

DIOCESE OF PEORIA BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

POLICY

All schools and parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria 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.

DEFINITION

Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is 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 in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; and/or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school or parish religious education program

PROCEDURES

Any reported bullying issue shall be promptly brought to the attention of the appropriate party, the pastor, DRE, or principal or their designee, and thereafter investigated. Any student who engages in bullying and/or cyberbullying 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.

Types of Bullying

1. Relational: ostracizing another student, psychological manipulation, and systematic actions to isolate, shun, or exclude.
2. Verbal: name calling, put downs, and/or the spread of rumors.
3. Physical: aggressive acts such as hitting, slapping, choking, kicking, spitting, or pushing, as well as the destruction of property or the writing of offensive notes/graffiti.

4. Cyberbullying: actions associated with one or more types of bullying utilizing email, instant messaging, social networks, text messages, or other means of electronic communications.

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; or destruction or damage to the property of another.
- Written or 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 messaging, 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.
- Blocking access to school or parish 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 related to a student's race, color, sex, 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 create a hostile educational environment for the student.
- Any of the preceding conduct which occurs off school or parish grounds when such conduct creates, or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school or parish religious education setting and/or at school or parish sponsored activities and events.

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