

## **Definition of Bullying**

An individual is bullied when he or she is repeatedly exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more individuals causing emotional, psychological and/or physical harm. These negative actions are intentional and hurtful. Bullying can be verbal, physical, relational or reactive. Bullying involves an imbalance of power, creates fear, and is not gender specific.

## **Conflict**

Conflict is a disagreement or a difference of opinion between equals. The people involved in a conflict may disagree and emotions may run high. When conflict is not managed properly, it may result in aggression. In a conflict, both parties have power to influence the situation. Conflict may be an inevitable part of group dynamics, but bullying is not. In each, a different response is required. Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The effectiveness of this policy will depend on the level of open and honest communication between everyone involved. Our expectations will include:

- 1.1 St. Thérèse School Students are expected to:
  - be positive and caring role models
  - refrain from bullying or being bystanders to acts of bullying
  - report acts of bullying to appropriate school personnel, parents/guardians
  - not intentionally and falsely accuse other students of bullying
- 1.2 St. Thérèse School Staff are expected to:
  - Address bullying in an age appropriate manner and teach students to report incidences
  - Investigate reports of bullying, apply interventions and follow-up
  - Keep lines of communication open between the home and the school
- 1.3 St. Thérèse School Parents/Guardians, Parish and Community Members are expected to:
  - Be active contributors to a safe positive, caring and respectful school community
  - Inform the school if bullying is suspected
  - Work with the school to resolve identified incidents of bullying

## **Procedures**

### **1. Prevention**

Prevention of bullying is the goal. Strategies are ongoing and include the use of social skills programs, classroom rules, open communication and common language.

### **2. Investigation**

The safety of all students is always the primary focus.

Age and maturity level of students will be taken into consideration.

Students involved shall be given an opportunity to share their perspective.

Information shall be gathered from students who were involved.

The level of harm that occurred – be it physical, emotional, mental will be taken into consideration.

Similar related incidents in the past and/or continuing patterns of behavior will be taken into account.

Classroom teacher or in-school administrator will determine whether parents/guardians need to be informed

### **3. Actions if Bullying occurs**

Interventions and Supports may include:

- discussion, problem solving, reviewing behavioral expectations
- filling out a school incident report
- phone call to parents/ meeting with parents
- loss of privileges
- mediation, restitution, counselling
- behavioral contract or action plan
- referral to Student Services, community agencies
- in-school suspension, out of school suspension, expulsion

If bullying behaviors are part of a continuing pattern:

- In-School administrators or designate shall complete a Division Bullying Incident Report
- Parents/Guardians of those students involved will be invited to meetings to discuss child's involvement in incident(s). In most cases these will be separate meetings
- A written record shall be kept of the plan of actions. This record shall be held in a confidential file by the principal.

4. This policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis.