

Holy Family Catholic School

Safe School Policy

on Non-Violence, Harassment, Bullying

I give you a new commandment: love one another.

As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. - John 13:34

Holy Family Catholic School is committed to providing a Catholic, faith-filled learning environment for all students, employees, volunteers and patrons in which Christ-like behaviors are ever present. Our intrinsic Catholic environment is meant to be free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. Our goal is to create a warm, welcoming, and safe school climate in which each student feels accepted. If, however, any bullying behaviors do occur, all community members should be able to tell and know that such incidents are unacceptable and that they will be dealt with effectively, according to school policy, in a Christ-like way. Holy Family Catholic School's anti-bullying policy was developed in accordance with Archdiocesan policies regarding non-violence in its Catholic schools.

Definitions

The words "harassment," "intimidation," "bullying," cyberbullying:

- can mean any intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act, when the intentional written, verbal, or physical act physically harms a student or damages the student's property or reputation;
- have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
- are so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment;
- have the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms, including:

- slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendo, demeaning comments, drawing cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, verbal or physical actions.
- "Intentional acts" refers to the individual's choice to engage in the act, rather than what the ultimate impact of the action(s) may be.

Counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement are all methods that may be called upon to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact of bullying incidents on the victim. These include:

- appropriate intervention(s),
- restoration of a positive, Christ-like environment, and
- support for victims and others impacted by the violation.
- False reports of and/or retaliation for reporting harassment, intimidation or bullying also constitute violations of this policy.

Prevention

1. Holy Family Catholic School communicates with all students, employees, volunteers, and adult patrons that bullying behaviors will not be tolerated at school.
2. Bully prevention lessons will be taught through counseling and classroom activities.
3. School rules will be posted, and students/parents will sign a behavior contract.
4. Religion classes will support the teachings of Jesus and Christ-like behaviors.

Procedures

1. Report of incident is made to a trusted adult.
2. The incident will be reviewed, with *appropriate measures** taken to correct the situation(s) in which bullying occurs.
3. Reconciliation of students is the goal.
4. Each incident will be monitored to ensure repeat offenses do not occur.
5. If a bullying incident does reoccur, measures taken are at the discretion of the school's disciplinary committee and/or principal.

In addition to the clearly stated school policies above, Holy Family Catholic School helps cultivate a peaceful and accepting atmosphere in the following ways. Each school day begins with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, which set the tone of faith, mutual respect, caring and compassion. Students pray throughout the day and are expected to comply with a formal dress code and code of conduct that set the stage for orderliness, structure and respect. These combined factors help reduce distractions, keep behavior problems to a minimum and allow for focused teaching and learning.

Expected behaviors and reliable follow up are at the core of Holy Family Catholic School's **discipline system** and **code of conduct**. Each stresses the importance of learning self-discipline and growing in responsible decision-making. Students are taught to recognize that consequences are inherent in the choices they make, including consequences for inappropriate behavior and violating school rules. Other programs are:

Rachel's Challenge, as part of a comprehensive Archdiocesan program, focuses our Middle School students on recognizing their purpose in life. Middle school students are presented with five powerful challenges based on the writings and the life of Rachel Joy Scott, who was the first fatality in the Columbine School shootings in 1999. Program participants take part in an opening school assembly, peer training sessions, and classroom based instruction to inspire students toward a life of kindness and compassion.

Character Counts! is a character education and development program for all grade levels that focuses on the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. At Holy Family Catholic School, we also focus on our overarching character value, which is Faith.

**Appropriate measures are local decisions, according to Archdiocesan policy.*