

# Bully – Free Parents/Child Pledge

## Holy Spirit School

We the parents of \_\_\_\_\_ agree to:

1. Help make our school and community a bully-free environment.
2. Read the schools bully-free policy with our children to help our family be informed and aware of school bullying policies.
3. Work in partnership with the school to encourage sensitivity to positive behavior, valuing differences, promoting others and treating people right
4. Regularly discuss with our children their feelings-about schoolwork, friendship and relationships.
5. Inform school staff of changes in our children's behavior or circumstances at home that may change a child's behavior at school.
6. Alert school staff if any bullying has occurred at school.

Child Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parents Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Statement and Procedures Harassment and Violence in Catholic Schools

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis and \_\_\_\_\_ School are committed to providing and maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from physical, psychological, and verbal harassment. This includes racial, ethnic, religious or sexual harassment and violence. This commitment continues our longstanding policy of fair and equal treatment of every person, regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, age; or marital, socioeconomic, veteran, and handicap status. We have an obligation to provide an environment that is free from intimidation and harassment based on any of these factors.

Harassment can result from a single incident or from a pattern of behavior in which the purpose or effect is to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating environment. Harassment encompasses a broad range of verbal or physical behavior that can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Physical or mental abuse
- Bullying, hazing, shunning
- Direct or indirect threats, intimidation, assault
- Racial or religious insults
- Derogatory ethnic slurs
- Unwelcome sexual advances or touching\*
- Sexual comments or sexual jokes
- Requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment or as a condition for obtaining an education that may affect any personnel or educational decisions such as hiring, promotion, or compensation; and/or grades, promotion, class placement in school, etc.

An employee or a student who believes that a person's conduct toward him/her is improper or offensive generally has an obligation to ask that person to stop the behavior before making a report.

Legally, employers and employees may be liable for acts of harassment whether committed by supervisors or fellow employees. In some cases, they can also be held liable for the acts of students if a pattern of adverse behavior has been ignored. An employee may be held individually liable as a harasser and subject to the same penalties that may be imposed upon employers under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

The archdiocese and the school prohibit any form of harassment by employees, co-workers, supervisors, volunteers and students. We will take all instances of harassment seriously. Harassment, threats and other unacceptable activities that create a hostile environment are prohibited and could subject an employee or student to immediate and severe disciplinary action. Harassment and other unacceptable activities that could become a condition of employment or a basis for personnel decisions or educational decisions are specifically prohibited. Any employee who engages in such harassment could be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including discharge.

- ★ NOTE: Unwelcome touching does not include legitimate non-sexual physical contact such as the physical restraint of a student to avoid harm to persons or property as allowed by Indiana law, a teacher's consoling hug, or physical contact required in sports, etc.

## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

Reports of possible violations should first be made to the school administrator, or if the complaint involves an employee or supervisor, the report may be made directly to the Archdiocesan Office of Human Resources. Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. The administrator should also direct any questions about this statement or reports of possible violations involving employees to the Office of Human Resources. If reports of violations involving students are not adequately resolved at the local level, a report should be made to the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education. These offices will promptly investigate any alleged harassment. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances. Nothing in this statement shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence directly to archdiocesan officials if it is inappropriate to do so at the local level. In some cases, complaints against employees may fall under the Archdiocesan Child Abuse Policy and Indiana mandatory reporting laws that impose other reporting requirements as well. In some cases, it may also be wise to immediately involve law enforcement authorities.

## **INVESTIGATION**

Upon receipt of a report or complaint alleging serious harassment or potential violence, the school administrator and/or Director of Human Resources shall immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigators may be school or archdiocesan officials or a third party designated by the archdiocese.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this statement, the investigators should consider the circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. School administrators should employ a threat assessment process as prescribed by the archdiocese whenever there is a perceived or directed threat of violence in the school.

## **ACTION**

The school administrator or the archdiocese may take immediate steps at its discretion to protect the complainant, students and employees pending completion of the investigation including immediate removal of persons from the school property. Once the investigation is complete, the school administrator or archdiocesan officials will take appropriate action and complete a written report. Such action may include, but is not limited to: warning, suspension, expulsion, referral to law enforcement and/or mental health authorities, remediation, and termination or contract non-renewal. All due process procedures shall be followed.

## **REPRISAL**

Appropriate disciplinary and legal action may be taken against any student, employee or other person who retaliates against any person who reports alleged harassment or violence or any other person involved in the investigation and subsequent actions. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

#### DISSEMINATION

This statement or appropriate parts thereof is to be published in student/parent and faculty/staff handbooks, discussed with staff and students (at an age-appropriate level) at least annually, and reviewed periodically for compliance with state and federal law, etc.

# Message to Parents and Staff Regarding Identification of Potential Threats of School Violence

We at the \_\_\_\_\_ School in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have emergency preparedness plans in place as well as other policies and procedures that help ensure that your child is safe at school. However, we need your help. We ask you to help us identify any situations where a student, staff member, family member, neighbor, or any other person might present a threat to the safety of our school.

Today, for obvious reasons, airport security checkpoints do not permit any behaviors by passengers of a threatening nature. Similarly, at school we cannot allow any behaviors by individuals that might pose a threat to the well-being of our students, staff and others. We have an obligation to keep our school safe. Therefore, we will take any and all threats, threatening behavior or other behavioral indicators seriously. The school is not a place where we can allow people to make threats, offhanded comments or practical jokes about violence, or to possess of weapons of any type. Nor, can we ignore behavioral signs that might indicate the potential for school violence. We will thoroughly investigate all potential concerns and take appropriate action.

## RECOGNIZING POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

We ask that you look for clues that may indicate that your child, another child you know, a student you teach or an adult associated with you and/or the school, poses a potential threat of violence. These are generally situations where something "is just not right" -- the behavior appears to be inappropriate for the person's age, extreme or out-of-character, and the person may need some immediate attention or intervention. This list is not exhaustive, but it does illustrate some behavioral indicators that *may* highlight a potential problem:

- Direct or indirect threats made against others
- Assignments or writings with violent themes or fantasies expressed (including suicidal themes)
- Statements indicating hopelessness or desperation
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts
- Bizarre thoughts, hallucinations, delusions or paranoia
- Fighting or intimidating behavior
- Missing or stolen weapons
- Possession of weapons
- Angry and emotional outbursts
- Signs of depression
- Obsession with weapons and violence, violent media, music, etc.
- Thoughts of death
- Deep grudges and resentments against particular individuals or groups
- Restraining orders that may involve someone trying to get access to persons at the school
- Any other warning sign that causes you concern about safety at school

## REPORTING PROCEDURES:

- Report indicators of potential problems or your concerns to the school administration - do not wait!
- Please ask questions if you are not sure about school safety.

**INVESTIGATION/ACTION:**

School administrators will investigate and take action as described in the statement on harassment and violence.

**DESSIGNATION**

This statement is to be published in student/parent and faculty/staff handbooks along with the statement on harassment and violence, discussed with students (at an age-appropriate level) and staff at least annually, and reviewed periodically.