



Holy Name Parish School

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BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

I. Introduction

Holy Name Parish 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 share and live out, through Catholic Christian tradition, the educational environment that permeates 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, positive and productive educational environment be established where students can attain the highest academic achievement and where no student shall be subjected to Bullying, Cyber-Bullying or Retaliation. Bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, or other similar disruptive or violent behaviors constitute conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the school's ability to educate its students in a safe and embracing environment. The school's staff expects 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.

II. 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

For the purpose of this Plan, whenever the term “Bullying” is used to denote either Bullying or Cyber-Bullying (as defined below).

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 a:

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.

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.

III. Priorities

Holy Name Parish School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

Holy Name Parish 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 the specific curricula of “Talking About Touching” and “Steps to Respect” we maintain our commitment to prevent, intervene, and respond to incidents of bullying and retaliation. Administration, working under the oversight of the Pastor is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

Our belief and commitment to the safety of our children may include intervention to prevent inappropriate behavior before a student becomes a target of bullying as is described by the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Law.

IV. Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

Bullying is prohibited:

- On Holy Name Grounds owned, leased or used by a School
- On property immediately adjacent to Holy Name Grounds
- At any Holy Name 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 Holy Name 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.

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

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

Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the Principal or Vice Principal 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 staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Reporting by Students, Parents, or Guardians, and Others

Holy Name Parish 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 Vice Principal. 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 staff member or with the Principal or Vice Principal.

VI. Responding to a report of Bullying or Retaliation

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal or Vice Principal 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 staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and monitoring the aggressor’s access to the target.

The Principal, Vice 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.

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, Vice 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, Vice Principal, or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal, Vice 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, Vice 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, Vice 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, Vice Principal, or designee will, among other things, interview students, Staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary.

The Principal, Vice 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, Vice Principal, or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal, Vice Principal, or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Determinations

The Principal, Vice Principal, or designee will make a determination based upon all the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal, Vice 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, Vice 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 Holy Name Parish School Handbook for disciplinary actions.