



Catholic Culture Handbook

Anti-Bullying

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Catholic Culture

The purpose of our Catholic Culture initiative is to:

- Enhance our Catholic identity and live our Faith in all aspects of our life
- Promote a true sense of belonging amongst all of our school's student body and families
- Focus on the positive and highlight the genuine acts of kindness
- Foster the attitude of respect on a daily basis
- Provide opportunity for students to take positive leadership roles and influence others to do the same
- Participate in meaningful stewardship activities

Teacher Catholic Culture action items:

1. Catholic Climate
 - a. Quarterly School-Wide Student Disposition Focus
 - i. Persevere - St. Monica
 - ii. Respect - St. Mother Teresa
 - iii. Achieve - Bl. Carlo Acutis
 - iv. Yearn - St. Thomas Aquinas
 - b. Faculty Prayer
 - i. Daily Prayer
 - ii. Prayer Teams
 - iii. Book Study- *Beautiful Eucharist*
 - c. Student Formation
 - i. Sacraments
 - ii. Religion Classes
 - iii. Service Projects
 - iv. Student Council
2. Bullying Prevention Education, Strategies and Procedures
 - a. Class Meetings
 - i. Counselor Class Lessons/Meetings
 - ii. PK-5 Homeroom
 - iii. Middle School Teacher Advisory Program
3. True Sense of Belonging
 - a. Community Families
 - b. School Spirit Assemblies
4. Positive Climate
 - a. PRAYS Cards
 - b. Positive Teacher to Parent Communication
 - c. Teacher Dispositions

Parish School Council Catholic Culture committee action items (to be determined by the 24-25 strategic plan):

Kansas Legislation

Kansas Anti-Bullying, Cyberbullying and Character Development Legislation (HB 2758)

The 2013 Legislature amended the anti-bullying statute (KSA 72-8256) and effective July 1, 2013 requires schools to include the following in their bullying policies:

Bullying means: a) any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act or threat either by any student, staff member or parent towards a student or by any student, staff member that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that such gesture, act or threat creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, knows or should know will have the effect of:

- a. Harming a student or staff member, whether physically or mentally;
- b. Damaging a student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm to the student or staff member; or
- c. Placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of damage to the student's or staff member's property;
- d. Cyberbullying; or
- e. Any other form of intimidation or harassment prohibited by the board of education of the school district in policies concerning bullying adopted pursuant to this section or subsection € of K.S.A. 72-8205 and amendments thereto.

The 2008 Legislature amended the anti-bullying statute and effective July 1, 2008, requires school districts to:

- 1) adopt and implement a plan to address cyberbullying, and
- 2) adopt policies prohibiting bullying on school property, in school vehicles, or at school-sponsored activities, and
- 3) adopt and implement a plan to address bullying, which must include provisions for training and education of staff and students.
- 4) upon request of a school district, the state board shall assist in the development of a grade appropriate curriculum for character development programs.

School District / Diocesan Policy

Policy 408B Student Bullying and Harassing

Bullying and harassing behaviors by students are not acceptable. This conduct need not occur on the school premises or at a school-sponsored event to come within the jurisdiction of the Diocese.

“Bullying” is an intentional gesture or threat by a student, staff member, or parent creating an intimidating environment for any student, parent, or staff member.

Each school must include in its guidance program periodic training for staff members, volunteers, and students about bullying, harassment, social alienation, and the consequences of such behavior. Students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior will be subject to progressive discipline ranging from mandatory counseling and suspension from participation in school-related activities and privileges, to disciplinary sanctions, up to and including expulsion, as laid out in each school's handbook.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Policy

BULLYING / HARASSING, THREATENING, VIOLENT BEHAVIOR, OR BEING IN VIOLATION OF STA WEAPONS POLICY will be considered a very serious and major offense. In Catholic schools, the faith community of students and adults is jointly responsible for respecting, protecting, and sharing the God-given life, worth, and dignity of every person, regardless of ability, gender, appearance, cultural background, or interests. “Bullying” as defined by the Kansas legislature is any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal, or physical act or threat that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student or staff member that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, knows or should know will have the effect of:

- harming a student or staff member, whether physically or mentally;
- damaging a student’s or staff member’s property;
- placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm to the student or staff member; or
- placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of damage to the student’s or staff member’s property.

