

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

All religious education and other programs for youth in the Diocese of Joliet shall actively seek to provide a supportive, caring environment in which all persons are safe from all forms of intimidation including bullying, which is unacceptable, unchristian, and strictly prohibited.

For the purpose of this policy, bullying is defined in conformity with Illinois Law as follows:

“Any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- (1) Placing the child/youth in reasonable fear of harm to the child/youth’s person or property;
- (2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the child/youth’s physical or mental health;
- (3) Substantially interfering with one/more child’s or one/more youth’s academic performance; or
- (4) Substantially interfering with one/more child’s or one/more youth’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a parish.”

105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 (b)

Bullying Conduct

Bullying conduct covered by this policy is conduct that occurs on parish property or at parish sponsored activities or events; while children/youth are being transported or walking to or from the parish or parish sponsored activities or events; while children/youth are waiting in transportation pick-up/drop-off zones; or cyber bullying as defined hereinafter.

Cyber Bullying

This policy prohibits bullying and intimidation of children/youth through the use of internet and social media sites on any electronic device (private, public, or parish owned), whether on or off the parish campus, or during non-attendance hours.

Any child/youth who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. Behavioral interventions may be included as a component of the disciplinary actions. This may include but is not limited to mandatory counseling.

104

Retaliatory behavior by a child/youth accused of bullying will also incur consequences. False accusations of bullying will result in disciplinary action taken against the accuser. Any reported bullying issue will be promptly brought to the attention of the appropriate party: the Pastor or Director of Religious Education/Parish Catechetical Leader or designee, and there after investigated. Reference: *The Illinois School Code*, 105 ILCS, 5/27-23.7