



St. James Middle School

Bullying Intervention Plan

State law requires each school district in South Carolina to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying at school. Furthermore, HCS policy provides that each school within the district is expected to have in place, and be ready to articulate and defend, an effective bullying intervention system. In this regard, **St. James Middle School** hereby adopts the following policy.

I. Statement:

St. James Middle School prohibits any act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. **St. James Middle School** has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, qualifies as conduct that disrupts a student's ability to learn and hampers a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Since students learn by example; school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate model behavior by treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.

St. James Middle School is committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment where students can physically, emotionally, and academically grow during the middle school years. Therefore, the school is committed to creating a school-wide culture focused on character education where all students and adults are treated with respect.

II. Prohibited Behavior Defined:

St. James Middle School acknowledges that "harassment, intimidation or bullying" means a gesture, an electronic communication, or a written, verbal, physical, or sexual act that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function where the school is responsible for the child or on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop and that:

- a) a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of harming a student, physically or emotionally, or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- b) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student, or group of students, in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

St. James Middle School considers the following prohibited behaviors:

1. **Making unwanted physical contact with another student with the intent to harm the other student such as kicking, hitting, poking, slapping, spitting, or punching another person.**
2. **Taking personal items from a person and damaging them or refusing to return them.**
3. **Using words to taunt, demean, threaten, ridicule, or gossip with the intent to embarrass or hurt another student either through oral and/or written language or through the use of social media (cyber-bullying).**
4. **Using peer pressure (cliques) to make another student feel isolated or frightened.**
5. **Bringing items to school that endanger or threaten the safety of the school environment.**

III. Appropriate Behavior Defined:

St. James Middle School expects students to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the district's standard for student behavior. A proper regard shall be shown towards the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, as well as the educational purpose underlying all school-related activities. Furthermore, due care shall be given to school facilities and equipment.

St. James Middle School believes that standards for student behavior is best achieved cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents and guardians, staff and community members of the school district; thereby producing an atmosphere that encourages students to exercise appropriate levels of self-discipline. The development of this environment requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property on the part of students, staff and community members.

St. James Middle School believes that the best discipline is self-imposed in nature, and that it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities for helping students learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and understand the consequences of engaging in prohibited behaviors. Staff members who interact with students shall apply suitable protocol which are designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage growth in each student's ability to exercise self-discipline and behave appropriately.

St. James Middle School considers the following appropriate behaviors:

1. **Acting with integrity and courage by doing the right thing.**
2. **Being respectful and courteous in all social interactions.**
3. **Using problem-solving and mediation skills when faced with conflict.**
4. **Working cooperatively with others to accomplish tasks.**
5. **Displaying positive oral and written communication skills.**
6. **Being considerate of others.**
7. **Showing compassion and empathy for others.**
8. **Building positive relationships.**

IV. Consequences and Remedial Measures:

St. James Middle School accepts responsibility for the development and implementation of procedures that ensure appropriate consequences and remedial responses to students or staff members who commit any act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The following factors, at a minimum, shall be given full consideration by school administrators in the development of the procedures for determining appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each incident.

Factors for Determining Consequences

- Age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved
- Degrees of harm
- Situational circumstances
- Nature and severity of the behaviors
- Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior
- Relationships between the parties involved; and
- Context in which the alleged incidents occurred

Factors for Determining Remedial Measures

Personal

- Life skill deficiencies
- Social relationships
- Strengths
- Talents
- Traits
- Interests
- Hobbies
- Extra-curricular activities
- Classroom participation
- Academic performance

Environmental

- School culture
- School climate
- Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student
- General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments
- Staff's ability to prevent and manage difficult or inflammatory situations
- Social-emotional and behavioral supports
- Social relationships
- Community activities
- Community environment
- Family situation

Consequences and Remedial Measures:

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students or staff members who commit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension, evidentiary hearing, or adverse employment action. Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Consequences must be consistent with the district's approved code of student conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the problem; and protect the victim of the act. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

Examples of Consequences

- Admonishment
- Temporary removal from the classroom
- Deprivation of privileges
- Classroom or administrative detention
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Involve Law Enforcement
- Evidentiary Hearing

Examples of Remedial Measures

Personal

- Restitution and restoration
- Mediation
- Peer support group
- Referral to a student behavior or ethics council
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- Supportive student interventions
- Behavioral assessment or other evaluation as deemed appropriate
- Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored
- Assignment of leadership responsibilities (e.g., hallway or bus monitor)
- Involvement of school disciplinarian or interventionist
- Student counseling
- Parent conferences

Environmental (Classroom, School Building or School District)

- School and community surveys for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation or bullying
- School culture change
- School climate improvement
- Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs
- School policy and procedures revisions
- Modifications of schedules
- Adjustments in hallway traffic
- Modifications in student routes or patterns traveling to and from school
- Targeted use of monitors (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, bus)
- Small or large group presentations for fully addressing the behaviors and the responses to the behaviors
- General professional development programs for certificated and non-certificated staff
- Professional development plans for involved staff
- Disciplinary action for school staff who contributed to the problem
- Supportive institutional interventions
- Parent conferences
- Family counseling
- Involvement of parent-teacher organizations
- Involvement of community-based organizations
- Development of a general bullying response plan
- Recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council
- Peer support groups; and
- Law enforcement (e.g., school resource officer, juvenile officer) involvement

St. James Middle School has the following specific measures in place to deter inappropriate behaviors and support a positive school-wide climate.

