

**DIOCESE OF DES MOINES**  
**Catholic Schools Policies/Regulations**

**STUDENT PERSONNEL**

**Harassment, Bullying and Hazing**

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Board that all schools maintain an environment free from unlawful and undesirable verbal and physical harassment, bullying and/or hazing. Schools must develop and incorporate programs to eliminate harassment, bullying and hazing. (IAC 2808.28)

For the purposes of this policy harassment, bullying and hazing shall mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a person which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student or school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one of more of the following conditions:

- Places a student or school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers in reasonable fear of harm to their person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers' physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance or school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers' job performance;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's or school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

“Electronic” shall mean any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. “Electronic” includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging, or similar technologies.

The phrase “trait or characteristic” of the student, school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers as used in this policy includes, but is not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

The term “sexual orientation” means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality. The term “gender identity” means the gender related identity of a person, regardless of the person’s assigned sex at birth.

Harassment, bullying and hazing may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Verbal, nonverbal, or physical or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one’s grades, achievements, property, etc. that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student or school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; and/or
- Unreasonable interference with a student’s or school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers’ performance or creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning or working environment.

This policy shall be in effect while students are on school property, while on school-owned or school operated/leased vehicles; while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school.

Students who believe they or other students or school personnel, coaches, sponsors and volunteers are the victim of bullying, harassment or hazing should immediately report their concerns to the school principal or the principal’s designee. The principal or the principal’s designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying, harassment or hazing. The school must promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying, harassment and hazing.

The investigator must consider the totality of circumstances presented in determining whether conduct objectively constitutes harassment, bullying or hazing. (IAC 280.28)

Any individual who believes a person has been bullied, harassed or hazed may report the matter to legal authorities.

Retaliation against a person because the person has filed a bullying, harassment or hazing complaint or assisted or participated in an investigation or proceeding is prohibited. An individual who knowingly files a false complaint and a person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall a person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. A student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion.

The principal shall ensure that the anti-harassment, anti-bullying and anti-hazing policy and procedures are printed in the Handbooks and shall contain the following statement: The Diocesan Catholic Schools Policy on harassment, bullying and hazing can be found at [www.dmdiocese.org](http://www.dmdiocese.org) Catholic Schools, About Catholic Schools, School Policies and Regulations. The policy must be integrated into the school's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

The principal or the principal's designee is responsible for collecting data relating to incidents of harassment, bullying and hazing. This data must be reported to the Iowa Department of Education upon completion of the investigation.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to impair the school's ability to educate and administer consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church. Nothing in this policy is intended to condone behaviors or lifestyles that are inconsistent with Catholic teachings.

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