

St. Dennis School Bullying Policy

St. Dennis School strives to provide a safe, secure, and respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, on school grounds, and school buses and at school-sponsored activities. Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behavior that involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can have a harmful social, physical, psychological and/or academic impact on students who are the targets of bullying behaviors, students who engage in bullying behaviors, and bystanders that observe acts of bullying. St. Dennis will consistently and vigorously address bullying so that there is no disruption to the learning environment and learning process.

St. Dennis School has a no tolerance policy when dealing with bullying. Bullying is NOT just “a part of life” or a “normal part of growing up.” St. Dennis School does not allow bullying behavior toward or by students, school employees or volunteers on school grounds, at school sponsored activities or in transportation to and from school or school-sponsored activities.

Definition of Bullying Behavior

Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions intended to cause fear, humiliation, intimidation, harm, or social exclusion. Bullying often involves repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. Bullying may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic such as, but not limited to, age, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression/nonconformity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, and social, economic, or family status.

Bullying behavior can be:

- **physical** (assault, hitting, kicking, theft, etc.)
- **verbal** (threatening or intimidating language, name-calling, cruel rumors, racist remarks, etc.)
- **indirect** (spreading rumors, social exclusion and isolation, using technology in a hurtful manner — cyber bullying, which includes, but is not limited to, use of email, instant messaging, text messages, digital pictures or images, cell phones, or website postings)
- **bullying by proxy** (i.e. someone engaging in bullying through another or on behalf of another)

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

- **intent to cause harm:** The behavior is aggressive and on purpose.
- **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.

- **repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Prohibiting Bullying Behavior

Bullying behavior is prohibited in school and school grounds, property, and educational environments. This includes transportation regularly used by students to go to and from school. Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision. Interactions, including electronic communication, that do not fall under the above list may still be covered by this Policy when these behaviors result in a substantial disruption of the learning environment.

Reporting Bullying Behavior

The prohibition against bullying and the St.Dennis "Report of Bullying Incident" form shall be included in student handbooks, employee orientation or training materials/handbooks, and school website. This Policy does not require a student or parent to complete this form in order to initiate an investigation. Notice is given to the school once a student or parent/guardian notifies a school official or other staff.

Reports of bullying may be made verbally, in writing or online through the website. A written record of the report, including all pertinent details, will be made by the recipient of the report. The school official receiving a report of bullying shall immediately notify the school employees assigned to investigate the report. The following school employees have been identified as the investigator: Principal, Assistant Principal, School Counselor. All such reports, whether verbal or in writing, will be taken seriously and a clear account of the incident is to be documented. The principal, assistant principal, school counselor and other trained staff, will promptly investigate the report and determine next steps.

There shall be no retaliation against individuals making such reports. Individuals engaging in retaliatory behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.

Procedure for Investigating Reports of Bullying

The person assigned by the school to conduct an investigation of the bullying report shall, within one school day, interview the person(s) who are the victim(s) of the bullying and collect whatever other information is necessary to determine the facts and the seriousness of the report.

Parents and/or guardians of each student involved in the bullying will be notified prior to the conclusion of the investigation. The school shall maintain the confidentiality of the report.

If it is determined that students participated in bullying behavior or retaliated against anyone due to the reporting of bullying behavior, St. Dennis administration may take disciplinary action, including: suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action as appropriate.

St. Dennis will also take appropriate action against any student who retaliates against any person who makes a good-faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation related to such bullying.

Disclosure and Reporting

The policy will be distributed annually to all students enrolled in St. Dennis, their parents and/or guardians and employees. The school will also provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

An annual summary report shall be prepared and presented to the home and school association, which includes trends in bullying behavior and recommendations on how to further reduce bullying behavior.

Wisconsin state statute 118.46 policy on bullying can be found at

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/118/46>. Wisconsin Legislature: 118.46