- Students sign an awareness contract and pledge, which outlines the definitions and different types of bullying, in addition to methods of reporting bullying concerns.
 - Guidance counselors follow up with individual students and parents with concerns.
- The Bullying Intervention plan is shared with parents on the school's web page.
- Teachers stand by their doorway during each change of classes supervising the movement of students to prevent problems.
- Any type of inappropriate behavior (i.e., put down about wearing a mask) directed toward students who choose to wear a mask will be addressed through the district's Student Behavior Code as outlined in the HCS Policy Manual.
- One administrator has been assigned to each grade level and is in close proximity to hallways and classrooms within their grade level. The administrators monitor the change of classes and lunch. The administrators handle discipline referrals, concerns, and any other issues concerning their assigned students.
- Academic teachers take their fourth-period or fifth-period classes to and from lunch. Academic teachers remain in the cafeteria with their classes so that each student in the cafeteria can always be identified by a staff member.
- Exploratory teachers and a select number of academic teachers assist the assistant principals in supervising during lunch and recess.
- A master duty schedule has been developed which is aligned with the school's floor plan to ensure staff density for supervision in the morning prior to the beginning of the school day and at the end of the school day, especially in troublesome areas.
- Teachers and staff supervise students in the morning as students exit cars, exit buses, walk in the hallways, eat in the cafeteria, sit in the gym, and sit in classrooms. Teachers and staff supervise students at dismissal as the students exit the building and enter either a car or bus.
- The school administrators and all staff members have been trained on bullying through the district's Safe Schools online courses.
- The school has cameras available throughout the campus to increase safety through increased supervision. Several cameras allow for 360-degree viewing.
- Rooms are all equipped with telephones and an emergency line for assistance when needed.
- Metal detectors and a weapons detection system are used daily and at athletic and other school events to increase safety.
- Students are required to use a clear backpack.
- The school places a strong emphasis on civic involvement through service learning, Student Council Association (SCA), Beta Club, and other civic-minded organizations.
- The Anti-bullying Club (Kindness Matters Club) partners with our Beta Club and guidance to help peer mentor students who are going through difficult situations. In addition to anti-bullying month, they promote standing up to bullying by

promoting, “If you see something, say something.” This slogan and anti-bully campaigns and reminders are posted throughout the hallways.

- **Digital Literacy Lessons addressing bullying are taught in person during social studies under the direction of the Media Specialist.**
 - **7th Grade Lessons**
 - **Digital Footprint & Reputation**
 - **Cyberbullying**
 - **Bias & Media**
 - **Digital Citizenship & Research**
 - **8th Grade Lessons**
 - **Digital Wellbeing & Feedback Loops**
 - **Ethical Use of Digital Resources & AI**
 - **Critical Evaluation of Digital Media**
 - **Digital Rights & Responsibilities**
- **SJM and the Kindness Week Committee partner with Seaside Elementary, Burgess Elementary, St. James Elementary, St. James Intermediate, and St. James High School in creating Kindness Week activities.**
- **SJM participates in Character Counts Spirit Week, conducting activities focused on positive character traits.**
- **The school participates in American Education Week, which includes activities for appreciation, in addition to participating in Veteran’s Day appreciation and celebration that honors performances from multiple clubs and student groups that display demonstrations of honor and respect.**
- **SJM staff members nominate students for Superb Shark Certificates (positive praise referrals) to provide incentives for positive behavior.**
- **The school provides a variety of activities and clubs to engage students in positive activities.**
 - The school offers B-Team sports (*softball, baseball, girls’ volleyball, football, basketball, and cheerleading*), in addition to having middle school students qualify for junior varsity and varsity teams at St. James High School.
 - St. James Middle School Clubs are developed and maintained each year based on student interest, allowing students the opportunity to be a part of a team and build collaborative relationships. Current SJM Clubs include: *Jr. Beta Club, Student Council, MathCounts, Robotics, Art Club, Science and Environmental Club, Chess Club, Maker’s Space Club, Battle of the Books Club, Rubik’s Cube Club, Kindness Matters Club, FCA, Curtain Call Acting Club, Magpie Club (Beading Crafts), Spelling Bee, Student Council, and Archery.*
- **The school provides behavioral support and character building through its guidance department and Rehabilitative Behavioral Health Services (RHBS).**
- **The guidance department may also conduct character-building sessions with students assigned to In-School Suspension (ISS).**
- **A school psychologist is housed at the building level along with other support services for students with special needs.**
- **Administration and/or teachers speak with students daily at lunch about behavioral expectations.**

- **Administration periodically meets virtually(pre-recorded) and/or in-person with students to review and remind students of expected behavior and treatment of peers.**
- **The administration uses log entries and student incident reports for documentation.**
- **Guidance meets with students annually to discuss bullying issues and ways to report bullying incidents.**

This plan is reviewed and updated annually.

