

## **Bullying Identification, Reporting, Investigation, and Intervention Procedure**

### **Bullying**

Assumption Catholic School promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the school that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

The school believes that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. Assumption Catholic School seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

### **Definitions**

**“Bullying”** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending Assumption Catholic School or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending the same school:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same school as the students engaged in the activity.)*

**“Cyberbullying”** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

**“Mobile electronic device”** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

**“Electronic communication”** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system.

**“Hostile environment”** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;

**“Outside of the school setting”** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

**“School employee”** means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by Assumption Catholic School or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled at Assumption Catholic School pursuant to a contract with Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

**“School climate”** means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. (and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. physical violence and attacks
2. verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
3. threats and intimidation
4. extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. exclusion from peer groups within the school
6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
7. Targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in this school and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a 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 other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the school, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school,

are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

A comprehensive program, to improve the school climate, involving everyone in the school and the community, to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of bullying. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels, school wide, classroom and individual.

The Assumption Catholic School program:

- ❖ Permits anonymous reports of bullying by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying by parents or guardians;
- ❖ Requires school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the school administrator, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;
- ❖ Require the principal to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report;
- ❖ Requires the principal to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- ❖ Requires the school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with bullying, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
- ❖ Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
- ❖ Requires the school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed or emailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying;
- ❖ Requires the school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;
- ❖ Establishes a procedure for the school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in Assumption Catholic School.
- ❖ Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
- ❖ Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
- ❖ Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;

- ❖ Requires the principal of the school or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency and the Diocese of Bridgeport Safe Environments Officer when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;
- ❖ Prohibits bullying (A) on school grounds, at a 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 other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
- ❖ Requires, at the beginning of each school year, for each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of this procedure, as well as an in-depth review of this procedure.
- ❖ Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of suspected bullying activities.

#### Disciplinary Actions for Verified Acts of Bullying

Students that are found to have committed verified acts of bullying will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- ❖ First verified act of bullying behavior, mandatory before or after school detention including reflective counseling and activities or one day of in-school suspension depending on severity of the action, based on the potential for harm to other students and/or disruption to the education environment.
- ❖ Second verified act of bullying behavior, mandatory one to three consecutive school days in-school suspension or one day out of school suspension depending on severity of the action, based on the potential for harm to other students and/or disruption to the education environment.
- ❖ Third verified act of bullying behavior, mandatory out of school suspension, from one to three consecutive school days depending on severity of the action based on the potential for harm to other students and/or disruption to the education environment.
- ❖ Subsequent verified acts of bullying behavior may result in expulsion from Assumption Catholic School in accordance with the policies of the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

*In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate Christian behavior at school and at home will reduce the instances and damage of bullying. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted, encouraged and expected in a our Catholic community.*

**Written Complaint**

Students and/or parents or guardians may file in writing their concerns about incidents or situations they consider to be bullying. Such written documentation shall be reasonably specific as to the actions givingrise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of such incidents, the target of such alleged bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such written documentation may be filed with the building administrator as hard copies or electronically through email for review and action in accordance with this procedure. Official reporting documents will be made available in the main office and on the official website of Assumption Catholic School.

**Assumption Catholic School  
Report of Suspected Bullying Form**

*All students, staff, faculty, or parents/guardians are invited to file a written report expressing their concerns about incidents or situations they consider to be bullying. **This report should be filed as soon as possible after the suspected incident.***

**Date of Report:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who is making this report?**

☐ Anonymous Student

I do not want to share my name

☐ Staff/Faculty Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Parent/Guardian

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Who committed the suspected act of bullying?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who was the victim of the suspected act of bullying?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the suspected act of bullying: (attached separate page if needed)**

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**Where did this act happen?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What time did this act happen?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who was around to potentially witness this act of bullying?**

Students: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff/Faculty \_\_\_\_\_

Other Adults \_\_\_\_\_

**For Official Use Only (Attach all notes, statements, notifications, and other documents)**

Date Report Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Investigation Started \_\_\_\_\_

Action of Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

Bullying Verified: \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If verified, report sent to parents of students?

Parent Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date Sent: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date Sent: \_\_\_\_\_

**Assumption Catholic School**  
**Report of Suspected Bullying/Consent to Release Student Information**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian,

A Report of Suspected Bullying has been filed on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been the victim of bullying. In order to facilitate a swift and thorough investigation of the allegation, Assumption Catholic School may need to disclose the name of your child and/or other information which may disclose your child's identity to third party organizations or individuals outside of Assumption Catholic School and the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Sincerely,



Steven J. Santoli

(Please check one)

- ☐ I hereby give permission for Assumption Catholic School to disclose my child's name, along with any other information needed to permit the school to effectively and appropriately investigate such a report, to a third party organization or individual contacted by the school as part of the investigation.
- ☐ I **DO NOT** give permission for Assumption Catholic School to disclose my child's name, along with any other information needed to permit the school to effectively and appropriately investigate such a report, to a third party organization or individual contacted by the school as part of the investigation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please Print)

## Verified Acts of Bullying in Assumption Catholic School

### *Bullying Behavior in the School*

*“The Principal of Assumption Catholic School shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school, and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Given that any determination of bullying involves repeated acts over time, each report prepared in accordance with the above that includes verified acts of bullying shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of the report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of such verified acts of bullying in the school, and it shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.”*

[illegible]