

Our Mother of Sorrows Bullying Policy

Overview

Our Mother of Sorrows School is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from harassment and bullying. Harassment or bullying of any student by any other student or school employee or volunteer is prohibited. The school treats allegations of harassment or bullying seriously and will promptly investigate such allegations and take appropriate corrective action.

A complaint of harassment or bullying does not, in and of itself, create a presumption of wrongdoing. Substantiated acts of harassment or bullying, however, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Students found to have filed false or frivolous charges may also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Harassment or bullying occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment or a school environment which is hostile or intimidating by a 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, derogatory written words, drawings or gestures, and extortion of money or possessions. Such conduct is disruptive to the educational process and the Christian and spiritual environment. Therefore, harassment and bullying are unacceptable behaviors at Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School.

Our Mother of Sorrows is also concerned about cyber-bullying and its impact on children. It causes emotional harm, and can result in children's depression, anger, school failure and physical harm to themselves and others.

If in the judgment of school officials any cyber activity occurring off-school premises could result in the harassment, intimidation or bullying of an Our Mother of Sorrows student, such cyber activity may be treated as an offense under the school's Bullying Policy. Examples of proscribed cyber activity, though not exhaustive, are:

1. Sending or posting harmful materials online or through a cell phone that, in the judgment of school officials, might pose a threat to another;
2. Posting threatening statements or distressing material about others either online or through a cell phone;
3. Disclosing personal or intimate information (whether or not true), including photos, addresses and phone numbers, about another in an "imposter" website (a website created by a person other than the person depicted on the website).
4. Posting hateful or derogatory material about another student, faculty, or staff member either online or through a cell phone.

This policy shall apply to activities on school property, all school-sponsored events whether at school or away from the school, any online learning lessons including, but not limited to, recorded videos and live online sessions, and to activity (whether on school property or not)

which causes harassment or bullying to be suffered by an Our Mother of Sorrows student or any bullying taking place with an Our Mother of Sorrows issued device. The following components are part of this policy:

- A procedure for pupils to confidentially report to school officials incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- A procedure for parents and guardians of pupils to submit written reports to school officials of suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- A requirement that school employees or volunteers report suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying to the appropriate school official
- A formal process for the documentation of reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, except that no such documentation shall be maintained unless the harassment, intimidation, or bullying has been proven
- A formal process for the investigation by the appropriate school officials of suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- Disciplinary procedures for pupils who have admitted or been found to have committed incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- Disciplinary procedures for pupils who have submitted false reports of incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying

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

Reporting Procedure

- Our Mother of Sorrows School encourages any student who believes s/he has been the victim of harassment or bullying, or any student who has witnessed acts of harassment or bullying, to report the incident(s) at once to any teacher, staff, or administrator of the school.
- Oral complaints should be documented by the adult receiving the complaint.
 - ❖ A simplified children's version of the form may be used for younger children.
 - ❖ Oral or written reports should be made to the administrator as soon as possible.
 - ❖ Oral reports must be followed up within 10 working days with a written report.
 - ❖ Teachers may provide an anonymous procedure for reporting
- Harassment and 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 harassment or bullying will not affect the reporter's education or work environment. No retaliation will be allowed as a result of a harassment or bullying report.

Investigative Procedure

Upon receipt of an oral or written complaint, the principal (or designee) will:

1. Interview the reporter (volunteer, faculty or staff member),
2. Victim,
3. Witnesses,

4. Accused

These interviews will generally be conducted individually, in a manner to protect the privacy of all involved persons. 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.

Disciplinary Procedure - Student Violators

At Our Mother of Sorrows, proscribed harassment or 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 harassment and 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 an oral reprimand and be assigned detention—either during school or after school and will be allowed to return to class; the victim will receive oral support and assurance. A repeat offense against the same victim by the same aggressor will involve for the aggressor 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.

Disciplinary Procedure - Failure to Act; Reprisals

- Failure of a volunteer or staff member to inform administration in a timely manner of harassment or bullying incidents may subject the volunteer or 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 harassment or bullying, or assisting in the investigation of a harassment or 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

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