V. Reporting Procedures:

Horry County Schools requires the principal, or the principal's designee(s), at each school to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or the principal's designee(s). All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. While written statements are not required, the reporting party should be encouraged to submit one. Oral statements shall be also considered as an official notification; however, the principal or the principal's designee(s) should document the oral statement.

Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action must not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report that cannot be corroborated. If requested, the identity of the victim will be protected to the extent allowed by law.

- **St. James Middle School has two assistant principals and one principal who work collaboratively to receive and investigate reports concerning incidences of bullying. One assistant principal works primarily with the seventh grade while the other assistant principal works primarily with the eighth grade. Incidents may also be reported to guidance or to the principal.**
- **St. James Middle has a tip box located near the cafeteria to anonymously report concerns.**
- **A bully complaint dropbox is located outside of the guidance office for students to anonymously submit any issues. Another suggestion/report box is located in the cafeteria. Students may also submit a complaint digitally through the district website.**
- **St. James Middle provides students with opportunities during advisory/Shark Time lessons to practice accessing staff member emails, including administrator emails, to email concerns and questions in a confidential manner. Students are provided tutorial opportunities on email etiquette when corresponding with their "trusted" adult.**
- **Horry County Schools has an anonymous tip line (If You See Something, Say Something.) that is posted on the school and district's webpage, Facebook page, and in the monthly school newsletter.**
- **Bullying incidents that are confirmed are documented in students' discipline records via PowerSchool along with appropriate sanctions.**

VI. Investigative Protocol:

Horry County Schools requires the principal and/or the principal's designee(s) to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. All complaints of this nature will be taken seriously. In doing so, the principal and/or the principal's designee(s) shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of each alleged incident. All investigations shall be sufficiently documented and the results of said investigation shall be retained by the school's administration regardless if the allegation is sustained or not. Those incidents which meet policy defined criteria must be reported to the District Office through the appropriate channels.

St. James Middle School will use the following methods to report to the Office of Student Affairs as required.

- 1. Horry County Schools Incident/Crime Report**
- 2. PowerSchool – Bullying and Student sanctions will be reported via PowerSchool as appropriate.**

VII. Prohibition Against Retaliation and Reprisals.

St. James Middle School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The administrator shall determine the consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, in accordance with applicable laws, policies and procedures.

Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be investigated and disciplinary measures taken aligned with school and district policy. Law enforcement and Horry County Police will be notified where applicable.

VIII. False Reporting and Accusations:

St. James Middle School prohibits any person from making false accusations as a means to harass, intimidate or bully another person. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another, as a means to harass, intimidate or bully another person shall be disciplined in accordance with district policies and procedures. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have falsely accused another as a means to harass, intimidate or bully another person shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials when appropriate.

St. James Middle School will follow these guidelines to address false reporting and accusations:

- The administrators will issue appropriate sanctions, consequences, and remedial actions for students based on school/discipline policy.**

- **The principal in cooperation with the Human Resources Department will determine the appropriate remedial action and/or sanctions for employees filing a false complaint.**

IX. Student Discussions:

The principal understands the requirement to develop an annual process for discussing the school's policy on harassment, intimidation and bullying with students, which may include, but is not limited to, class meetings, or newsletters.

St. James Middle School has the following processes in place to meet the aforementioned requirement:

- **The school's policy on harassment, intimidation, and bullying is addressed in the school's handbook which is given to each student and taught in classes and formal/informal administration discussions with students during the first few weeks of school and reviewed throughout the school year.**
- **Classroom Academic and Disciplinary Plans are reviewed with students and sent home to be reviewed by parents/guardians.**
- **The administrator for each grade level holds virtual (pre-recorded) and/or in-person class meetings during the first few weeks of school to discuss school-wide expectations with students, discipline, and consequences. Bullying is addressed through these meetings.**
- **Each student is required to complete a semester of health and PE. Bullying is addressed through health classes.**
- **Students involved in bullying incidents are provided with counseling through the following resources: the school's guidance department, RBHS services, and/or other outside agencies in cooperation with the school.**

- X. On an annual basis, prior to the beginning of each school year, the principal will review this plan and amend it when deemed necessary. Furthermore, this plan shall be available to all school staff, students and parents. In addition to providing access to this plan, the administration at **St. James Middle School** will make it clear that all HCS Bullying Intervention Plans are applicable to all acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop or at any other program or function where the school is responsible for the child.

St. James Middle School Principal: Olga Toggas

St. James Middle School Bullying Intervention Representative: Carlos Barker

8/15/2025