

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

Introduction

This policy has been created to support our school's mission, to support our commitment to provide a safe environment for all, and to support our students in developing the self direction and skills necessary for positive social interaction.

In any school community, there will be times when students do not get along. In most cases bullying occurs because an individual lacks the self-discipline skills needed to get along in society. Our policy and procedures are based on the Discipline with Purpose Anti-Bullying Curriculum *Anyone Could Be a Bully*, and are designed to guide our community in responding to bullying and other negative social behaviors so that students move past these negative behaviors and develop skills to learn and play together as part of the community.

This policy applies to all students, parents, faculty, and adults on our campus, whether attending school, employed by the school, working as contractors, volunteering or visiting.

Policy Statement

At Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School we believe that all people have dignity because they are created in God's image and are of infinite value. We further believe that as a Catholic Christian community we are called to reflect the values of Jesus in His regard and respect for all people. In this way, we build up the Body of Christ within our school community, and provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for all members.

Any form of bullying directed toward any member of our school community by another member of the community is contrary to these Christian values and is not acceptable at any time.

The school will provide ongoing and age-appropriate anti-bullying and social skills education for all students, as well as education for staff and parents on these same topics, in order to promote the prevention of bullying behaviors within our school community.

The school will provide ways for individuals to report incidents of bullying and other negative social behaviors that are of concern.

The school will treat seriously any reports of bullying behaviors or concerns. Such reports will be reviewed and investigated in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Consequences will be applied according to our classroom and school discipline cycles, and in some cases may result in suspension and/or required withdrawal depending on the nature of the infraction.

Prevention and Education

Bullying prevention begins with all members of our community being able to communicate clearly about the concerns and issues. Learning to distinguish the difference between normal social ups and downs, negative social behaviors such as meanness and rudeness, and actual bullying is part of the process for all of us. To that end, we provide the following definitions for our common understanding:

Bullying – when a student (or group of students) attempts to take power over another student. Bullying can be repeated over time or consist of a single interaction, with students adopting the roles of target, bully, bully-follower or bystander.

Physical Bullying – using physical force to hurt another student by behaviors that may include but are not limited to hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, spitting, pinching, getting in the way or holding. It is also physical bullying to interfere with another student's belongings, to take or break possessions, and to demand or steal money.

Verbal Bullying – directing words at another student with the intention of putting down or humiliating. This includes but is not limited to threatening, taunting, intimidating, insulting, sarcasm, name-calling, teasing, put-downs and ridiculing. It is also considered verbal bullying when a student uses hostile gestures towards another student, such as making faces, staring, giving the evil eye, and eye-rolling.

Relational Bullying – when a student influences other students' friendships and relationships by actions that include but are not limited to deliberately leaving them out, spreading gossip and rumor, whispering about them, giving the silent treatment, ostracizing or scape-goating. Relational bullying also includes writing words or creating cartoons, posters or drawings about another student designed to hurt or humiliate that student.

Cyber Bullying – the use of cell phones, text messages, e-mails, instant messaging, web blogs and postings to bully another student in any of the ways described above. Examples of cyber bullying include but are not limited to sending threatening or insulting messages by phone and e-mail, posting embarrassing pictures and personal information about others on blogs or social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace, forwarding to others a private e-mail or text message that was meant for a single individual, and spreading hurtful rumors online.

The educational and social skills components of our bullying prevention program will be based on the Discipline with Purpose Anti-Bullying Curriculum, and will draw on other resources as necessary and appropriate for our students and school community.

Reporting Procedures

All members of the OLPH Catholic School community have the right and responsibility to report incidents of concern regarding negative social behaviors and bullying so that together we can maintain a safe environment for all and practice the skills necessary for positive relationships within the community. School administration and teachers are not always present to witness incidents or areas of concern, and therefore can only intervene when they are informed about them.

Students are encouraged to report bullying concerns to their classroom teacher or another school staff member by way of a verbal report or written note, or by completing a bullying concern report form ("*I'm Concerned*" Report Form). Student reports can also be placed in the Concerns Box outside of the Health Office.

Parents are also encouraged to report directly to faculty or administration their concerns about any bullying behaviors. Parent reports can be made by way of a verbal or written report, or by completing a bullying concern report form. Parent reports can also be placed in the Concerns Box outside of the Health Office.

Teachers and Staff will report to the school administration all bullying concerns and incidents that come to their attention through either direct observation or reports from others. All reports that teachers share with the administration will be documented on a bullying concern report form.

School Administration can also initiate a process to address an observed concern or incident. Depending on the concern, their report may be shared with the classroom teacher of the student(s) involved. All administration initiated reports will be documented on a bullying concern report form.

School Administration will maintain records of all reports filed during the school year.

Intervention Procedures

All reports of bullying concerns will be handled seriously and promptly by the faculty and administration. Upon review and investigation of a report, some concerns will be addressed within the classroom by the teacher, while more serious and repeated concerns will be referred to the administration for further intervention.

Intervention in bullying concerns, like all disciplinary matters at OLPH, will be addressed with the two DWP goals in mind: to maintain safety and order within the community, and to identify, teach, and practice the skill(s) needed to prevent the unwanted behavior from occurring again.

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in order to protect all of the individuals involved in the matter.