

## Anti-Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation

### A. Policy

- A. All people have dignity because they are created in God's image and thus are to be treated with respect. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are contrary to Gospel values and have no place in the Catholic school. All persons associated with the Diocese of Youngstown Catholic Schools, including but not limited to administration, the staff, and students are entitled to be in a school environment that is Christ-centered and free of bullying, harassment, and intimidation.
- B. Bullying, harassment, or intimidation behavior by any student/ school personnel in the Diocese of Youngstown Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action.
- C. Schools shall formulate a written policy which prohibits bullying, harassment, and intimidation, includes the definition and provisions for reporting and investigating complaints, as well as consequences for bullying behavior in the school code of conduct.

### B. Procedures/Guidelines

- A. **Bullying, harassment, or intimidation are defined as any intentional written, verbal, graphic, physical, acts including electronically transmitted acts (i.e. internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand-held device), either overt or covert, by a student or a group of students toward other students/ school personnel repeatedly more than once with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule, or humiliate. The elements of bullying are intentional aggressive behavior, an exhibited pattern over time, and an imbalance of power or strength.** Bullying behavior:
  1. Causes mental or physical harm to the target or damage to the target's property, or places another student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to property.
  2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.
  3. Disrupts the orderly operation of a school or classroom that alters the conditions of another student's education.
  4. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's right or performance or otherwise adversely affect an individual's opportunities.
  5. 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 behavior.
  6. Is considered electronic bullying (cyberbullying) meaning bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication (internet, cell phone, personal digital assistance or wireless hand-held device), which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, or data of any nature transmitted in whole or part by:
    - Wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile

communications.

- The creation of a web page or blog, email or twitter account, or other means of electronic communications in which the creator builds a fake profile 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.
- 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.

**B. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation of any type will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The school will treat complaints of bullying, harassment, and intimidation seriously and will respond to such complaints in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner to those occurring:**

1. On school grounds owned/ leased/ used by a school or on property immediately adjacent to school grounds
2. At school bus stops and on a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school
3. At school-sponsored events, activities, functions, or programs, both on and off campus
4. At a location, activity, function, or program not school-related, when there are possible ramifications for students or adults in the school
5. Through the use of technology or electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school
6. Through the use of technology or an electronic device not owned, leased, or used by a school if it interferes with or adversely impacts the school, as determined by school administration, by the act or acts in question:
  - Create a hostile environment at school for the target.
  - Infringe on the rights of the target at school.
  - Materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the school, by using technologies to bully, tease, embarrass, offend, threaten, harass, deceive, or intimidate other people whether directly or as a forwarded message.

**C. The following examples are a non-exhaustive list of possible forms of bullying, harassment and intimidation:**

1. Direct Physical: hitting, punching, poking, strangling, hair pulling, kicking, slapping, beating, biting, spitting, stealing, pinching, unwanted tickling, damaging or destroying personal property;
2. Direct Verbal or written: comments such as hurtful name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossip, and threats, insults, whether in person or through any form of electronic communication;
3. Indirect Psychological or Emotional: gossip, spreading rumors, lies. Excluding, ignoring, rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, manipulation, isolating, ostracizing, and peer pressure;
4. Cyber-bullying: using electronic communications to do the act of bullying (i.e. email, texting, social network, on-line chats);
5. Sexual: (See DOY Sexual Harassment/ Sexual Violence/ Sexual Misconduct Policy)

6. Racial includes, but is not limited to: actions based on personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation;
7. Jokes, stories, pictures, cartoons, cyber rumors, drawings or objects which are offensive, tend to alarm, annoy, incite abuse, or demean an individual or group.

**D.** Schools shall be proactive in dealing with incidents of harassment, working closely with families, parents, and guardians. A school's Code of Conduct is to address the issue and be published in the school's handbook. Consequences for students who bully others may include oral or written warning/reprimand, counseling, parent/student conferences, detention, suspension, written behavioral contract and/or probation, and/or expulsion depending the results of an investigation and severity of the incident.

