

**St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas  
2018-2019 Student- Parent Handbook**

**ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY  
SECTION 17**

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**BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY**

**I. CODE OF CONDUCT**

Harassment-Free Environment for Students:

St. Matthew Catholic School does not condone harassment of any kind including bullying in any of its forms. All students are to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment in any form is prohibited and will be immediately addressed. This prohibition against all acts of harassment applies to all people engaged in all school related activities: all students; all school administrators and teachers, regular or temporary, part-time or full-time employees; volunteers, itinerant instructors, and consultants. All staff members will receive an annual review of the bullying/harassment policy and in-service training as needed.

The Archdiocese of San Antonio (Policy \*3302) defines bullying and harassment as follows:

**Bullying** means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs within or outside of school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the Archdiocese of San Antonio or the school, which includes a privately owned vehicle being used for school purposes, and that:

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's property;

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2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
3. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom, school, school-sponsored or school-related activity; or
4. Includes cyberbullying.

**Cyberbullying** means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

**Harassment** is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities

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**II. WAYS TO REPORT BULLYING/HARASSMENT**

There are several ways for students, parents, teachers, interested parties to report an instance of bullying.

**ANONYMOUSLY on line**

A bullying incident report can be submitted on the St. Matthew Catholic School website. It is currently located in the Parent Resources tab on the Website. It is anonymous, unless the reporter chooses to self-identify.

**Through a printed BULLYING REPORT form, which can also be SUBMITTED anonymously.**

In APPENDIX A – FORMS, there are forms that can be printed and turned in to one of the school administrators or one of the school counselors.

These forms may be submitted anonymously.

**III. RESOLUTION/ CONSEQUENCES FOR BULLYING OR OTHER ACTS OF HARASSMENT**

When a report of a bullying/harassment issue is received one of the administrators will conduct an investigation into the reported incident adhering to guidelines provided by the Catholic Schools Office. Parents of the students involved will be notified.

St. Matthew Catholic School Administrators will use discretion in assigning consequences for reported bullying/harassment on a case by case basis, which can range from campus intervention to expulsion in the most severe cases.

The following factors will be taken into consideration when determining appropriate consequences: age, development, degree of harm, surrounding circumstances, nature and severity of the behavior, incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior, relationship between the involved parties, and the context in which the alleged incident has occurred.

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**St. Matthew Catholic School will remain in compliance with policies set by the Archdiocese of San Antonio and local, state and federal laws, including reporting violations (bullying/harassing/sexting) to the proper authorities.**

Section 20 of this handbook further describes the Discipline system and consequences for violations of school behavior policies, whether the infraction takes place on the campus or off-campus.

### **III. SUPPORT SERVICES**

The services of the school counselors are available for students involved in any aspect of a bullying situation: the child (children) being bullied; the child (children) who are engaged in bullying behavior; the child (children) who are bystanders or reporters of the behavior.

### **IV. RETALIATION**

Retaliation against someone who reports a bullying/harassment incident is considered a serious offense and will be dealt with in the same manner as a bullying/harassment incident.