



320 N. Sherwood Ave. Clarksville, IN 47129

Bullying Policy

Introduction

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School seeks to provide an environment in which all members of the school community are given the opportunity to grow spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically. The Gospel Message should be reflected in student behavior and should be modeled by parents and school personnel. St. Anthony student behavior should reflect personal discipline and respect for self and others. Student conduct should be in alignment with traditional Catholic values and the behavioral policies of St. Anthony Catholic School. The school has the right to call students to accountability when they display behaviors or conduct to the contrary of these values or policies.

In line with these principles, St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School strives to maintain a safe learning environment free of bullying. In addition, the school strives to build peace within the school community and respect for all.

Definition of Bullying

"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."

This definition includes three important components:

1. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
3. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Bullying can take on many forms. Examples include:

1. Verbal bullying including derogatory comments and bad names
2. Bullying through social exclusion or isolation
3. Physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
4. Bullying through lies and false rumors
5. Having money or other things taken or damaged by students who bully
6. Being threatened or being forced to do things by students who bully
7. Cyber bullying (harassment or bullying that occurs through email, a chat room, instant messaging, a website, blogs, cell phone, the internet or text messaging)

In accordance with this definition, the following factors should be considered before identifying conduct by a student or group of students as bullying in violation of school policy. The determination that conduct does not constitute bullying under school policy, however, does not restrict the right of the administration to impose appropriate disciplinary consequences for student misconduct.

Repeated misconduct

Bullying in violation of school policy typically must be "repeated against the same student over time." An isolated incident, however egregious, is rarely "bullying". While serious, isolated incidences will be appropriately addressed under the school's discipline policy and will be entered in a log maintained by the homeroom teacher to ensure a pattern of bullying behavior does not develop.

Ridicule, harass, humiliation, and/or intimidation

Bullying is more than misconduct. Bullying is marked by the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the victim. In evaluating whether conduct constitutes bullying, special attention should be paid to the words chosen or actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the student accused of bullying interacted with the victim, and the motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred, of the alleged violator.

Complaint Process

Students are encouraged to report any concerns of bullying behaviors either experienced or witnessed to their homeroom teacher as soon as possible. The reports need to be forwarded to the counselor, or directly to the principal, for review and action. Complaints of bullying can best be investigated and handled when reported timely and with details, including the identity of those involved.

Staff responsibilities and intervention

Teachers, administrators and other staff such as teacher's aides, cafeteria workers or after-care workers who witness bullying, as defined above, shall promptly notify the homeroom teacher in writing of the students involved and the events observed. Teachers and other professional staff members are encouraged to address the issue of bullying in other interactions with students. They may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. Teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly (unless intervention would be a threat to the staff member's safety) whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, harassing, humiliating, or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "bullying".

Investigation of Complaint

Once a complaint has been reported, the counselor and principal shall promptly investigate to determine if bullying has occurred. The principal and/or counselor will review to also see if there is a pattern of bullying behavior and will use that as a tool of investigation. The principal and/or counselor will keep documentation for each incident. The documentation will include if the acts of bullying were verified, and, when acts of bullying were verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action.

Consequences of Actions

Once the investigation is complete, the school principal and/or, in consultation with the homeroom teacher and support staff involved shall determine the consequences for the individual(s) on a case-by-case, age appropriate basis. Bullying can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying," as defined above, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the student responsible for bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action is a matter for the professional discretion of the principal. It is the goal of the administration, faculty, and staff to have the child achieve redemption, learn, and stop the bullying.

Reporting Obligations

If after investigation, acts of bullying by a specific student are verified, the principal shall notify the parent or guardian of the student of that finding and a conference with the principal may be requested. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against the student, a written documentation will be kept on file.

Reports to the victim and his/her parent or guardian

If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the principal and/or counselor shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing notification, the statutory privacy rights of the person responsible for bullying must be respected. Specific details of the consequences imposed and the details of the investigation shall not be disclosed except as provided by law.