



ST. JOHN NOTTINGHAM
LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONGREGATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL,
& COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

St. John Nottingham Lutheran School Anti-Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy

PURPOSE

At John Nottingham Lutheran School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships. We believe that “HIB” behavior is unacceptable and we students, staff and parents all share a responsibility for preventing it.

This policy builds on the Ohio Revised Code’s requirements to provide clear procedures and strategies to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. (Please note that while the Ohio Revised Code requires a behavior to be repeated more than once to qualify as “harassment, intimidation, or bullying.” St. John Nottingham does not, and the first incident will be considered sufficient.)

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Christian schools are called upon by God to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation, justice, and the Word of God. In witnessing these values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviors which marginalize or victimize people.

DEFINITIONS

St. John Nottingham expands the definition of “bullying” to include harassment and intimidation as well, and refers to any intentional, written, verbal, graphic, physical, or online act that a student, group of students, or staff member exhibit towards another student, group of students, or staff member that causes mental, emotional, or physical harm to another student, group of students, or staff member and creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student, group of students, or staff member. These “HIB” behaviors are generally:

1. deliberate and often repeated.
2. intended to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another.
3. action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group.

HIB behavior takes many forms, all of which will and are intended to cause distress. Examples include:

Physical - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others, etc., or exhorting others to be physically aggressive.

Verbal - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumors, etc., including racist or sexist language.

Non-Verbal - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, rude gestures, etc.

Exclusion - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone, etc.

Extortion - threatening to take someone's possessions, food, or money, etc.

Property - stealing, hiding, damaging, or destroying property etc. (In the event of accidental property damage, while restitution will likely be required, this would not be considered an HIB incident.)

Cyber - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones (including taking unwanted pictures, videos, or audio recordings of another student or staff member), email, chat room, social networking, web page, etc.

How do we prevent bullying at St John Nottingham?

We believe, based on research, that prevention strategies through education that involve the whole school community (including students, staff and parents) are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at SJN we recognize that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying.

At SJN we make the following commitments to prevent bullying:

- We commit to the explicit teaching of positive behaviors embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action, etc., in accordance with the responsibilities placed upon us by the State of Ohio, families, and God.
- We commit to consistent communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the expectations of Christian fellowship and love as the centerpiece of all anti-HIB efforts.
- We commit to regularly recognizing and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviors that promote and restore right relationships.
- We commit to providing vigilant supervision in classroom, playground, cafeteria, and transition areas.
- We commit to providing active, year-round anti-HIB coaching and programming directed by the School Psychologist.
- We commit to taking every report of HIB behavior seriously and investigating it to the fullest extent possible.
- We commit to providing appropriate consequences for HIB incidents.

At SJN students are encouraged to:

- take some positive action to stop the HIB behavior if they observe an incident and it is safe for them to do so.
- report the HIB incident to a staff member as soon as possible.
- make it clear to their peers that HIB behavior is not accepted.

At SJN staff are expected to:

- take positive, assertive action to stop the HIB behavior when they observe an incident.
- report information about any reported or observed HIB incident to SJN administration as soon as possible for further action.
- be proactive in providing a safe environment for their students to learn.

At SJN parents are encouraged to:

- be actively involved with their children’s school experience.
- listen to their children and encourage their child to maintain positive, active communication with SJN staff.
- immediately contact the school if they have a concern.

Reporting HIB incidents at SJN.

HIB incidents may be reported in a variety of ways:

- Speaking directly with an SJN staff member.
- Reporting the incident via Jupiter Grades to an SJN staff member.
- Reporting the incident anonymously via written testimony left in an SJN staff member’s mailbox.
- Seeking parental assistance in reporting the incident to an SJN staff member.
- Reporting the incident to SJN church pastoral leadership.

Formal Reports

Students, parents, guardians, and staff members may file formal reports regarding suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the principal for review and action in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code.

Records will be maintained of formal reports of HIB behaviors for a minimum of five years and may be subject to records transfer requests from other schools or agencies such as Child Protective Services. Formal reports may be made anonymously if the reporter wishes.

Informal Reports

Students, parents, guardians and staff members may make informal reports of conduct that they consider to be harassment, intimidation and/or bullying by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witness. A school staff member or administrator who receives an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint *in writing*, including the above information. This written report by the school staff member and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the principal for review and action in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code.

Records will be maintained of informal reports of HIB behaviors for a minimum of five years and may be subject to records transfer requests from other schools or agencies such as Child Protective Services. Informal reports may be

made anonymously if the reporter wishes.

How do we respond to HIB incidents at SJN?

HIB behavior is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioral expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our disciplinary policies.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated to the fullest extent possible, and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying may include any or all of the following, as determined appropriate by SJN administration and staff based on the severity/nature of the incident:

- Guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (e.g. re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking, etc.).
- Guidance and support for ‘bystanders’, ‘supporters’ and witnesses of the bullying (e.g. intervention strategies, etc.).
- Age appropriate and consistent consequences for the student(s) perpetrating the incident.
 - These may include any or all of the following: parental conferences, behavioral improvement contracts, loss of recess/free time, after school detention, suspension, Saturday school, or expulsion/termination of enrollment.
 - These consequences will rapidly increase in severity for repeated offenses.
- Intervention and support for the student(s) who were the victims of the behavior.
- Involving and informing parents in the process.

Procedures for investigating HIB incidents and follow up

In discerning appropriate responses to an HIB incident, the collective welfare of the school community will be balanced with the individual needs of the student. The confidence of a student, parent, or staff member reporting an HIB incident will be honored.

- Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (i.e. student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behavior, staff etc.).
- The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
 - A clear statement on the consequences of the incident, the additional consequence that will occur if the bullying continues, and the additional consequences that will occur if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident.
 - Immediate preventative actions that implemented to avoid further incidents.
- Follow up interviews will focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved. Regular monitoring of all students involved is standard.
- Behavioral Improvement Contracts will, in most cases, be implemented to define specific behavioral problems, describe appropriate replacement behaviors, outline supports provided to enable students to make positive changes, and specify consequences should the behaviors continue.
- Full records of all reports of, responses to, and consequences of HIB incidents will be maintained.

- Any further recurrence of HIB behaviors may result in suspension and could lead to the removal of the student from the school through suspension pending negotiated transfer, termination of enrollment, or expulsion.

POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every three years.