



SAINT CATHERINE of SIENA SCHOOL

2020/2021 BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

1. Introduction

Saint Catherine of Siena School acknowledges that its purpose for existence is rooted in the mission of the Church. In fulfilling its role within the educational mission of the Church, the school must establish an educational environment in which Catholic values and beliefs permeate all aspects of its daily life and operations. Each child must be challenged to reach his/her full potential by fostering in each child a love of learning and by providing an environment that also fosters respect and understanding of one another. In this regard, it is essential that a safe and positive school climate be established in which students can attain the highest academic achievement and in which no student shall be subjected to bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation. Bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation constitute conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the school's ability to educate its students in a safe and inclusive environment. The school's faculty and support staff expect that all students behave appropriately and treat others with civility and respect. Bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation are not to be tolerated. Accordingly, the school hereby promulgates this ***Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan*** as required by the Archdiocese of Boston Bullying Prevention Policy.

2. Definitions

For purposes of this Plan, the following definitions shall apply:

Aggressor means a student who engages in bullying or retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act of gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property
- Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the target
- Infringes on the rights of the target at the school
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school

By way of example only, bullying may involve, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted teasing
- Threatening
- Intimidating
- Stalking
- Cyber-Stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, racial, or any other type of harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of school or personal property
- Social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
- Rumor or spreading of falsehoods

Cyber-Bullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by:

- Wire
- Radio
- Electromagnetics
- Photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posing of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Hostile Environment means a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe to alter the conditions of the student's education.

Retaliation means any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

School Grounds mean property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

Faculty and Support Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, faculty, administrators, counselors, School nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, and paraprofessionals.

Target means a student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

3. Priorities

Saint Catherine of Siena School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

Saint Catherine of Siena School is committed to providing all students with a safe and respectful learning environment that is free from bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement. Through our daily routines and our curriculum, we maintain our commitment to prevent, intervene, and respond to incidents of bullying and retaliation.

4. Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation

Bullying is prohibited:

- On Saint Catherine of Siena School grounds owned, leased or used by the school
- At any Saint Catherine of Siena School- sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds
- At a school bus stop
- On a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school
- Through technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by Saint Catherine of Siena School
- On field trips and all off campus activities

Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school if the act or acts in question:

- Create a hostile environment at school for the target
- Infringe on the rights of the target at school
- Materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the school

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying or retaliation provides information during an investigation of bullying or retaliation, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying or retaliation is also prohibited.

5. Reporting of Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, or Retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by faculty and support staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a faculty or support staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school faculty or support staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the faculty or support staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school faculty or support staff members, may be made anonymously.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the Principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report does not limit the authority of the faculty or support staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by Students, Parents, or Guardians, and Others

St. Catherine of Siena School expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents, or guardians and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a faculty or support staff member or with the Principal or designee.

6. Responding to a report of Bullying or Retaliation

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a faculty or support staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and monitoring the aggressor’s access to the target. The Principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

7. Obligations to Notify Others

Notice to Parents or Guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal, Vice Principal, or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. **Notice to Law Enforcement:** At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency.

Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Investigation

The Principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation and the ages of the children involved. During the investigation the Principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, faculty and support staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. To the extent practicable, and given obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Determinations

The Principal or designee will make a determination based upon all the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The Principal or designee will determine what remedial action is required, if any, and determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Responses to Bullying

Please refer to the Saint Catherine of Siena *Student-Parent/Guardian Handbook 2020-2021* for disciplinary action.