**E.** Each school is required to develop an Anti-Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Prevention and Intervention Plan using the DOY policy as a model. It should be included in the school's Student/Parent/ Family Handbook and posted on the school website. The following elements need to be addressed in the plan:

1. The definition of bullying.
2. Clear procedures for reporting prohibited incidents for students, faculty, counselors, school nurses, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extra-curricular activities, and all school support staff.
  - a) Formal Complaints (include development of a form that allows students or parents/guardians to report suspected bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Include person(s) involved, alleged behaviors, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, names of any potential student or staff witnesses)
  - b) Informal Complaints (document the information reported)
  - c.) Anonymous Complaints (Students who make informal complaints may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s).)
3. A requirement that school personnel report prohibited incidents of which they are aware to the school principal or other person designated by the principal. School personnel should intervene whenever bullying behavior is observed.
4. A requirement for a procedure for complaint investigation.
5. In cases where the reported aggressor or target is not a student in the school, information shall be disclosed to the principal or appropriate administrator of the public, private, or charter school in which the student is enrolled.
6. A requirement in which the custodial parent(s) or guardian(s) of any student involved in a prohibited behavior is notified.
7. A requirement for documenting reported incidents, responses to incidents including steps taken to investigate. (Note: In the case of a request for anonymity, the complaints should be reviewed with reasonable action taken so that the source of the complaint is not disclosed and the due process rights of the student exhibiting bullying behavior are not violated. Investigation of an anonymous report may be limited to a review of the complaint subject to further information or withdrawal by the complaining student the original condition of anonymity.)
8. A strategy for protecting a victim or other person from new or additional bullying, harassment, or intimidation, and retaliation following a report, including a means by which

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a person may report an incident anonymously.

9. A strategy for providing counseling or outside referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members as needed.
  10. A range of non-disciplinary and disciplinary actions that may be taken against a student exhibiting bullying behavior or retaliation provided that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
  11. A statement and a disciplinary procedure prohibiting students from deliberately making false reports of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and for any student responsible for deliberately making a false report.
  12. Provisions for introducing and informing parents and guardians about the anti-bullying prevention and intervention plan along with suggested ways parents can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school.
- F.** Staff members are required to be vigilant and take immediate steps to intervene in bullying behavior. Professional development to inform and support staff members should be planned periodically.
- G.** Schools shall include in their regular instructional programs lessons that teach the dangers and consequences of harassment and bullying. Special assemblies or speakers may be part of the curriculum to inform and educate students and attention should be paid to positive school environment. A bullying program that includes the following best practices is to be adopted (Health Resources and Services Administration, 2006):
- Focus on the school environment.
  - Assess bullying in your school.
  - Garner staff and parent support for bullying prevention.
  - Form a group to coordinate the school's bullying prevention activities.
  - Train school staff in bullying prevention.
  - Establish and enforce school rules and policies related to bullying.
  - Increase adult supervision in places where bullying occurs.
  - Focus some class time on bullying prevention.
  - Intervene consistently and appropriately in bullying situations.
  - Continue these efforts over time.
- H.** Schools must provide internet safety and cyber-bullying prevention instruction for staff and students annually and file verifying documentation. (see Internet Safety and Cyber-Bullying Prevention Annual Documentation Form)
- I.** If an incident that occurs off campus and outside a school-sponsored event is discovered, parents will be notified.
- J.** Isolated, trivial incidents, while not sufficient to constitute bullying, harassment, and intimidation, are not accepted behavior in a Catholic school and will be handled according to the student behavior code.

## K. Links and Supporting Documents

- A. Ohio Department of Education  
<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/SafeAndSupportiveLearning.aspx?page=1009>
- B. Diocesan Student Technology and Acceptable Use Policy
- C. Diocesan Internet Safety Policy
- D. Diocesan Personally Owned Device Policy
- E. Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Employees and Authorized Users
- F. Diocesan Sexual Harassment/ Sexual Violence/ Sexual Misconduct Policy
- G. Stop Bullying Now [www.stopbullyingnow.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.gov)
- H. Olweus Bullying Program [www.olweus.org](http://www.olweus.org)
- I. Bully Proofing Your School <http://www.pffac.org>
- J. PeaceBuilders [www.peacebuilders.com](http://www.peacebuilders.com)
- K. Steps to Respect <http://www.cfchildren.org/steps-to-respect>
- L. Bully Free School and Classroom <http://www.bullyfree.com/>
- M. Peace Be With You: A Christ-Centered Bullying Solution  
<http://peace2usolutions.blogspot.com/2011/05/peace-be-with-you-christ-centered.html>
- N. Common Sense Media <http://www.common sense media.org/>
- O. <http://www.netsmartz.org> -Very thorough site with outstanding resources for cyberbullying and all digital citizenship. Videos and presentation materials for students, parents, educators, law enforcement
- P. <http://www.brainpop.com/technology/digitalcitizenship/> -Plenty of resources available here, including videos, quizzes, activities, etc. for all areas of digital citizenship, including cyberbullying
- Q. <http://mrsa.wikispaces.com/Internet+Safety+Curriculum+Resources> -Amazing listing of a multitude of sites dealing with safe internet use, cyberbullying, and digital citizenship. This is a teacher's wiki, so it will change and get updated as new resources come to her attention.
- R. Teaching Tolerance [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

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Elementary

High School

X Both