

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

Introduction

At St. Dominic Catholic School we believe that all people should be treated respectfully as children of God and we aim to provide a safe and caring learning environment for our students. Bullying behaviors are actions that are contrary to these beliefs and to the teachings of our faith. Therefore, this policy has been put in place for all students attending our school.

The goal of the Bullying Prevention and Response Plan is as follows:

- To promote a Catholic educational environment in which bullying behaviors are not tolerated.
- To take positive action to prevent bullying behaviors from occurring through a well-communicated and clear policy.
- To inform students, parents, faculty, and staff of the expectations and to work together to maintain a positive school environment.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as an imbalance of power by which the behavior of a student or a group of students is hurtful, threatening, or frightening to another individual or group while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity, or on a school bus. Additionally, school administrators may address bullying outside of the school setting if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

Bullying is more than misconduct. Bullying behavior is intentional and repeated against the same student or group over time. An isolated incident is not bullying and will be addressed under the school's discipline policy.

Bullying includes but is not limited to the following:

Verbal Harassment – includes name calling, teasing and put-downs, spreading gossip/rumors, or threatening

Indirect Harassment – includes social exclusion and isolation, intimidating through actions and gestures, or making hurtful written comments

Being an Active Bystander – assisting or reinforcing the mean behavior of an individual or a group

Physical Violence or Threat of Physical Violence – includes hitting, shoving, kicking, throwing items at someone, taking items from someone, threatening or angry body language, destructive behavior with or towards objects, intimidation, forcing someone to do something, or other use of violence

Cyber-bullying - using technology to intimidate, embarrass, harass, threaten, or gossip

What Can We Do?

Staff, parents and students need to work together to prevent bullying behaviors. The success of this policy requires the following:

Staff members should:

- Encourage all students to report bullying behaviors they witness or experience.
- Remain alert to signs of bullying. Be visible and increase supervision in areas known as “hot spots” for bullying.
- If bullying is witnessed, take action and document behavior with a Correction Notice. Both sets of parents should also be notified (as stated on the Correction Notice).
- Offer support and encouragement to students being bullied.
- Provide students with skills to deal with bullying behavior and opportunities to practice these skills as outlined below.
- Discuss bullying in each classroom and foster a class culture of respect for others.
- Communicate to parents the anti-bullying strategies so they can be reinforced at home.
- Act as role models of tolerant and caring behavior.

Parents should:

- Be aware of their child’s actions and relationships. Maintain open communication with their child. Get to know their child’s friends and observe how they interact in social settings.
- Report concerns of bullying behavior to their child’s teacher, guidance counselor, and/or principal.
- Practice positive problem solving skills with their child.
- Support the school's bullying prevention policy and actively encourage their child to avoid bullying behavior.
- Be open to the idea that their child may be involved in bullying behaviors and work with the school to eliminate these behaviors.

Student bystanders should:

- Report incidents of bullying they witness to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident, or to another staff member as soon as possible following the incident.
- Stand up for the student being bullied and refuse to join in if they see someone being bullied.
- Offer support for people being mistreated.
- Encourage students who are being bullied to talk to their parents or trusted adults.

Students who are being bullied should:

- Report incidents of bullying to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident, or to another staff member as soon as possible following the incident.
- Talk to their parents or an adult they trust, such as a teacher, friend’s parent, or school counselor.
- Act confident. Hold their head up, stand up straight, make eye contact, and walk away confidently.
- Do not engage in violence or retaliation.
- Hang out with students who treat them with respect.
- Avoid situations where bullying can happen.

All students should:

- Treat others with the respect and dignity that is expected of any Catholic school student.

Disciplinary Action Plan

Inappropriate behavior may be handled in variety of ways depending on the incident.

Any bullying observed by a staff member must be documented on a Correction Notice with both parents being notified.

Isolated incidents which do not constitute bullying will be handled by the teacher in charge at the time of the incident. Depending on the severity of the incident, the principal, guidance counselor, and/or parents may be notified. Disciplinary guidelines set forth in the school handbook will be followed.

When bullying behavior is reported, the initial action will be for the teacher, guidance counselor, and/or principal to talk with the students involved in the incident. Then, at a minimum, the following actions will be taken:

1st Offense: A Correction Notice will be issued with both parents being notified of the concerning event(s).

2nd Offense: A parent/student conference will be scheduled with the principal to determine the course of action, which may include a detention or suspension.

3rd Offense: The minimum action will be a detention and the maximum action would be expulsion at the discretion of the principal.

In addition, based on the behavior, the following may occur:

- Student may be denied recess time or participation in other activities.
- Student may be assigned a written punishment, which may require a parent's signature.
- Student may be removed from the class for a specified period of time.
- Student may be required to remain after school to complete work.

We read the Bullying Prevention and Response plan and understand that bullying behaviors will not be tolerated. We also understand that in order to address bullying situations, we need to make the staff aware of these incidents. We will do our part to promote a safe and caring environment at St. Dominic Catholic School.

Family Name

Parent Signature

Student(s) Signature

Date