Bullying can take the form of any of the following:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening, extorting, isolating, or alienating;
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, poking, biting, or any other act of violence;
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or pictures;
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, teasing, taunting, racial slurs;
- Technological – use of technology, the Internet, email, chat rooms, or phone and text messaging to bully; or
- Written or graphic material that is circulated within the school or placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere for public display. The behaviors targeted here, including bullying and harassment, are forms of violence that are not acceptable and cannot be tolerated in Catholic schools. These behaviors cannot be classified either as normal behavior nor as normal human development. At a minimum, they constitute bad manners and bad examples. They may also be both immoral and illegal as well. The conduct targeted under this policy need not occur in the school environment, on its premises, or at a school-sponsored event to come within the jurisdiction of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School or the Diocese of Wichita.

St. Thomas will use a Virtuous Behavior Restorative Discipline program as a preventative component of the overall school anti-bullying program. In addition, students will participate in weekly class meetings or training with school personnel. These meetings will focus on how to deal with and work through student conflict issues and scenarios. Students will continue to meet with their community families on a regular basis and participate in various activities which foster community. Parents who wish to report an alleged bullying incident may request a form from the school administration.

Bully Free Education

The Bully Free Program is an instructional resource with an excellent scope and sequence of lesson plans. The lessons are designed to help establish an environment in which students and adults feel psychologically, emotionally and physically safe. The lessons will empower bystanders by teaching them how to play a major role in preventing and stopping bullying. The lessons allow students who feel they are victims to cope with their feelings; furthermore, the lessons provide skills in which the student can be assertive with others. Students who display bullying behaviors will learn valuable lessons to encourage them to stop mistreating others. The lessons will be systematically implemented throughout the grade levels to promote a safe and loving environment.

Conflict vs. Bullying

Peer-Conflict Definition

Peer-Conflict is a struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, wishes, or external or internal demands. Peer-Conflict often develops at lunch or recess, when students are less supervised and rowdy students have an opportunity to provoke others. It is not bullying when two kids with no perceived power imbalance fight, have an argument, or disagree. Conflict resolution or peer mediation may be appropriate for these situations.

Bullying Definition

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power- such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

Types of Bullying

There are different types of bullying:

1. Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Sarcasm
 - Spreading rumors
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to cause harm
 - Racial slurs
2. Emotional / Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
 - Being unfriendly
 - Tormenting
 - Extorting
 - Leaving someone out of purpose, isolating or alienating
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumors about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
3. Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
 - Hitting
 - Inappropriate or violent touching
 - Spitting, biting
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures
4. Sexual bullying
 - Unwanted physical contact
 - Sexually abusive comments, pictures or gestures
5. Cyberbullying
 - Use of technology, the internet, social applications, or phone and text messaging to bully
6. Written or graphic bullying
 - Inappropriate material that is circulated within the school or placed on walls, bulletin boards, in lockers, or elsewhere

Sequence of Intervention

- A. Student Interventions
 - 1. Be Assertive, speak with “I Messages”
 - 2. Peer mediator & Resolution Worksheet
- B. Teacher Intervention
 - 1. Adult help and/or teacher notification, behavior consequence, documentation & parent notification
 - 2. Student conference, behavior consequence, documentation & parent meeting
- C. School Administrative Intervention
 - 1. Student and parent conference, disciplinary action
 - 2. Student and parent conference, priest notification, disciplinary action, behavioral contract
- D. Parish Priest Intervention
 - 1. Student behavior contract consequence
 - 2. Expulsion

*There are some serious, threatening behaviors that are not tolerated and will be sent directly to administration. Administration reserves the right to change this sequence of interventions and select appropriate consequences, depending on the situation, students’ behavior records and on the type of behaviors that need to be addressed.

