

Saints Peter and Paul Policy to Address Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation
Subject: BULLYING – HARASSMENT - INTIMIDATION COMPLAINT PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

I. Procedures

All school employees who observe, receive reports of, overhear, or otherwise witness bullying, intimidation, or harassment or to whom such harassment is reported shall take prompt and appropriate action.

Staff members who engage in or fail to appropriately address bullying, harassment, or intimidation may be subject to disciplinary consequences as stated in employee contracts. Per Maryland law, a school employee who reports an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation in accordance with this regulation is not civilly liable for any act or omission in reporting or failing to report an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

A. Definitions (list is not intended to be all inclusive)

1. Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

As used in this regulation, bullying, harassment, or intimidation means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or intentional electronic communication based on a single incident or pattern of behaviors that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being and is:

- Motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, physical or mental ability or disability; and is
- Threatening or seriously intimidating; and
- Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a bus; or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.
- Also prohibited are reprisals or retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, intimidation, or harassment or who are targets, witnesses, bystanders or others with information about an act of bullying, intimidation, or harassment.

2. Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation due to Sex

For purposes of this regulation, sexual harassment is a form of discrimination based on sex and consists of unwelcome and unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature by another person when:

- a. The harassing conduct causes a student to believe that he or she must submit to unwelcome sexual conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or when an employee or third party agent of the school district causes a student to believe that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to unwelcome sexual conduct; or

- b. The unwelcome sexual conduct is severe, persistent or pervasive such that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.
3. Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation due to Race, National Origin, Disability, Religion or Socioeconomic Status
- a. Harassment based on race or national origin can include an individual's ancestry, country of origin, or country of origin of the student's parents, family members, or ancestors. In addition, harassment can occur because a person is an immigrant, speaks another language or has a foreign accent.
 - b. Harassment based on disability refers to an individual having a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities or references to the program or services a student receives based on his/her disability.
 - c. Harassment based on religion includes reference to an individual's commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance.
 - d. Harassment based on socioeconomic status relates to or involves a combination of social and economic factors in regard to an individual.
 - e. Bullying and/or harassment may occur when:
 - 1) The conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.
 - 2) The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance.
 - 3) The conduct otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities.

B. Prevention

The school recognizes its responsibility to implement the following practices in an effort to prevent bullying and harassment in the schools:

- 1. Conduct professional development for administrators and all staff to increase awareness of the prevalence, causes and consequences of bullying and to increase the use of evidence-based strategies for preventing bullying. Additional professional development may be provided for new employees who are hired after the start of school during the school year.
- 2. Implement counseling and curriculum activities on bullying and sexual harassment prevention using school-wide evidence-based anti-bullying programs as a part of a system of positive behavioral supports and school improvement efforts at all grade levels.

3. Create school climate improvement efforts to promote student involvement in the anti-bullying efforts, peer support, mutual respect, and a culture which encourages students to report incidents of bullying to adults.
4. Collect school data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying to guide internal decision-making related to supervision, prevention, intervention and professional development.

C. Administrative Process/Requirements

1. Student Who Makes a Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation Complaint

- a. All complaints that are reported will be investigated.
 - 1) School staff will initiate the investigation of student complaints against students in a timely fashion, ideally within two (2) days.
 - 2) If a student expresses a desire to discuss an incident of bullying, intimidation, or harassment with a staff member, the staff member will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.
 - 3) *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms* may be submitted by a student, parent, close adult relative, or staff member to school administration. A student may request assistance from a staff member to complete the form if the student wishes. The *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms* may be obtained from teachers, the school counselor, and the principal. Forms may be turned into home room teachers or school counselor.
 - 4) Student complaints against a staff member will be initially investigated by the school principal in consultation with the pastor. The principal and the pastor will jointly determine appropriate follow-up investigations as warranted.
 - 5) The principal and/or pastor will investigate a complaint against a volunteer, vendor, or other person having business or contact with the school system and will report findings and recommend appropriate action to the pastor or the designee.
 - 6) It cannot be predicted what will be discovered or if a hearing may result from the ultimate outcome of the investigation. Efforts will be made, however, to increase the confidence and trust of the targeted individual and any witnesses, by informing them that any information discussed and recorded will be confined to "need to know" status. Neither the targeted individual nor witnesses should be promised absolute confidentiality at the onset of an investigation.
- b. If it has been established that an incident may have occurred, a school staff member shall contact a parent/guardian of the student making the complaint and the parents of the offender of the incident.

- c. The school staff member reporting the incident will inform the parent/legal guardian that the student is being offered support and follow-up will occur after the initial conference to determine if the bullying, intimidation, or harassment has ceased.
 - d. The school staff member conducting the investigation will complete the incident investigation form and send copies to the appropriate homeroom teacher.
 - e. The school staff member will create a written record of the bullying, harassment or intimidation incident and any disciplinary actions taken, as well as the statements of the targeted individual, witnesses, and offender. Such documents are considered confidential as they contain student record information. Discussions with all parties should be documented as soon as possible after the event.
 - f. Information obtained from the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms* shall be recorded for data collection.
 - g. If at any time the parent/legal guardian has questions or concerns about the process, they may contact first the teacher and then the principal if needed.
2. Student Against Whom the Complaint is Made
- a. Consequences and remedial actions for persons committing acts of bullying, intimidation, or harassment and for peers engaged in reprisal or retaliation and for persons found to have made false accusations will be imposed.
 - b. A teacher conference may be held with the parent/legal guardian and student to determine how best to help the student to prevent future acts of misconduct.
 - c. The administrator/school staff member should be aware that some acts of bullying, intimidation, or harassment could also be delinquent acts. If they are delinquent acts, they promptly shall be reported to the responsible law enforcement agency.
 - d. Intervention/Remediation may include:
 - 1) Professional development for school staff on how to respond appropriately to students who bully, are bullied, and are bystanders who report bullying.
 - 2) Education/counseling for the students exhibiting bullying behaviors may include teaching replacement behaviors, development of empathy, tolerance and sensitivity to diversity.
 - 3) Remedial measures shall be designed to correct the bullying behavior, prevent another occurrence, and protect the victim.
 - 4) Support/counseling for the victim will include protection from retaliation and further episodes of bullying.
 - 5) A continuum of interventions developed to prevent bullying by addressing the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who bully in order to prevent further incidents, while taking great care to ensure the safety of the victim.

- 6) Utilizing community health and mental health resources for those students who are unable to stop bullying behaviors in spite of school intervention and for those students involved in bullying behaviors as perpetrators or victims whose mental or physical health, safety, or academic performance has been impacted.

e. Consequences may include, but are not limited to (and are not listed in a particular order):

- Time out
- Loss of a privilege
- Notify a parent
- Detention
- Parent/Student conference
- Reassignment of seats in class, cafeteria, or bus
- Reassignment to another mode of transportation
- Completion of a reflection activity
- Reparation to victim in the form of payment for or repair of damage to possession
- Education about the effects of bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Behavioral Contract
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Extended suspension
- Positive behavioral supports- behavioral intervention plan; remediation of problem behaviors that takes into account the nature of the offense, the developmental level of the student, and the student's behavioral history
- Referral to an external agency
- Participation in counseling (delivered by a community mental health provider)
- Cooperation with a behavioral management program developed in consultation with a mental health professional
- Referral to law enforcement
- Expulsion

3. Support services are available to the student bully, the targeted individual, witnesses, and any bystanders. Interventions and programs will be implemented as appropriate based on context, situation, age, and severity.

D Notification

SSPP notifies all students and staff annually of its discrimination/harassment/bullying complaint process regulation via the SSPP web site and Parent Update.