

Diocesan Policy #5050.6

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

A safe and civil environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, bullying and like behaviors will not be tolerated as they are contrary to the mission of Roman Catholic Schools to educate the whole child in a God-centered environment and to facilitate growth and self-actualization.

Definition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

Harassment, intimidation and/or bullying consist of any gesture, electronic communication, or written, verbal or physical act that is reasonably perceived as having the purpose or effect of either (1) creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment, or (2) interfering with a student's physical or emotional well-being or with the operation of the school. Harassment, intimidation and bullying are serious incidents that amount to more than annoyances, disagreements or disputes typical of a particular age group.

Cyber-bullying is a form of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying under this policy. Examples of cyber-bullying include, but are not limited to: posting inappropriate pictures or personal information of a student or individual on the internet; using social media to post or send harassing, intimidating or inappropriate messages about or to another student or individual; and sending harassing, intimidating or inappropriate text messages or email about or to another student or individual. In some cases, violations of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy may also violate this policy.

Retaliation

Retaliation for reports of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying is prohibited. The procedures in place for addressing harassment, intimidation and/or bullying apply with equal force to allegations of retaliation.

Reporting Incidents of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

Individuals who become aware of conduct that may violate the school's anti-harassment policy are to report the incident to the **student's teacher**. School personnel are to report any violation of the anti-harassment policy to **the principal** within a school day.

If you have reason to believe that a violation of this policy has occurred, contact:

**Mrs. Elizabeth K. Tonkovich, Principal, (732) 840-1412,
etonkovich@stdomschool.org**

Resolving Complaints of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

When an informal resolution process is utilized, the school will: (1) provide prompt notice to the student(s) and their parent(s) of the charges; (2) allow an opportunity for students involved to present their accounts of the event; (3) conduct conferences with the reporting person and any appropriate witnesses or school personnel; and (4) consider the privacy interests of the students involved, particularly during the investigation process. If the incident is one which suggests the possibility of suspension or expulsion, **Policy 5050.3, Suspension Policy**, or **Policy 5050.4, Expulsion Policy**, would be followed.

In the course of resolving a complaint under this policy, the school will strive to balance the need to fully investigate the allegations with the privacy of the individuals involved. Therefore, information gathered during the investigation and resolution process will only be shared on a “need-to-know” basis with those directly involved in the incident and investigation. Additionally, information may be shared with Senior Administration Officials including the Superintendent’s Designee and the Superintendent.

Resolution of a complaint of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying depends on the context and circumstances of each case. The range of responses may vary. Counseling may also be recommended. Factors considered in determining an appropriate disciplinary response include, but are not limited to:

- Age, developmental and maturity levels of the students involved
- Degree of harm
- Nature and severity of the conduct
- History or pattern of behavior
- Relationship between students involved

The school will also consider the need to implement appropriate remedial measures. Examples of remedial measures may include changing class assignments or schedules where possible, counseling, parent conferences, on-going monitoring of behavior, a behavior contract and programming on relevant issues for the student body and parents. Support for faculty members is recommended with professional development on harassment, intimidation and bullying. The school will strive to balance the interests of students involved as well as the needs of the school as a whole when resolving a complaint of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying. Disciplinary measures will be consistent with the school’s disciplinary policies and diocesan guidance for student discipline.