

ADDENDUM

Diocese of Steubenville

~Office of Christian Formation and Schools Diocesan

Handbook for Catholic Schools Harassing, Intimidating, and Bullying Policy

1. In Obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we acknowledge the dignity and worth of every human being as a person made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, respect and tolerance should be the cornerstone of all our interactions and behaviors. Faculty, staff, administration and students, must strive to never diminish another person by our conduct or our attitudes.

2. It is in keeping with the Mission of Catholic schools of the Diocese of Steubenville to prepare students to live and work in a complex and interdependent society, to acknowledge diversity and to build community by practicing Christian faith based hospitality, civility and respect for others.

3. Harassing, intimidating, and bullying behavior by any student enrolled in a Catholic school of the Diocese of Steubenville is strictly prohibited. No student shall be permitted to PLAN or ENGAGE in such activity. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion from school.

4. **Harassment, intimidation and bullying can be defined as** any intentional written, verbal, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts), that a student has exhibited toward another particular student, and the behavior causes mental or physical harm to the other student, and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it causes an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.

4.1. Examples of conduct exhibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying may include, but are not limited to: a) Physical violence and/or attacks; b) Threats, taunts and intimidation through words and/or gestures; c) Extortion; d) Damage to personal property; e) Stealing of money and/or personal property; f) Behavior with the intent to intimidate or threaten others through the use of information; g) Electronic acts with the intent to harass, intimidate or threaten through the use of communication technologies (including cellular phone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other communication device) and web-site based social media/net-working (what is often called cyber-bullying). 4.2. Cyber-bullying may include but is not limited to: a) Posting slurs (including gossip and rumors) or threats on web sites; b) Sending abusive/threatening e-mails, or instant messages; c) Using camera phones to take embarrassing/disturbing photos or videos.

5. When harassing, intimidating, and bullying behavior has been reported to have been exhibited by adult staff/volunteers or students age 18 or older towards a minor (under the age of 18), such incidents shall be addressed in accordance to the Diocesan Decree on Child Protection.

6. Teachers and other school staff who witness or are made aware (through reports from other students or parents) of acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall promptly notify school administration of the incident(s).

7. Under the direction of the school administration, reported/suspected acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be investigated in a thorough and timely manner. When such acts have been verified as taking place, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action shall be implemented.

7.1 Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified cannot provide the basis for disciplinary action.

7.2 In cases in which one student has accused another student (or students) of acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying, additional evidence (other than the word of the accuser) is required to verify the accusation and to provide a basis for disciplinary action. In such cases where one student accuses another and the accusation cannot be verified, the Principal shall meet with the alleged perpetrator(s) to review the policy definition of harassment as well as the consequences that would follow should a verified incident take place. In addition, faculty shall be notified of the complaint so they can be more attentive.

7.3 If after an investigation, acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying involving students have been verified; the school's

administration shall notify the parents/guardians of both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s) in writing. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of all students involved. **7.4 Non-disciplinary Interventions.** When verified acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts do not reasonably warrant a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of such unacceptable behavior, its prohibition and the student's duty to avoid any such conduct that could be considered harassing, intimidating, or bullying in the future.

7.5 Disciplinary Interventions. When verified acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying warrant a disciplinary response, students may be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including but not limited to in/out of school suspension or recommendation for expulsion (in accordance with the disciplinary procedures of the Diocesan Schools Handbook).

7.5.1 In or Out-of-school suspension may be imposed only after the school administration has interviewed and informed the accused perpetrator(s) of the reasons for the suspension and has given the student(s) an opportunity to explain the situation. Parents/guardians will be notified and permitted to be in attendance when reasons for the suspension are offered.

7.6 In addition to disciplinary action, students who commit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying which are deemed to be of a serious nature, may be required to undergo a psychological examination by a licensed psychologist before the student is readmitted to school. All costs associated with this requirement as well as the educational needs of the student during this period will be the full responsibility of the parent/guardian.