Student Interventions

Be Assertive

When you assert yourself, you're sticking up for what you think is right and telling people how you want to be treated. You can try the ASSERT Formula to stand up for yourself if you're mistreated.

- A stands for attention. When you are ready to talk out a problem, you need to have the person's attention.
- S stands for soon, short and simple. Speak up as soon as you feel you're being mistreated. Look the person in the eye, speak calmly and clearly, and keep your message short and simple.
- S stands for specific. What did the person do that hurt or upset you? Be as specific as you can.
- E stands for effect. What was the effect of the behavior? Say how it hurt / harmed you.
- R stands for response. Let the other person give a response. Maybe he or she didn't realize the behavior had upset you. If so, you'll probably get an apology, or the person may try to act like it wasn't a big deal. Don't let that bother you. You're entitled to your feelings. Once you've expressed yourself you can't control how the other person will react.
- T stands for terms. Terms are ways to fix the problem. Offer a solution to the problem or let the other person know what you'll do if it happens again.

Use "I-Messages"

Step 1 Calmly and clearly say HOW you feel.

Step 2 Calmly and clearly say WHY you feel the way you do.

Step 3 Calmly and clearly say WHAT you want or need.

"I feel _____ because _____ and I want _____."

For example: "I feel frustrated because I did all the work and I want everyone in the group to do their part of the project."

Counselor Drop Box

The drop box can be used to report that something has happened, when it is not an emergency. You may also use the drop-box to express a concern about yourself or someone else or to write a positive comment about someone. Parents can also email teachers with concerns or comments that do not require the teacher's immediate attention.

Student Self-Referral Form

Students are welcome to ask to meet with our school counselor as needed. Our counselor can help our students with skills needed to navigate peer conflict or other difficulties they may be facing.

Student Response Form

Students may fill out the form if they need to report an incident. This report will allow the teacher, administration or the counselor to intervene appropriately. Students can also use this form to report students that have been helpful to them or others.

Peer Mediator

Peer mediation is a recognized way to deal with conflict whereby students are trained to act as a moderator in discussions between other students trying to work out their differences. Peer mediation works because students can connect with their peers in ways that adults cannot.

Conflict resolution is the act of solving a problem. Students may have difficulty finding a resolution to their own problems, but a student mediator can help them resolve their differences.

Overview of the Peer Mediation Process

Step: 1 Agree to Mediate

Step: 2 Gather Points of View

Step: 3 Focus on Interests

Step: 4 Origins of Conflict

Step: 5 Evaluate Options

Step: 6 Create an Agreement

Peer mediators will use a worksheet to develop a conflict resolution. Students will create an agreement, record it in writing and give it to their teacher.

Peer Mediation Worksheet

Date of Mediation: _____ Mediator(s): _____

Names of Participants

Participant 1: _____ Grade _____

Participant 2: _____ Grade _____

Step 1: Introductions and Ground Rules

Ground Rules:

- Respect each other's opinions.
- Do not interrupt when someone is speaking.
- Speak for yourself, not on behalf of others.
- Keep the conversation calm and constructive.

Step 2: Define the Problem

What is the conflict about?

Participant 1's perspective:

Participant 2's perspective:

Step 3: Identify Feelings

How does each participant feel about the situation?

Participant 1's feelings:

Participant 2's feelings:

Step 4: Explore Possible Solutions

What would each participant like to see happen?

Participant 1's desired outcome:

Participant 2's desired outcome:

Step 5: Generate Solutions

Brainstorm possible solutions together:

1. _____

2. _____

Step 6: Evaluate the Solutions

Which solution(s) are acceptable to both participants?

- Solution 1:

- Solution 2:

Step 7: Agreement

What specific actions will each participant take to resolve the conflict?

Participant 1's action(s):

Participant 2's action(s):

Step 8: Closing

Summary of Agreement:

Both participants agree to:

Follow-up:

- Next check-in date (if needed): _____

- Additional support or resources: _____

Mediator's notes (if any):