

**DIOCESE OF DES MOINES  
COUNCIL FOR CATECHESIS**

**Catholic Schools Policies/Regulations**

**STUDENT PERSONNEL**

**Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying**

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Board that all schools maintain an environment free from unlawful and undesirable verbal and physical harassment and/or bullying. Schools should develop and incorporate programs to eliminate harassment and bullying from all student and school personnel.

For the purposes of this policy harassment and bullying shall mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one of more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

"Electronic" shall mean any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic" includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging, or similar technologies.

The phrase "trait or characteristic" of the student as used in this policy includes, but is not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

The term “sexual orientation” means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality. The term “gender identity” means the gender related identity of a person, regardless of the person’s assigned sex at birth.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Verbal, nonverbal, or physical or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other victimization that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one’s grades, achievements, property, etc. that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; and/or
- Unreasonable interference with a student’s performance or creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning environment.

This policy shall be in effect while students are on school property, while on school-owned or school-operated/leased vehicles; while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school.

Students who believe they or another student or students are the victim of bullying or harassment should immediately report their concerns to the school principal or the principal’s designee. The school must promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying and harassment. The principal or the principal’s designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying or harassment.

If a staff member believes she/he is or has been bullied or harassed by a student, the staff member should contact the principal who must investigate the matter. If the staff member chooses, the matter may be reported to legal authorities.

Retaliation against a person because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is prohibited. An individual who knowingly files a false harassment complaint and a person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall a person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. A student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion.

The principal shall ensure that the anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy and procedures are printed in the Handbooks and integrated into the school’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The principal or the principal’s designee is responsible for collecting data relating to incidents of harassment and bullying. This data must be

reported in the spring Basic Education Data Survey (BEDS) and to the local public annually.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to impair the school's ability to educate and administer consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church. Nothing in this policy is intended to condone behavior or lifestyles that are inconsistent with Catholic teachings.

**Policy Adopted:** January 31, 1994

**Policy Revised:** April 25, 2000  
April 7, 2004  
May 21, 2007  
January 21, 2008  
May 19, 2008  
November 17, 2008