



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools of the Archdiocese. It must not be tolerated during the school day nor during any school sponsored activities on or off the school grounds. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. This behavior against the fundamental tenet of “Love your neighbor as yourself”, and destroys respect for the dignity of the student, undermines the Christian atmosphere of the school, and deprives the student a safe and caring learning environment.

Purpose

Holy Cross Catholic School is committed to providing a faith-filled environment grounded in Catholic values. A safe educational environment is essential for students and teachers to carry out their roles and for Holy Cross to carry out its mission. This policy does not replace any policies that deal with individual student misconduct of behavior addressed in the “Expectations of the Student” section of the Parent/Student Handbook.

Definitions

A. For purposes of this policy, “bullying” means a pattern of deliberate or intentional behavior, involving the use of words or actions that are intended to cause fear, distress, intimidation, seclusion, or harm. Bullying is a repeated behavior or a pattern of behavior, and it may involve an imbalance of physical, social, or psychological power. Bullying can take different forms, including:

1. Verbal (e.g., using threatening or intimidating language, teasing, and name-calling);
2. Social (e.g., spreading rumors, ostracizing or socially excluding others, breaking up friendships);
3. Physical (e.g., physical acts and gestures including hitting, kicking or tripping, theft, damaging property, threatening or intimidating behavior); and
4. Cyber-bullying (e.g., misusing the internet, social media sites, mobile phones, or other digital technologies to tease, intimidate, humiliate, defame, threaten, harass, stalk, or terrorize another person).

B. For purposes of this policy, “on school property or at school-related functions” means all Holy Cross School buildings, school grounds, school property or property adjacent to school grounds, Holy Cross School buses, or school-related trips, functions, activities, or events.

Statement of Policy

A. Holy Cross School prohibits bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, on school property or at school-related functions. Holy Cross School also prohibits cyber-bullying, regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off school property or with or without the use of school resources. These prohibitions apply to students who directly engage in an act of bullying, and to students who condone or support another student's act of bullying. This policy also applies to any student whose conduct constitutes bullying, and that conduct thus interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school, or the safety or welfare of other students, volunteers, or employees.

B. Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

C. A person who feels that he or she has been bullied should immediately report the details of the incident or incidences. For purposes of accuracy, the victim should report directly to a Holy Cross School staff member. All reports made by students will be investigated to determine if policy was violated, and who is accountable for the violation.

A person who observes an act of bullying or becomes aware of such an act must report it to a school staff member. Anyone with any bullying-related concerns may also contact the principal.

D. Retaliation against a victim, a good faith reporter, or a witness is prohibited.

E. False accusations or reports of bullying are prohibited.

F. A student who violates this policy shall be subject to discipline for that act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures. Holy Cross School may take into account all factors it determines to be relevant. Depending on the circumstances, such factors might include:

1. The age, developmental, and maturity levels of the parties involved;
2. The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature and severity of the behavior;
3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior;
4. The relationship between the parties involved;
5. The context in which the bullying occurred.

G. Depending on the level and severity of the offense, discipline may range from positive behavioral interventions to a more serious consequence such as suspension or expulsion. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of collusion may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school property and events. Reports of bullying and disciplinary actions taken as a result of bullying are classified as private and confidential data. This data will not be disclosed except as permitted by law.