment which will require a parent's signature.
- Student may be removed from class for a specified period of time.
- Student may be required to remain after school.

Faculty / Staff members should:

- Encourage all students to report bullying behaviors they witness or experience.
- Be visible and alert for signs of bullying.
- If bullying is witnessed, take action and document behavior with an Incident Report Form.
- Offer support and encouragement to students being bullied.
- Provide students with skills to deal with bullying behavior and opportunities to practice these skills as outlined below.
- Discuss bullying in each classroom and foster a class culture of respect for others.
- Act as role models of Christian behavior.

Parents should:

- Be aware of their child's actions and relationships.
- Maintain open communication with their child.
- Get to know their child's friends and observe how he/she interacts in social settings.
- If incidents occur outside of school, address any observed behaviors of bullying/harassment with the child's parents.
- Report concerns of bullying behavior to their child's teacher, guidance counselor, and/or principal.
- Practice positive problem solving skills with their child.
- Support the school's bullying/harassment policy and actively encourage their child to avoid bullying behavior.
- Monitor their child's texting, emailing, and other social media.
- Support the school's policy by expecting the same standards of behavior in and outside of school.
- Be open to the idea that their child may be involved in bullying behaviors and work with the school to eliminate these behaviors.

Student bystanders should:

- Report incidents of bullying they witness to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident or to another staff member as soon as possible following the incident.
- Stand up for the student being bullied and refuse to join in if they see someone being bullied.
- Offer support for people being mistreated.
- Encourage students who are being bullied to talk to their parents or trusted adults.

Students who are being bullied should:

- Report incidents of bullying to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident or to another staff member as soon as possible following the incident.
- Talk to their parents or an adult they trust, such as a teacher, school counselor, or principal.
- Act confidently, hold their heads up, stand up straight, make eye contact, and walk away confidently.
- Do not engage in violence or retaliation.
- Associate with students who treat them with respect.
- Avoid situations where bullying can happen.

All students should:

Treat others with the respect and dignity that is expected of any Christian school student.

We have read the harassment/bullying policy and understand that harassment/bullying behaviors will not be tolerated. We also understand that in order to address bullying situations, we need to make the faculty/staff aware of these incidents. We will do our part to promote a safe, caring, and Christian environment at St. Joseph School.

Family Name: _____

Parent Signatures: _____

Student(s) Signature _____

Date: _____