

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2015-2016

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL IS COMMITTED TO PROTECTING ITS STUDENTS FROM BULLYING AND HARASSMENT FOR ANY REASON AND OF ANY TYPE. HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL BELIEVES ALL STUDENTS ARE ENTITLED TO A SAFE, EQUITABLE AND HARASSMENT-FREE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE. BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND SHALL BE JUST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION. THIS POLICY SHALL BE INTERPRETED AND APPLIED CONSISTENTLY WITH ALL APPLICABLE STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS. CONDUCT THAT CONSTITUTES BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION, AS DEFINED HEREIN, IS PROHIBITED.

The standards of this Policy constitute a specific, focused, coordinated, integrated system of support for all students, staff and families that will improve relations within Holy Family Catholic School. It is designed to ensure that the staff has been trained to provide awareness, intervention training and to direct follow up when incidents are reported and/or occur.

I. Definitions

A. **“Bullying”** means systematically and chronically inflicting physical harm or psychological distress with one or more students or employees. It is further defined as: unwanted purposeful written, verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior, including but not limited to any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long term damage; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation, is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power. Bullying may involve, but is not limited to:

1. Unwanted and repetitive teasing
2. Threatening
3. Intimidating
4. Stalking
5. Cyberstalking
6. Cyberbullying
7. Physical violence
8. Theft
9. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
10. Public humiliation
11. Destruction of school or personal property
12. Social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
13. Rumor or spreading of falsehoods which lead to extreme social separation

B. **“Harassment”** means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of technology, including but not limited to cell phones, PDA’s, computers, computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student that:

1. Places a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits;
3. Has the effect of substantially negatively impacting a student's emotional or mental well-being; or
4. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school work environment.

C. **"Bullying"** and/or **"Harassment"** also encompasses but are not limited to:

1. Retaliation against a student by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying, harassment, or discrimination;
2. Retaliation also includes reporting a baseless act of bullying, harassment, or discrimination that is not made in good faith;
3. Unwanted harm toward a student in regard to their real or perceived: sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability (physical, mental or educational), socio-economic background, ancestry, ethnic city, gender, linguistic preference, political beliefs, social/family background;

D. **"Accused"** is defined as any student, school employee or family member of a student in the school or outside the school at school-sponsored events, who is reported to have committed an act of bullying, whether formally or informally, orally or in writing.

E. **"Complainant"** is defined as any student, school employee or family member of a student who formally or informally makes a report of bullying, orally or in writing.

F. **"Victim"** is defined as any student in the school or outside the school at school sponsored events who is reported to have been the target of any act of bullying/harassment during any educational program or activity conducted by the school.

G. **"School"** means Holy Family Catholic School.

II. Expectations: The school expects all students, parents/family members and employees to conduct themselves in keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith. All School employees in collaboration with the students and family members of the students will be required to strictly adhere to this Policy.

III. Policy Awareness: At the beginning of each school year, the School shall make students, employees and family members of students aware of the existence of the Policy. The School will also post the Policy on the school website and/or through other reasonable means.

IV. Reporting an Act of Bullying:

- A. Students are strongly encouraged to report complaints of bullying to any teacher, administrator or staff member. All school employees, faculty and staff should and must report any allegations of bullying or violations of this Policy involving students to the Principal.
- B. Any other members of the School community who have credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a written report of bullying, whether a victim or witness.
- C. Any student (and/or family member on the complainant's behalf if the complainant is a minor) who believes he/she is a victim of bullying (or any individual, including any student who has knowledge of any incident(s) involving bullying or students) is strongly encouraged to report the incident(s) to a School employee. Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the alleged incident. Failure on the part of the victim to initiate and/or follow up on the complaint may result in the complaint being deemed abandoned.
- D. The School shall document in writing all complaints regarding bullying to ensure that problems are appropriately addressed in a timely manner, whether the report is made verbally or in writing.

V. Bullying Complaints and Resolution:

- A. The investigation of a reported act of bullying of a student begins with a report of such an act.
- B. The Principal shall begin a thorough investigation of all reports of bullying within two (2) school days of receiving a complaint. The School will also provide immediate notification to the parents of both the victim and the accused of an act of bullying. This process is to be followed with all anonymous written complaints as well. Although this Policy encourages students to use the formal written complaint process, the School will investigate all complaints and reports of bullying whether or not the complaint is in writing.
- C. The resolution, all interviews and interventions that take place and the corresponding dates shall be documented in writing and kept in the accused's file.

VI. Consequences of Bullying and Violations of the Policy:

- A. Once an investigation is concluded, the School will determine whether a particular act of incident constitutes a violation of the Policy.

- B. Consequences and appropriate interventions for students who violate this Policy may range from informal positive behavioral interventions up to, but not limited to, expulsion.
 - C. If it is determined by the Principal that this Policy was violated and involved physical harm to another or the threat of physical harm, then the accused will receive a written reprimand and serve detention, and correspondents of such will be sent home to the parents. After another incident occurs regarding physical harm or threat of physical harm, the student could be suspended for up to one week. If after the suspension is served the student violates this Policy again involving physical harm or the threat of physical harm then the student is subject to expulsion from the School.
 - D. If it is determined by the Principal that this Policy was violated but the violation did not involve physical harm or the threat of physical harm then the violation will be documented. After another violation of the Policy not involving physical harm or the threat of physical harm the student could be subject to a range of punishments from detention to suspension to expulsion from the School.
- VII. Confidentiality: To the greatest extent possible, all complaints will be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The School's obligation to investigate and take corrective action may supersede an individual's right to privacy. The complainant's identity shall be protected, but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The identity of the victim of the reported act shall be protected to the extent possible.
- VIII. Retaliation Prohibited: Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment in connection with filing a complaint or assisting with an investigation under this Policy. Retaliatory or intimidating conduct against any individual who has made a bullying complaint or any individual who has testified, assisted, or participated, in any manner, in an investigation is specifically prohibited and as detailed in the Policy shall be treated as another incidence of bullying.
- IX. Constitutional Safeguard: This Policy does not imply to prohibit expressive activity protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.
- X. Preclusion: This Policy should not be interpreted as to prevent a victim or accused from seeking redress under any other available law either civil or criminal.

XI. Severability: If a provision of the Policy is or becomes illegal, invalid or unenforceable in any jurisdiction, that shall not affect the validity of enforceability in that jurisdiction of any other provision of this Policy.

Bullying Complaint Report Form

This report MUST be completed to file a complaint relating to an incident of alleged bullying and turned in to the school Principal or the school office.

Complainant Name (Last, First, Middle) Sex Grade

Victim Name (Last, First, Middle) Sex Grade

Accused Name (Last, First Middle) Sex Grade

Incident Date: _____

Describe the location where the incident took place:

Describe the incident:

List all witness names and grades:

List all evidence of bullying (i.e. letters, photos, etc. – attach evidence if possible):

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Complainant

Date