

## **BULLYING**

All elementary and secondary schools of the diocese shall actively seek to provide a supportive, caring environment that is safe from all forms of intimidation including bullying. Bullying is repeated behavior involving a deliberate, conscious intent to hurt, threaten, frighten, or humiliate someone. It may include physical and/or verbal intimidation or assault; extortion or taking belongings; oral or written threats; outrageous teasing, mocking, taunting, putdowns, or name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; suggestive comments; false accusation and/or social isolation. Bullying behavior shall not be tolerated in any form including via social media.

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All elementary and secondary schools of the diocese shall develop anti-bullying procedures according to the following guidelines:

1. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognize bullying and to take action when they are aware of it happening.
2. When appropriate, a parent information meeting on dealing with bullying issues will be offered.
3. All faculty and staff shall treat any report of bullying seriously and take action. A faculty/staff meeting will be held annually to discuss bullying and review reporting and investigation procedures, prevention strategies, and disciplinary approaches.
4. Faculty and staff members shall listen carefully to the student(s) reporting bullying, and make sufficient inquiries to clarify exactly what has been happening.
5. Student(s) should be assured that they have acted correctly in reporting bullying.
6. The faculty or staff member who receives a report of bullying behavior shall make a written summary of the information and pass it on to the dean and/or principal, who will take appropriate action.
7. The school administration shall thoroughly investigate all reports of bullying. This may include interviews with students, parents, and faculty and staff members as well as a review of school records. The victim(s), accused student(s), and any witnesses shall be interviewed separately to establish an accurate account of events. Written records shall be maintained of suspected and/or repeated incidents of bullying.
8. Emphasis must be placed on changing the behavior of the bullying student(s), while providing care and support for the student who has been bullied.
9. Whenever bullying has been reported, the principal or his/her designee (assistant principal, counselor, dean, etc.) shall give advice to the student(s) who have been bullied on how to deal with any repeat incidents of bullying that may happen.

10. The principal or designee shall arrange follow-up discussion with the student(s) at periodic intervals to find out if the bullying has stopped.
11. Whenever incidents of bullying are reported, the school shall contact the parents of all the students who are involved.
12. Any student who retaliates against another student for reporting bullying behavior shall be reprimanded and penalized in accordance with the school's disciplinary code.