

*Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School
2001 Clinton Ave.
Coal Township, PA 17866
570-644-0375 Fax 570-644-07655*

BULLYING POLICY

It is the intent and goal of Our Lady of Lourdes School to provide all students with an equitable opportunity to learn. To that end, the School Administration and Board has a significant interest in providing a safe, orderly, and respectful school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning and positive character development.

Bullying is detrimental to student learning and achievement. It interferes with the mission of the school to educate students and disrupts the operations of the school. Bullying affects not only students who are targets but also those who participate and witness such behavior.

The School Administration and Board also believe that promoting ethical and responsible behavior is an essential part of the school unit's educational purpose. Ethics, responsible behavior and "character" are important if a student is to leave school as a responsible and involved citizen who exhibits true Christian practices. Bullying interferes with the accomplishment of these goals.

Finally, the School Administration and Board recognize the well-publicized incidents of violence and threatened violence that have occurred nationally in the past several years. As research suggests a link between bullying and school violence, the Administration and Board seeks to prevent such incidents and instead take a systematic approach to bullying prevention and intervention.

It is not the Administration's or the Board's intent to prohibit students from expressing their ideas or from engaging in civil debate. However, the Administration and the Board does not condone and will take action in response to conduct that interferes with students' opportunity to learn, the educational mission of Our Lady of Lourdes, and the operation of this school.

Bullying Prohibited

Bullying, as defined in this policy, is not acceptable conduct at Our Lady of Lourdes School and is unacceptable and strictly prohibited. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension and expulsion. A student's bullying behavior may also be addressed through other behavioral interventions.

Bullying Defined

For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” means any physical act or gesture or any verbally, written, or electronically communicated expression that:

A) A reasonable person should expect will have the effect of:

1. Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property;
2. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to his/her property; or
3. Substantially disrupting the instructional program or the orderly operations of the school; or

B) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, hostile educational environment for the student who is bullied.

Application of Policy

This policy applies to bullying that takes place at school or on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity or event, or while students are being transported to or from school or school-sponsored activities or events. It also applies to bullying that occurs at any other time or place that substantially disrupts the instructional program, operations of the school, or welfare of students.

Examples of conduct that may constitute bullying include, but are not limited to:

- A. Physical contact or injury to another person or his/her property;
- B. Threats of harm to a student, to his/her possessions, or to other individuals, whether transmitted verbally, in writing, or through cyberspace;
- C. Blackmail, extortion, demands for protection money, or involuntary loans or donations;
- D. Non-verbal threats and/or intimidations such as use of aggressive or menacing gestures;
- E. Stalking;
- F. Blocking access to school property or facilities;
- G. Stealing or hiding books, backpacks, or other possessions;
- H. Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking, put-downs, or demeaning humor relating to a student’s race, color, ethnicity,

gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in disruption of the instructional program or operations of the schools, or that results in a hostile educational environment for the student.

For the purpose of this policy, bullying does not mean mere teasing, put-downs, or similar interactions among friends, nor does it include expression of ideas or beliefs so long as such expression is not lewd, profane, or does not interfere with students' opportunity to learn, the instructional program, or the operations of the school. This policy does not preclude teachers or school administrators from setting and enforcing rules for civility, courtesy, and/or responsible behavior in the classroom and the school environment.

The determination whether particular conduct constitutes bullying requires reasonable consideration of the circumstances through an investigation, which include the frequency of the behavior at issue, the location in which the behavior occurs, the ages and maturity of the students involved, the activity or context in which the conduct occurs, and the nature and severity of the conduct.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Principal or school designee will be responsible for developing and implementing procedures for:

- A. Student and parent reporting of bullying to staff and school administrators;
- B. Staff reporting of bullying to school administrators;
- C. Review of reports and investigation of bullying incidents;
- D. Intervention with and/or discipline of students who engage in bullying;
- E. Provide support and counseling for students who are victims of bullying;
- F. Training staff and students in bullying prevention; and
- G. Periodic evaluation of bullying prevention, intervention, and training efforts in Our Lady of Lourdes School.

Reporting

Students who have been bullied or who observe incidents of bullying are encouraged to report this behavior to a faculty, staff member or school administrator. Faculty and staff members should report bullying to the principal. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited and appropriate discipline will be instituted for and

individual engaging in retaliation. Any student who is determined to have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Responding to Bullying

In determining the appropriate response to students who engage in bullying behavior, the principal or designee should consider the facts of the investigation and/or report, the ages and maturity of the students involved, the type and severity of behaviors, the frequency and/or pattern of behaviors, the context in which the incident occurred, and other relevant circumstances. Consequences may range from positive behavioral interventions, detention, and up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or reports to law enforcement officials.

Dissemination of Policy

Notice of what constitutes bullying, the Administration's and Board's prohibition against bullying, and the consequences for students who bully shall be communicated to students and parents through the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Handbook.

Approved by the Board November 17, 2010

Procedure to be followed on Notification of an Incident

1. Student and parent report bullying to staff and school administrators;
2. Staff reporting of bullying to school administrators;
3. Investigation will be opened
4. Collation of information (e-mail, social network comments: Face book, Twitter, etc. comments that can be printed)
5. Interviews will be held with all parties
6. Review of reports and investigation of bullying incidents;
7. Intervention with and/or discipline of students who engage in bullying;
8. Provide support and counseling for students who are victims of bullying;
9. Training staff and students in bullying prevention; and
10. Periodic evaluation of bullying prevention, intervention, and training efforts in Our Lady of Lourdes School.

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RETURN THIS PAGE TO SCHOOL

School Bullying Policy

We have read the School Bullying Policy with our child(ren) and we will carefully follow the directives.

Please return:

Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Child: _____ Grade: _____

Child: _____ Grade: _____

Child: _____ Grade: _____

Child: _____ Grade: _____

Child: _____ Grade: _____

Parent or Guardian Signature(s): _____

Parent or Guardian Signature(s): _____