

LAWRENCE CATHOLIC ACADEMY

OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

Introduction:

Lawrence Catholic Academy is aware that its purpose is rooted in the mission of the school and of the church. Within the educational mission of the Church, Lawrence Catholic Academy must share and live out, through the Catholic Christian tradition, the message of Jesus Christ and be committed to providing and integrated Catholic educational environment that permeates all aspects of its daily life and operations.

At Lawrence Catholic Academy, it is our belief and mission that each child should be challenged to reach his/her full potential, develop a love of learning, and learn in an environment that fosters respect and understanding of one another. It is essential that a safe, positive and productive education environment be established where students can achieve the highest academic standards and where no student shall be subjected to Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Retaliation, or other like disruptive or violent behaviors that constitute conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and embracing environment. Principal's, faculty, staff and volunteers are expected to model/demonstrate civility and respect with student's, faculty, staff, and volunteers. It is the role of the Principal's, faculty, staff, and volunteers to require that all students behave appropriately and treat others with civility and respect. Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, and Retaliation are not to be tolerated.

Definitions:

The definition of "Bullying" has three major components:

1. It is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying typically involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
3. It involves an imbalance of power or strength.

"Bullying" is when a person is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself. It is an imbalance of power that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the Target or damage to the victim's property;
- places the Target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;

- creates a hostile environment at school for the Target;
- infringes on the rights of the Target at school;
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

Examples of different forms of bullying:

- Verbal;
- Social isolation and exclusion;
- Racial;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Cyber;
- Relational or social - “manipulation of friendships, intent to ruin a student’s reputation.”
- Rumors, through lies and false information;
- Being threatened and forced to do things;
- Having items taken or damaged;
- Indirect bullying - “concealed and subtle aggressive acts such as, social isolation, rumors)

For the purpose of this Policy, whenever the term “Bullying” is used it is to denote either Bullying or Cyber-Bullying.

“Cyber-Bullying” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to:

- social media such as, Instagram/Finsta, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, etc;
- texting via cell phone or the Internet;
- email;
- assuming the identity of another person or knowingly impersonating another person as the author of posted comments or messages;
- distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person, or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons.

“Hostile Environment” is a situation in which Bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education.

“Retaliation” is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports Bullying, provides information during an investigation of Bullying, or who witnesses or has reliable information about Bullying.

“Plan”, a Bullying prevention and intervention plan established by a school.

“School Grounds” mean property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

“Staff” includes, but is not limited to educators, faculty, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, and paraprofessionals.

“Aggressor” means a student who engages in Bullying or Retaliation.

“Target”, a student against whom Bullying or Retaliation has been perpetrated.

“Bullying teacher”, a teacher who repeatedly behaved in arrogant, derogatory, and humiliating ways toward particular students.

Identifying teacher bullying of students:

- Picks on or embarrasses a particular student in front of other students
- Uses humor or sarcastic comments to ridicule or make fun of a student
- Play favorites with some students while treating others more harshly
- Inappropriately uses their power as a disciplinarian with students

Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds owned, leased, or used by a school;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At any school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds;
- At a school bus stop;
- On a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school; or

- Through the use of technology or any electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school if the act or acts in question;

Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

In accordance with this Bullying Prevention Policy, Lawrence Catholic Academy utilizes the “OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program. The goal of the plan is to “restructure the school environment in such a way as to markedly reduce both opportunities and rewards for bullying behavior.”

The Core Principles of the OBPP:

- Principle 1: warmth, positive interest, and involvement by adults
- Principle 2: setting firm limits to unacceptable behavior
- Principle 3: consistently use non-physical, non-hostile negative consequences when rules are broken
- Principle 4: adults in the school should function as authorities and positive role models

Roles in bullying behavior:

- Students who bully: start the bullying and play a leadership role.
- Followers or Henchman: students who are positive toward the bullying and take an active part but do not initiate the bullying or play a lead role.
- Supporters or passive bullies: students who actively and openly support the bullying, for example, through laughter or calling attention to the situation, but they don’t join in.
- Passive supporters or possible bullies: students who like the bullying but do not show outward signs of support.
- Bystanders: students do not get involved and do not take a stand, nor do they participate actively in either direction.
- Possible defenders: students who dislike the bullying and think they should help the student who is being bullied but do nothing.

- Defenders: students who dislike the bullying and help or try to help the student who is being bullied.
- Target/victim: the student who is being bullied.

OLWEUS Student Rules

1. We will not bully others
2. We will try to help student who are being bullied
3. We will try to include students who are left out
4. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home

Reporting and Investigating Reports of Bullying

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. Students may also report have a means for reporting bullying anonymously. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

The School Administration, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The Administration shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form, which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged aggressor, and/or witnesses.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action. This may include consulting with or reporting to law enforcement

The investigation shall be completed within ten school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the

results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying shall be in accordance with School disciplinary policies.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.