

Policy on Bullying

Introduction

The mission of St. Joseph School is to help students to understand the Catholic faith, live this faith and to extend this faith to others in love. We recognize that all members of our school community have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It is essential that a safe, positive and productive educational environment be established where students can achieve the highest academic standards, where no student shall be subjected to bullying, intimidation or harassment. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. This behavior is against the fundamental tenet of "Love your neighbor as yourself", and destroys respect for the dignity of the student. We seek to provide an environment in which moral values are taught which help in forming Christ-like character.

Scope of Policy

This bullying policy is to be applied to Kindergarten through Grade 8. It addresses bullying and does not replace any policies that deal with individual student misconduct or behavior. This is already addressed in the student handbook under discipline.

This policy will not apply to Pre-School because it is recognized that these children are very young and are learning social skills. Unkind acts that occur at this level will be handled by the child's teacher. The teacher will work with the student, family and principal (as needed) to address these situations. Bullying is not acceptable behavior at St. Joseph School, en route to and from school, or at school sponsored events. Bullying is defined as the intimidation of others by the real or threatened infliction of written, verbal, physical or electronically transmitted acts, emotional abuse, or through attacks on the property of another. Bullying in violation of school policy must be "repeated against the same student over time". An isolated incident, however egregious, is not "bullying". Bullying is more than misconduct. Bullying is marked by the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the victim.

Bullying by Definition:

Bullying, harassment or intimidation means any of the following: Any intentional written, verbal, electronic (cyber-bullying), physical act, or any other similar behavior that a student or staff member has exhibited toward another student which:

- (1.) Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property.
- (2.) Places another student in reasonable fear of harm or of damage to property.
- (3.) Creates a hostile environment at school for another student.
- (4.) Infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- (5.) Disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school or classroom and alters the conditions of another student's education.
- (6.) Is a form of "retaliation" meaning any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment

directed against a student who reports any misconduct, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

(7.) Is considered electronic bullying (cyber-bullying) meaning bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, or data of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by:

a) Wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

b) The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

c) The distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Location:

Bullying in violation of school policy must occur on school grounds, or at a school sponsored activity (which includes transportation services.) Conduct that occurs off-campus, e.g. harassment over the internet, physical intimidation in the community, is not bullying under this policy unless it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

Intervention:

We expect that students' behaviors should reflect the child's age, level of development, and maturity. Consequences will take into consideration these factors. Consequences for students who have committed acts of bullying may range from behavioral interventions up to and including suspensions or expulsion. The disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior and may include:

- a.) Be denied recess time.
- b.) Be assigned a writing exercise examining behavior to be signed by parent.
- c.) Receive a detention.
- d.) Separation from peers within classroom to extent possible.
- e.) In-school suspension.
- f.) Out-of-school suspension.
- g.) Expulsion.

+NOTE: Disciplinary actions will NOT necessarily be taken immediately solely on the basis of a report made by a student or a parent/guardian. Investigation of the report will take place prior to any disciplinary action.+

The principal and teachers are responsible for receiving reports of acts of bullying. Acts of bullying can be reported to any school employee who will in turn report the act. The principal or designee will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of the alleged incident of bullying. In doing so, the principal or designee will determine if the incident violates the school policy.

With parental support we would like to see our students develop the skills needed to stand up for themselves or for the student being bullied, and refrain from joining in bullying behavior.