

Philosophy

St. Coletta of Greater Washington is committed to ensure the safety of all students by encouraging a school climate where everyone is free to learn. Students who are bullied and those who bully others are at a significant risk of health, safety and educational risks.

Policy

It is the policy of St. Coletta of Greater Washington to prohibit bullying, harassment or intimidation of any person on school property, school-sponsored functions, while in transit to school or school-sponsored functions, or by the use of electronic technology. Using electronic technology to bully includes any incident that occurs on school property with school technology, or that otherwise adversely affect a student's ability to participate or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities. It is also the policy to prohibit reprisal or retaliation against anyone who reports reliable information about acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation or who are victims.

As used in this policy, "bullying" means any severe, pervasive, and persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

1. May be based on youth's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of intrafamily offense, place or residence of business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and
2. Can reasonably be predicted to:
 - a. Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to his person or property;
 - b. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth's physical or mental health;
 - c. Substantially interfere with the youth's academic performance or attendance; or,
 - d. Substantially interfere with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

"Electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

“Harassment” means perceived or actual experiences of discomfort with identity issues in regard to race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other identifying characteristics by a student which adversely affects that student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs or activities.

“Intimidation” means subjection of a student to intentional action that seriously threatens and induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority which adversely affects that student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational program or activities.

“Retaliation” means an act of reprisal or getting back at a person for an act he /she has committed.

Procedure

This policy will be made available within the front office. Additionally, it will be distributed to staff and students annually and students and staff will be reminded that these policies extend to school sponsored functions.

Code of Conduct

St. Coletta School serves students with significant disabilities, which may include students that present with behavior challenges. All students are managed on an individual basis to determine the level of supports and/or consequences required to address severe behaviors that may disrupt the classroom environment or put themselves and/or others at risk of harm.

Prevention

All school staff will participate in annual professional development to increase awareness of the prevalence, causes, and consequences of bullying and to increase the use of evidence-based strategies for preventing bullying, as well as the procedure for reporting incidences of bullying. Additional professional development may be provided for new employees who are hired after the start of the school year.

Students will participate in learning about their rights to an environment free from bullying and the appropriate responses.

All school staff will promote student involvement in the anti-bullying efforts, peer support, mutual respect, and a culture which encourages students to report incidents of bullying to adults.

Procedure for Reporting Acts of Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation

1. Students, staff, parents, and guardians may report any incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation to assistant principals or Lead Social Worker at 1901 Independence Ave SE, Washington, DC 20003 or at (202)350-8680.
2. Incidences of bullying may be reported anonymously; however, disciplinary action cannot be taken solely on the basis of the anonymous report. The anonymous report may trigger an investigation that will provide actionable information.
3. An employee or youth who promptly and in good faith reports an incident of, or information on, bullying in compliance with the policy of the agency, educational institution, or grantee shall be immune from a cause of action for damages arising from the report.
4. If a student complains that he/she is currently the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the staff member will respond quickly and appropriately to investigate and intervene, as safety permits.
5. If a student expresses a desire to discuss an incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation with a staff member, the staff member will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.

Procedures for Investigation

1. All reports of bullying will be documented using the *Incident Report Form*. They must then be promptly and appropriately investigated by school administrators or the administrative designee, consistent with due process rights, using the *Incident Report Form* within 2 school days after receipt of a reporting form or as timely as possible for school administration.
2. School administrators or the administrative designee will determine whether bullying, harassment, or intimidation actually occurred by taking steps to verify who committed the act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and whether others played a role in perpetuating this act. Other related complaints, if any, will be reviewed in making this determination.
3. Efforts will be made to ensure the safety of the alleged victim of the reported bullying incident. For instance, administrators may alter the bully's seating or schedule to reduce access to the alleged victim.
4. School administrators or the administrative designee will immediately notify parents of the victim and offender of the incident.
5. School administrators or the administrative designee will apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with the school's discipline policy. St. Coletta School is dedicated to serving students with challenging behaviors by providing

intensive behavior supports; however, there may be incidents where further disciplinary action is necessary. All cases are determined on a student by student basis and take into consideration their specific circumstances such as cognitive skill level and social awareness. Possible consequences include: in-school disciplinary action, in-house suspension, short term out-of-school suspension, or long-term suspension or expulsion. Please see the discipline policy for a further description of each consequence. The offender will be informed that retaliation against a victim or bystander is strictly prohibited and that progressive consequences will occur if the activity continues. These consequences may include in-school disciplinary action, in-house suspension, short term out-of-school suspension, or long-term suspension or expulsion.

6. Additionally, bullies and victims of bullying may be referred to appropriate support services, such as counseling.
7. The administrator/designee will create a written record of the bullying, harassment, or intimidation incident and any disciplinary actions taken, as well as obtain the statements of the victim, witnesses, and offender. Discussions with all parties should be documented as soon as possible after the event.
8. If parties are dissatisfied with the outcome of a bullying investigation, an appeal may be made in writing to the school's principal at 1901 Independence Ave SE, Washington, DC 20003, (202)350-8680. This appeal must be submitted no later than 30 days after the initial determination. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Principal must conduct a secondary investigation within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal. This 30 days may be extended up to an additional 15 days if the Principal sets forth in writing the reasons why more time is needed to conduct an investigation. Additionally, upon the receipt of an appeal, the Principal must inform the party making the submission of their ability to seek additional redress under the DC Human Rights Act (ohr@dc.gov) at 441 4th Street NW, Suite 570 North, Washington, DC 20001, (202)727-4559.

Resources:

Board of Education of Montgomery County. Montgomery County Public Schools. Special Education and Student Services. *Policy-Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation*. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jhf.pdf>

District of Columbia. *Bullying and Intimidation Prevention Act of 2011 (B19-11)*. <http://dctranscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/dc-b19-11-one-pager-update.pdf>

District of Columbia. *District-wide Model Bullying Prevention Policy*. http://ohr.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ohr/publication/attachments/DCBullyingPreventionPolicy_PressQ_022513.pdf

Prince George's County Public Schools. *Administrative Procedure (5143) - Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation (October 27, 2017)*.

http://www1.pgcps.org/uploadedFiles/Schools_and_Centers/High_Schools/High_Point/Admin%20Policy%20Bullying.pdf