



Rationale

The foundation of Catholic teaching about life and relationships is respect for the human person. “The quality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it.”¹ For this reason all persons must be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, bullying, harm or threat of harm. CISVA is committed to providing and promoting a learning environment that enables every student to feel safe, accepted and respected.

CISVA works continuously to develop strategies that make students feel valued, respected and connected within their school community, while remaining consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church. This includes the protection of a student’s physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness as well as protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

Definition

Bullying is a pattern of repeated actions targeted at a person in a deliberate manner, intended to reduce the perceived power that person has over the situation or to harm that person. All acts of bullying have the characteristics of being dehumanizing, intimidating, humiliating, threatening, and evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress in the person being targeted.

Bullying encompasses a wide range of behaviours in a relationship between a dominant and a less dominant person or group where:

- an imbalance of the perceived power is manifest through aggressive actions
- physical or psychological (verbal and social) abuse occurs
- negative interactions occur directly (face-to-face) or indirectly (gossip, exclusion)
- negative actions occur with intent to harm, which can include some or all of the following:
 - a) physical actions such as punching, kicking, biting and initiating unwanted sexual touching, can hurt the person’s body, damage belongings or make the person feel badly about himself or herself;
 - b) verbal actions such as threats, name calling, insults, racial and cultural slurs or inappropriate jokes and/or comments; this includes sexual harassment; that is, when a person or group hurts another person by taunting or discussing sensitive sexual issues, creating sexual rumours or messages, and making derogatory comments on a person’s perceived sexual identity;
 - c) social exclusion such as spreading rumours, ignoring, gossiping, excluding.
- negative actions are repeated and/or the intensity or the duration of the actions establishes the bully’s dominance over the person. The person thus becomes a victim of injustice.
- information and communication technologies are used physically to threaten, verbally harass or socially exclude an individual or group.

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1935.

Policy

All CISVA schools will have in place protocols that outline roles, responsibilities and procedures for staff, students and other adults (including parents) that address bullying.

Procedures

Working with administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and student body, schools will develop a written bullying prevention protocol that includes the following elements:

Education, Awareness and Prevention

- education and awareness on bullying including ways to recognize its pattern and characteristics versus normal peer conflict
- instruction to students that emphasizes respect and compassion for others and age appropriate behaviours to prevent or respond to bullying
- instruction to students on their responsibility to report and take an active stand against acts of bullying including reference to the school's code of conduct as it relates to bullying

Reporting

- steps students and staff will take to respond to allegations of bullying
- efforts that track incidents of bullying at schools (bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment including student-to-student sexual harassment, intimidation, threatening or violent behaviour)
- how reported incidents will be dealt with and monitored

Responding to Bullying

- efforts that outline clear and logical consequences for those who bully, that provides support for those being bullied and intervention with students who bully
- informing the parents/ guardians of children involved in a bullying incident, engaging their support and collaboration to seek a resolution
- in deciding a course of action the school weighs the consequences by age and maturity of the individuals involved, the degree of harm done, incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behaviour, the relationship between the parties involved and the context in which the incident(s) occurred

CISVA remains committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person(s) against a student who has made a complaint of a breach in policy.

<p>Reference: Ministry of Education Resources "Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools – A Guide" "Focus on Bullying – A Prevention Program for Elementary School Communities" "Keeping it Safe – A Guide for Parents of Students K-12" "Call it Safe – A Parent Guide for Dealing with Bullying in Elementary Schools" "Call It Safe – A Guide for Dealing with Harassment and Intimidation in Secondary Schools" www.erasebullying.ca</p> <p>Cross-reference: Policy 426 - Suspensions and Expulsions; Policy 411 - Family Statement of Commitment</p>	<p>Approved: Board of Directors</p>
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