

# **Archdiocese of Baltimore**

## **Bullying Prevention, Intervention, and Response Policy**

### **I. Policy Statement**

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation (as defined below) of any student is prohibited in all Archdiocese of Baltimore Schools. Such behaviors are contrary to school life in a Christ-centered community, which respects the dignity and uniqueness of all of God's children. To foster a school environment where all students are educated in a safe and caring atmosphere, all Archdiocesan schools will follow established procedures for prevention, intervention and response.

The Department of Catholic Schools will provide professional development for principals on prevention education designed to model and teach positive relationship building and appropriate interpersonal communication. School principals will ensure that faculty and staff are notified of this policy and professional development is provided. Each school will educate students and families about the dangers that result when students are targets/victims of bullying, and strategies for intervening when these incidents do occur. Schools will inform students of policy and reporting procedures during orientation sessions in classes during the first week of school. The policy and procedures should be published in each school's student/parent handbook and on the school's website.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation against anyone who has reported these behaviors is prohibited. Students engaging in these behaviors are subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.

Students, parents, employees, and service providers are responsible for reporting incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation. School principals will ensure that all illegal behaviors are reported to the appropriate local authorities and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools immediately.

The discrimination and harassment of students on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability or handicap are addressed under the Archdiocesan Student Harassment Policy in the Code of Conduct. Suspected abuse or neglect of students is addressed under the Policy for the Protection of Child and Youth.

### **II. Definitions**

As used in this policy, "bullying, harassment, or intimidation" means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including an electronic communication, that i) physically harms an individual; damages an individual's property; substantially interferes with an individual's education or learning environment; or places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual's person or property; and ii) occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

**Electronic technology:** communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager, etc.

**Retaliation:** an act of reprisal or revenge, i.e., getting back at a person for an act he /she committed (such as reporting misconduct).

### **III. Education**

Education on the prevention of and responses to bullying, harassment, and intimidation will be delivered to all students in kindergarten through grade twelve through orientation, religion classes, guidance lessons, or other age appropriate means.

School faculty will ensure that students are involved in activities that address bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, or intimidation and in creating a culture of peer support and mutual respect.

School faculty will promote student involvement in the anti-bullying efforts, peer support, mutual respect, and a culture which encourages students to report incidents of bullying to adults.

School principals will ensure that professional development is provided to school faculty and staff on how to respond appropriately to students who bully or are bullied, and how to empower bystanders.

School principals will provide parents with education on the negative impact of bullying for students, the family and the school community as well as proactive strategies to prevent bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

School principals will educate School Board members on the negative impact of bullying for students, the family and the school community and the school's bullying preventions, intervention and response policy and education protocols.

### **IV. Intervention**

School principals and/or their designee are responsible for providing appropriate assistance to students and parents who have been affected by behavior prohibited in this policy.

A student who violates this policy may be required to participate in appropriate counseling/intervention designated by the school principal that is designed to increase the student's understanding of the offense and its impact on others.

School principals will collaborate with the Department of Catholic Schools to address students who continue to be involved in bullying behaviors as perpetrators, targets/victims, or witnesses, and whose mental or physical health, safety, or academic performance has been impaired.

### **V. Procedures for Reporting**

1. When a student reports that he/she is or has been the target/victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the staff member will respond quickly and appropriately to intervene and report the incident to the school principal.
2. If a student wishes to discuss the incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation with a staff member, the staff member will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age appropriate way of doing so.
3. Student reports will be documented using the Bullying Prevention, Intervention and Response Reporting Form.
4. A student may request assistance from a staff member to complete the Bullying Prevention, Intervention and Response Reporting Form at school.

5. The student, a staff member, parent or close adult relative should complete and submit Bullying Prevention, Intervention and Response Reporting Form to the school principal in person, by mail, or electronically.
6. Reporting forms should be available in all schools in the main (front) office, counselor's office, and other locations determined by the school principal.
7. Principals will report all bullying incidents that result in suspension to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

## **VI. Procedures for Investigating**

1. All reports should be written using the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form. Reports must be promptly and appropriately investigated by the school principal or their designee upon receipt of a reporting form.
2. The school principal will take steps to verify who committed the act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and whether others played a role.
3. Other related complaints, if any, will be reviewed in making the determination as to whether bullying, harassment or intimidation occurred.
4. Neither the victim nor any witnesses should be promised confidentiality at the onset of an investigation as the outcome of the investigation cannot be predicted. All parties involved should be informed that any information discussed and recorded will be disclosed only on a "need to know" basis.
5. The school principal will promptly and appropriately notify parents of the victim and parents of the offender of the incident after receipt of the reporting form.

The school principal will apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with school disciplinary policies. The offender will be informed that retaliation against a victim or bystander is prohibited and will result in disciplinary consequences.

The school principal will create a written record of the bullying, harassment, or intimidation incident and any disciplinary actions taken, as well as the statements of the victim, witnesses, and offender. Discussions with all parties should be documented as soon as possible after the event. Any material records or evidence will not be discarded and will be maintained in a separate secure file.

The school principal will continue to monitor the resolution. Separate conferences with the victim and offender will occur within two weeks after the investigation. In addition another follow-up conference will be held with the victim four weeks after the initial follow-up conference.

## **VII. Consequences**

Consequences and remedial actions should be consistently and fairly applied for persons committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, for persons engaged in retaliation and for persons found to have intentionally made false accusations, after appropriate investigation has determined that such an offense has occurred. The following list of consequences and remedial actions is provided as a guide and by no

means limits the school from implementing other additional consequences and remedial actions. The seriousness of the behavior and prior conduct of the involved students are considered when determining appropriate consequences.

**Student Consequences:**

- Parent notification
- Time out (primary students)
- Loss of a privilege
- Verbal reprimand
- Completion of letter of acknowledgement of action, with apology to the victim (after reviewed by the principal and not in a case of sexual harassment or intimidation)
- Demerit
- Detention
- Reparation to victim in the form of payment for, or repair of damage to, possessions
- Reassignment of seats in class, cafeteria, or bus
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Extended suspension
- Expulsion

**Remedial Actions:**

- Parent/Student Conference
- Counseling with school counselor or school psychologist
- Education about the effects of bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Behavioral agreement
- Positive behavioral supports/plan that is appropriate to the developmental level of the student and the student's behavioral history
- Referral to an external agency
- Participation in counseling (delivered by a school or community mental health provider)
- Cooperation with a behavioral management program developed in consultation with a mental health professional

**Types of support services available to the student bully, victim, witnesses, and any bystanders:**

- Counseling/Conflict resolution
- Problem solving skills training (proactive, constructive, relationship-building)
- Social skills/competency training
- Anger management training
- Educational programming
- Parental involvement
- Peer support groups
- Schedule modifications
- Targeted use of monitors (e.g. hallways, cafeteria, buses)
- Public or private community-based mental health services
- Faith-based services
- Health Department Programs
- Department of Juvenile Services
- Department of Social Services
- Law enforcement agencies