



Catholic Partnership Schools Anti-Bullying Policy

Each of the Catholic Partnership Schools prohibits acts of harassment or bullying. This behavior destroys respect for the dignity of the student and undermines the Christian atmosphere of the school. The administration and staff of Holy Name School, Sacred Heart School, St. Anthony of Padua School, St. Cecilia School, and St. Joseph Pro-Cathedral School believe that a safe and respectful environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. No student shall be subjected to bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation. Principals, faculty, staff, and volunteers are expected to demand that all students behave appropriately and treat others with civility and respect. Bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation are not to be tolerated.

Bullying is defined as any specific acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the other student. Research shows that bullying is most likely to occur on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, and the acts are repeated against the same student over time. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault, extortion, oral or written threats, teasing, putdowns, name-calling, threatening looks, gestures or actions, cruel rumors, false accusations, and social isolation.

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a person that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the person or damage to the victim’s property;
- places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property; creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- infringes on the rights of the victim at school or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

An isolated incident, however egregious, is not Bullying. Numerous acts of misconduct against different students do not constitute Bullying. Such conduct may warrant disciplinary action, but is not Bullying.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term “bullying” is used, it is to denote either bullying or cyberbullying.

“Cyber-bullying” means 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, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by:

- Wire
- radio
- electromagnetics
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of 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.

Each Catholic Partnership School expects students to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, parents, and volunteers.

Bystander support of harassment or bullying can support these negative behaviors; both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying are prohibited. Staff should encourage students to support students who walk away from these acts when they are taking place, constructively attempt to stop them or report them to the designated authority.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment or bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the history of problem behaviors and performance, and must be consistent with the school’s approved parent/student handbook.

Catholic Partnership Schools requires the principal and/or the principal’s designee to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or the principal’s designee. All other members of the School community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action will not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The school principal and/or the principal’s designee are responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy.

In doing so, the principal and/or the principal’s designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The investigation should be completed within three school days after a report or complaint is made. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents, and school staff, a review of school records, and an identification of parent and family issues.

PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds;
- on property adjacent to school grounds;
- at any school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether on or off school grounds;
- at a school bus stop;
- on a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school; or
- through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school

Bullying by students is also prohibited at other locations and through other means if it:

- causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the person's education or
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

Nothing contained in this Policy or in any plan shall require a school to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Minimum Required Actions

If the principal and/or the principal's designee determines that bullying or "retaliation" – means any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying or provides information during an investigation of Bullying has occurred, he/she shall:

- notify the local law enforcement agency if the principal or his or her designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against an aggressor;
- take appropriate disciplinary action;
- notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor, and
- notify the parents or guardians of the target and notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.

Bullying incidents that demand in-school/out-of-school suspension, expulsion, or police notification shall be reported to the Executive Director of the Partnership.

If the reported incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from another school, the principal and/or the principal's designee first informed of the incident shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school and/or school district may take appropriate action.

If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal and/or the principal's designee informed of the incident shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Target Assistance

Each school shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both alleged targets and aggressors, affected by bullying or retaliation, as necessary.

Catholic Partnership Schools prohibit retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate action for a person who engages in retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

Consequences/Intervention

If it is concluded that an act of bullying has occurred, the parents/guardians of the student who committed such acts and the parents/guardians of students against whom such acts were directed shall be notified. Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the result of the investigation and may include a parent conference, professional counseling, detention, suspension, and expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident or the series of incidents, the administrator may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan, separating and supervising the students involved, providing staff support for students when necessary, reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate, and developing a supervision plan with the parents.

Each School prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment or bullying may range from behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with school policies. Parents deemed to have engaged in acts of harassment or bullying against students, school staff, or volunteers are subject to legal action and the recommended transfer of their children from the school.

Prevention programs/curriculum: Each school provides a variety of programs, special assemblies, guest speakers, and awareness activities within our school curriculum that are age-appropriate and address the gravity of bullying.

The Partnership Anti-Bullying Policy is found within the Parent and Faculty Staff Handbooks and is posted on the partnership website. Awareness activities are communicated to parents and guardians as they are scheduled.