

DIOCESE OF JOLIET – CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

5313 BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

All elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Joliet shall actively seek to provide a supportive, caring environment in which all persons are safe from all forms of intimidation including bullying, which is unacceptable, unchristian and strictly prohibited.

For the purpose of this policy, bullying is defined in conformity with Illinois Law as follows:

“Any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- (1) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property;
- (2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health;
- (3) Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or
- (4) Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.”

105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 (b)

Bullying Conduct

Bullying conduct covered by this policy is conduct that occurs on school property or at school sponsored activities or events; while students are being transported or walking to or from school or school sponsored activities or events; while students are waiting at school bus stops; or cyber bullying as defined hereinafter.

Cyber Bullying

This policy prohibits bullying and intimidation of students through the use of internet and social media sites on any electronic device (private, public, or school owned), whether on or off the school campus, or during non school hours.

Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. Behavioral interventions may be included as a component of the disciplinary actions. This may include but is not limited to mandatory counseling.

Retaliatory behavior by a student accused of bullying will also incur consequences. False accusations of bullying will result in disciplinary action taken against the accuser.

Any reported bullying issue will be promptly brought to the attention of the appropriate party: the Pastor or the Principal or designee, and thereafter investigated.

Reference: *The Illinois School Code*, 105 ILCS, 5/27-23.7

BULLYING PREVENTION GUIDELINES

The Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7) Sec. 27-23.7. Bullying prevention.

(a) The General Assembly finds that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with students' ability to learn and participate in school activities. The General Assembly further finds that bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Because of the negative outcomes associated with bullying in schools, the General Assembly finds that school districts and non-public, non-sectarian elementary and secondary schools should educate students, parents, and school district or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school personnel about what behaviors constitute prohibited bullying.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in all school districts and non-public, non-sectarian elementary and secondary schools. No student shall be subjected to bullying:

- 1) during any school-sponsored education program or activity;
- 2) while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities;
- 3) through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment; or
- 4) through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

(b) In this Section:

"Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- 1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- 2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- 3) substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- 4) substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic

system, or photooptical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. "Cyber-bullying" also includes the distribution of 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 effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

Bullying, as defined in this subsection (b), may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

"School personnel" means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school district or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school, including without limitation school and school district administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

(c) (Blank).

(d) Each school district and non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school shall create and maintain a policy on bullying, which policy must be filed with the State Board of Education. The policy or implementing procedure shall include a process to investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the district's or school's jurisdiction and shall require that the district or school provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the district and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs. Each school district and non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school must communicate its policy on bullying to its students and their parent or guardian on an annual basis. The policy must be updated every 2 years and filed with the State Board of Education after being updated. The State Board of Education shall monitor the implementation of policies created under this subsection (d).

(e) This Section shall not be interpreted to prevent a victim from seeking redress under any other available civil or criminal law. Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 or 4 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

(Source: P.A. 95-198, eff. 1-1-08; 95-349, eff. 8-23-07; 95-876, eff. 8-21-08; 96-952, eff. 6-28-10.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January 1, 2015.

Approved: August 1, 2014

Effective: January 1, 2015

General Information

Types of bullying:

1. *Relational*: This includes ostracizing another child, psychological manipulation, and systematic actions to isolate, shun, or exclude.
2. *Verbal*: This includes name calling, put downs, and/or the spreading of rumors.
3. *Physical*: This includes aggressive acts, such as: hitting, slapping, choking, kicking, spitting or pushing, as well as the destruction of property and the writing of offensive notes/graffiti.
4. *Cyber*: Actions associated with one or more types of bullying, utilizing e-mail, instant messaging, social networks, text message, or other means of electronic communication.

“Bullying Conduct” may include but is not limited to:

- Physical acts, such as inappropriate, unwanted, uninvited, or injurious physical contact with another; stalking; sexual assault; and destruction or damage to property of another;
- Written and electronic communication of any type that incorporates language or depictions that would constitute bullying, using any medium (including, but not limited to, cell phones, computers, websites, electronic networks, instant messages, text messages and emails);
- Verbal threats made to another, blackmail, or demands for protection money;
- Non-verbal threats or intimidation such as aggressive or menacing gestures;
- Direct or indirect, relationally aggressive behavior such as social isolation, rumor spreading, or damaging someone’s reputation;
- Any of the above conduct which occurs off school grounds when such conduct creates, or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school setting and/or at school sponsored activities and events.

In addition to that conduct described above, *examples* of conduct that may constitute bullying include but are not limited to the following:

- Blocking access to school property or facilities;
- Stealing or hiding or otherwise defacing books, backpacks or other personal possessions;
- Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking putdowns, or demeaning humor relating to a student’s race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in the disruption of school activities or that results in a hostile educational environment for the student.

Conduct that would *not ordinarily* be considered bullying for purposes of this document includes:

- Mere teasing
- “Talking trash”
- Trading of insults
- The expression of ideas or beliefs (expressions protected by the First Amendment), so long as such expression is not lewd, profane, or intended to intimidate or harass another.

The examples set out are meant to be illustrative and are not exhaustive of conduct that may or may not be considered “Bullying.” Nor are they intended to limit the exercise of discretion granted to school administrators.

The bullying prevention policy is communicated annually to staff, students, and parents and/or guardians.