

Policy Statement

The intent of this policy is to support our Catholic schools' commitment to provide a safe learning environment for all students. As we are all created in God's image and likeness, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lafayette affirms that all people have inherent dignity. We are called to reflect the values of Jesus in His regard and respect for all people as it is written "So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the Law and the Prophets." (Mt. 7, 12). In this way, we build up the Body of Christ within our Catholic schools. Bullying and hazing creates an environment in which dignity and respect are compromised. Therefore, we attest, bullying and hazing have no place in our Catholic schools.

This policy shall apply to all students and shall be in effect while students are on school property, while on school-owned or school-operated/leased vehicles, while attending or engaged in school sanctioned activities, and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management, and/or the reputation/welfare of the school.

Prevention/Education

To enhance the education, formation, and safety of our students, schools should endeavor to actively promote positive student behavior while prohibiting inappropriate behavior such as bullying and hazing. Therefore, schools operating in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lafayette are strongly encouraged to:

- o Prohibit all forms of student bullying and hazing;
- o Provide adequate supervision to minimize the risk of bullying and hazing;
- o Provide continuing education/professional development on bully prevention for faculty and staff members;
- o Develop school-wide bullying and hazing prevention programs to educate students;
- o Incorporate bullying and hazing prevention lessons into the school's curriculum.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a deliberate and malicious pattern of behavior having the effect of physically, psychologically and/or emotionally harming another through abuse, coercion, intimidation and/or threats where the pattern of behavior is sufficiently severe, persistent and pervasive so as to create an intimidating or threatening educational environment, to substantially interfere with a student's performance in school, or to substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying may be physical or verbal and may be in the form of gestures, writings, electronic transmissions, social media posts, sharing of photographs/video or physical acts. Bullying may be in the following forms:

- o Gestures (including but not limited to obscene gestures and making faces);
- o Name-calling, threats of harm, taunting and malicious teasing;

- Spreading untrue, injurious rumors;
- Disseminating inappropriate or embarrassing photographs or video;
- Hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, choking, and other physical acts;
- Damaging and/or unauthorized use of personal property;
- Repeated shunning and/or isolation of another from groups or activities.

Definition of Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying and is defined as the transmission of any electronic textual, visual, written, or oral communication with the malicious and willful intent to emotionally harm, coerce, and/or intimidate. Electronic devices may include, but are not limited to:

- Computers
- Tablets
- Mobile phones
- Other interactive or digital technologies

Definition of Hazing

Hazing is the deliberate encouragement, direction and/or participation (active or passive) of any activity which subjects another student to actual or potential physical, psychological or emotional harm, or civil or criminal consequences for the purpose of initiation into, admission to, affiliation with, continued membership in or acceptance by existing members of any school organization, group, or extracurricular activity, whether occurring on or off campus. "Consent" of the victim shall not be recognized as a defense to the school's prohibition of hazing. Hazing may involve harassment, degradation, humiliation, intimidation and/or ridicule to an individual or group, willful destruction of public or private property, or criminal or other offensive acts against third parties.

Reporting

The principal/designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of the anti-bullying and hazing policy. All school employees and volunteers supervising school-sponsored functions should report alleged violations of the policy to the principal/designee.

Investigation

Once an allegation is made, the principal/designee should promptly investigate the claim as soon as feasible under the circumstances. Any student accused of violating this policy shall be advised of the complaint and shall be given an opportunity to be heard. The extent of the investigation shall be at the discretion of the principal/designee as dictated by the facts and circumstances, and may include interviews and a review of any evidence presented and/or discovered.

Documentation

Documentation of the allegation, the results from the investigation, and the disposition is to be maintained in the school's student records of both the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s).

Notification

Parents/guardians of the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) are to be notified by the principal/designee.

False Accusation

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or hazing is subject to disciplinary action as set forth in this policy.

Retaliation

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying or hazing in good faith is prohibited and is subject to disciplinary action as set forth in this policy.

Discipline

Disciplinary action arising out of a violation of this policy shall be at the discretion of the school administration. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, a warning, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Repeat violators are subject to additional disciplinary action.