

Florida Christian School Model Policy Against Bullying and Harassment

****Please note: Any reference to “bullying” includes cyberbullying,
whether or not specifically stated.**

a. Statement prohibiting bullying and harassment:

Florida Christian School is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all of its students. It is the policy of Florida Christian School that all its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Therefore, this policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures directed at a student by another student that has the effect of: (1) physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student; (2) damaging, extorting or taking a student’s personal property; (3) placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional or mental harm; (4) placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or (5) creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or the mission at FCS.

b. Definition of bullying and a definition of harassment:

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. The following are 4 key elements to bullying:

1. Hurtful
2. Repetitive
3. Imbalance of Power
4. Intentional

Bullying can be written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Relational aggression (Making fun of others for who they are, the way they dress, or how they look)
- Racial slurs
- Rumors
- Jokes
- False accusations
- Threat
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Intimidation

- Stalking
- Innuendos
- Demeaning comments
- Public or private humiliation
- Destruction of property
- Pranks
- Social isolation/exclusion
- Gestures
- Sexual or religious harassment
- Cyber-bullying
- Other verbal or written conduct

Bullying reflects a pattern of behavior and is not a single isolated incident. These definitions include students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student’s act of bullying. This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either: on school premises before, during, or after school hours; on any bus or vehicle as part of any school activity; or during any school function, extracurricular activity or other school-sponsored event or activity.

Cyberbullying includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images or website postings (including blogs and social network sites). Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyberstalking as defined in s. 784.048(1)(d), F.S., means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

Harassment and Discrimination

Florida Christian School is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, FCS will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person’s protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, including non-related school events, or at school-sponsored events. All students are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student must immediately report the incident to Patriot Peace Team, which is comprised of employees from the Mental Health Department, Dean of Students, Principals and other administration as needed.

Sexual Harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Sexual Harassment may be defined as any unwanted sexually oriented acts which create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment. Sexual harassment consists of non-welcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct, or other verbal or physical conduct of communication of a sexual nature when any of these conditions exist: Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or education decisions affecting such individual. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating or hostile or offensive work environment. Some examples of this behavior include (but are not limited to): Written contact-sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations, or drawings; The electronic transmission or receipt from one minor to another of any photograph or video that depicts nudity may constitute illegal sexting. Students engaged in sexting will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences which may include expulsion from school. In addition, the school administration may report instances of sexting to the Florida Department of Children and Families or local law enforcement for appropriate investigation as to violations of law;

- Verbal contact-sexually suggestive or obscene comments; threats, jokes;
- Physical contact-any intentional pats, squeezes, touching, pinching, and repeatedly brushing up against another's body, assault, blocking movement or coercing any sexual activity;
- Visual contact-suggestive looks, staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually explicit or suggestive objects, pictures, magazines.

Bullying and Harassment also encompasses:

1. Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
2. Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - a. Incitement or coercion
 - b. Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of Florida Christian School.
 - c. Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

c. Behavior expected from each student of Florida Christian School:

Florida Christian School expects each student to be obedient to God in his or her daily conduct. The Bible emphasizes the importance of our testimony to those around us. Therefore, since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and

volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Additionally, as a Christian School, FCS seeks to promote behavior and attitudes that are aligned with and acceptable to God. As Christians, we are called to love others who are weaker, not to intimidate or manipulate people.

James 1:27

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

I John 3:17-18

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Galatians 6:9-10

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Florida Christian School ensures and sustains a healthy, positive, and safe learning environment for all students. It is important to continue displaying and promoting a Christ like attitude with regards to bullying and harassment. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment, teachers, administrators, counselors, school nurses, other non-teaching staff (such as bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, coaches, and/or school librarians), parents/legal guardians, and students.

Florida Christian School upholds that bullying or harassment of any student or school employee is prohibited:

- a) During any education program or activity conducted by Florida Christian School;
- b) During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity;
- c) On any FCS transportation;
- d) Through the use of data or computer software (i.e. Airdrop) that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of Florida Christian School within the scope of the school, meaning regardless of ownership, any computer, computer system, or computer network that is physically located on school property or at a school-related or school-sponsored program or activity; or
- e) Through the use of data or computer software (i.e. Airdrop) that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned or used by Florida Christian school, if the bullying substantially interferes with or limits the target's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by

Florida Christian School or substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of the school.

- f) The above section (e) does not require a school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

d. Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying or harassment:

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action (i.e. non-related school activity).

Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, administrative withdrawal, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. Florida Christian School reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action, which may be unique per individual incident.

e. Consequences for a student who is found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of an act of bullying or harassment:

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

f. A procedure for receiving reports of an alleged act of bullying or harassment, including provisions that permit a person to anonymously report such an act.

It is the duty of each student and parent to report any bullying to the school immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses, or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported. All other members of the school community, including but not limited to, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in-person.

The Bullying Report and Harassment Reporting Form will be accessible in various formats. The form must be completed, dated and signed by the reporting party so that the school may initiate an investigation, when appropriate. The completed form should be submitted to Florida Christian School's licensed therapist.

