

Bullying Policy

It is defined as: The repeated intimidation of students by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or emotional abuse, or through attacks on the property of another. It may include, but is not limited to, such actions as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs—either ethnically- or gender-based, and extortion of money or possessions. Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and the Christian and spiritual environment and therefore, bullying is unacceptable behavior at Our Mother of Sorrows School.

This policy shall apply both to activities on school property and other school-sponsored events that may occur away from the school. The following components are part of this policy:

1. A procedure for pupils to confidentially report to school officials incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
2. A procedure for parents and guardians of pupils to submit written reports to school officials suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
3. A requirement that school district employees report suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying to the appropriate school official
4. A formal process for the documentation of reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, except that no documentation shall be maintained unless the harassment, intimidation, or bullying has been proven
5. A formal process for the investigation by the appropriate school officials of suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
6. Disciplinary procedures for pupils who have admitted or been found to have committed incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
7. A procedure that sets forth consequences for submitting false reports of incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying

Our Mother of Sorrows school will give notice of this policy to students, parents/guardians, and staff in the Parent Handbook and Faculty Handbook.

Reporting Procedure

OMOS School encourages any student who believes s/he has been the victim of bullying or any student who has witnessed bullying to report the incident(s) at once to any teacher, staff, or administrator of the school.

Verbal complaints should be documented on the *Bullying Report Form* by the adult receiving the complaint.

- A simplified children's version of the form may be used for younger children.
- Verbal or written reports should be made to the administrator as soon as possible.
- Verbal reports must be followed up within 10 working days with a written report.
- Teachers may want to provide an anonymous procedure for reporting, such as a "problem box".

Bullying reports are treated as confidential data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law. The privacy of the complainant, accused, and witnesses will be protected as much as possible within the framework of the school's obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations.

Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the reporter's education or work environment. No retaliation will be allowed as a result of a bullying report.

Investigative Procedure

Upon receipt of a verbal or written complaint the administrator (or designee) will:

1. Interview the reporter (faculty or staff member).
2. Interview the victim.
3. Interview the witnesses.
4. Interview the accused.

These interviews will be conducted individually, in a manner to protect the privacy of all involved persons, and may be done in consultation with the school counselor--as deemed appropriate. Parents of the victim and the accused will be notified. Depending upon the severity of the alleged action, law enforcement or Child Protective Services personnel may also be contacted. A *Bullying Behaviors Chart* is to be used as a reference tool for determining the degree/severity of the incident.

Disciplinary Procedure

Student Violators

OMOS School follows the *Discipline With Purpose* model as a general school disciplinary policy. It is commonly recognized that bullying is a form of misbehavior outside the realm of minor, everyday mischief or schoolyard squabbles and involves a pronounced imbalance of personal power between aggressor and victim as well as an element of repetition. For this reason, incidents of bullying will be treated in a more formalized manner.

- For **mild or moderate incidents** of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, parents of the victim and the aggressor will be contacted and informed of the incident; the aggressor

will receive a verbal reprimand and be assigned detention—either during school or after school and will be allowed to return to class; the victim will receive verbal support and assurance. A repeat offense against the same victim will involve a parent conference, detention, and referral to the counselor. Further offenses will result in suspension and if there is no evidence of progress, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from school.

- For **severe incidents** the aggressor will be removed from class and parents of victim and aggressor will be contacted. For the aggressor, mandatory, documented counseling will be required; and s/he will face suspension, at minimum, and possible expulsion or legal action, depending on the nature and severity of the incident. The victim will be offered counseling by the school counselor and be given supportive care, increased vigilance, and reassurance.
- Students **making false claims** of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be sent for a conference with the principal after the first offense. A second false claim will result in a phone call to parents, counseling, and detention. Repeat offenders will face suspension or possible expulsion at the discretion of the principal.

Failure to Act; Reprisals

- Failure of a staff member to inform administration in a timely manner of a bullying incident may subject the staff member to disciplinary action in accordance with Diocesan policy and legal requirements.
- Any administrator, teacher, staff member, volunteer, or student who retaliates against a person making a good faith report of bullying or assisting in the investigation of a bullying incident will face discipline or other appropriate action. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

Education and Training

OMOS School will provide education and information to students, parents, and employees regarding bullying, including information regarding this bullying policy, what constitutes bullying, the harmful effects of bullying, how to seek help, how to give help, and other initiatives to prevent bullying.