

## **Bullying Policy** **Grades Kindergarten through Eighth**

### **Introduction**

Bullying is prohibited at St. James School. It must not be tolerated during the school day nor during any school sponsored activities on or off the school grounds. Bullying is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ; and this behavior is against fundamental Gospel values and destroys respect for the dignity of a student, undermines the Philosophy and Belief Statements of the school.

### **Span of Policy**

This bullying policy is to be applied to kindergarten through eighth grade. It addresses bullying and does not replace any policies that deal with individual student misconduct. Student behavior is addressed in the Code of Conduct section of the Parent/Student Handbook.

This policy will not apply to the pre-school program. It is recognized that these children are too young and are learning social skills. Unkind acts that occur at the pre-school level will be handled by the child's teacher. The teacher will work with the student, family, and principal to address these situations.

### **Definition of Bullying**

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

This definition includes three important components:

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
- Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
- Bullying involves an imbalance of strength.

Bullying can take on many forms.

- Verbal bullying including derogatory comments and name calling
- Bullying through social exclusion or isolation
- Physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
- Bullying through lies and false rumors
- Having money or other things taken or damaged by students who bully
- Being threatened or being forced to do things by students who bully
- Racial bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Cyber bullying via cell phone or internet

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*Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.*

### **Repeated Misconduct**

Bullying in violation of school policy must be in accordance with the three components listed in the definition of bullying. An isolated incident, however egregious, is not "bullying". While serious, both isolated incidences of bullying behavior and numerous acts of misconduct against different students will be appropriately addressed under the school's Code of Conduct and will be documented in an effort that a pattern of bullying behavior does not develop.

### ***Reporting an Act of Suspected Bullying***

School administration/designee is responsible for receiving oral or written complaints alleging violations of the bullying policy, as is true for all inappropriate behaviors that are listed in the Code of Conduct. Parents/guardians are encouraged to report suspected bullying immediately. This aids in the timely investigation of any alleged incident.

Students may report allegations of bullying to any school employee, faculty, or staff. All employees, faculty, and staff are required to report, in writing, any allegations of bullying or violations of this policy involving students to school administration/designee.

Parents of the victim and the accused will be notified of the alleged bullying. If the allegations are verified the victims parents and the parents of the accused will be notified. The parents of the accused will be informed of the disciplinary interventions. In providing notification to the victim's parents, the statutory privacy rights of the person responsible for bullying must be respected and will not be disclosed to the parents or guardian of the victim, except as provided by law.

### ***Consequences of Actions***

Once an investigation is complete, the school administration shall determine the consequences for the individual(s). Consequences may vary according to the severity of the bullying actions and in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct. In keeping with gospel values and the school's philosophy, the goal is forgiveness, growth, and to stop the bullying. The following steps may be taken when bullying behavior has been identified.

**Non-disciplinary interventions:** When acts of bullying have been identified and proven in a reasonable time period, and depending upon severity, students committing the acts of bullying may be asked to see the school counselor in order to better understand the actions defined as bullying, and his/her responsibility to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying.

**Disciplinary interventions:** When acts of bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the list of consequences listed in the Code of Conduct. These may range from detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion.

Students may also be referred to the Student Assistant Program which can result in further compulsory sessions with the school counselor.

Notifying law enforcement may be necessary in severe cases.

### ***Educational Measures***

St. James will include education about the harm, culture, and injustice caused by bullying into the curriculum where it is possible and appropriate. Special presentations from outside agencies may also be utilized to aid the students in understanding the ramifications of bullying for all involved.

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