

## Washington New Church School ANTI BULLYING POLICY

July 15, 2019 Revision

*"I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent...." (Isaiah 62:6)*

*Jesus said, "Whatever you want people to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)*

- I. **Policy Statement:** To ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for its students, the Washington New Church School consults the policy, definitions and protocols laid out by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Prince George's County Public School system, which may be viewed online at [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov) and at [www.pgcps.org/antibullying](http://www.pgcps.org/antibullying). In short, bullying, harassment or intimidation of students will not be tolerated and will be addressed in age appropriate ways in accordance with the severity of the offenses.

### II. **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Bullying behavior is threatening, intimidating and occurs repeatedly over time with the intent to cause harm. In New Church terms it is a blatant form of the evil of despising another in comparison with one's self (see TCR #411).

There are three types of bullying, all of which contravene one or more of the Ten Commandments in the spiritual if not the literal sense:

- A. **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean or unkind things.
- B. **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships.
- C. **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions.

#### D. **Examples of Bullying**

- Hitting, pushing, kicking or spitting at another student
- Interfering with another pupil's property by stealing, hiding or damaging it
- Using offensive or belittling names when addressing another student
- Obscene gestures
- Teasing or spreading rumors about another student or his/her family
- Belittling another student's abilities and achievements
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another student
- Excluding another student from a group activity
- Ridiculing another student's appearance, way of speaking, personal mannerisms or cultural differences

- Misusing technology on or off campus (Internet or phone) to hurt or humiliate another person; this includes the use of any social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Snap-Chat, etc. to annoy, embarrass, or provoke another student.
- Reprisals or retribution on another student.
- Lying about another student, including making false accusations against them.

**E. Signs that children may be VICTIMS of bullying**

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. May come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

**F. Signs that children may be bullying OTHERS**

- They get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are hyper-competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

**III. Responsibilities of the School Community**

**A. STAFF**

WNCS will foster in our students self-respect and respect for others and demonstrate the high standards expected of all students.

WNCS expects staff to report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee immediately. Staff members will intervene immediately when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying will be investigated promptly. This policy applies to students on school grounds during or after school hours, on a school-sponsored activity, or in the case of technology misuse that impacts the school environment.

WNCS will provide staff development in bullying prevention and be alert to the signs of distress or indications of bullying.

WNCS staff will discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and will assure them that bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying

does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

## **B. STUDENTS**

WNCS has a Student Code of Conduct in the handbook which is to be followed by every student. It includes the following expectations:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity. (See examples under II. D.)
- Engage positively with periodic school trainings on appropriate by-stander responses.
- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying in order to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances. We are a “telling” school; students who see *something* are expected to say *something* without fear of retaliation.
- Children who become the target of bullying should not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

## **C. PARENTS**

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behavior in their children, which might be evidence of bullying;
- Advising their children to report any bullying to their class teacher and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying;
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with the school, even if their children are accused of bullying.
- Participate in developing and implementing an intervention plan for their child.

## **IV. Bullying Incident Investigating and Reporting Procedures**

### **A. Investigation**

- WNCS will interview all parties involved in an incident.
- WNCS will take steps to support and respond to the needs of both bullied and bullying pupils.
- WNCS will provide information and counsel to those involved.
- WNCS will contact parents and relevant professionals as needed.
- It can often be difficult to verify reports of bullying, but all such reports must be taken seriously. The reporting student will be affirmed and assured that the event will be investigated. Reports that are not clear, or cannot be confirmed, should be

treated cautiously, but there may be times when the school will follow up based on our best evaluation.

**V. Consequences for bullying behavior**

- A.** Observing teachers will write up incidents of bullying and report them to the home-room teacher and the principal. We will use the Bullying behavior Sequence of Incidents and Consequences worksheet to track a pattern of behaviors. These records will be kept in the student's file. Once the first strike is reached, all affected parents will be notified.
- B.** Interventions may include such things as: skills training, schedule adjustment, increases supervision, behavior contracts, parent and student conferences.
- C.** Punishments for bullying

The plan for punishment is to be worked out with the parents of the offending child in cooperation with the appropriate staff members and may include:

- "Face it and fix it" as described in the school handbook;
- Special monitoring and supervision of students who may be involved in bullying;
- Detention
- In-school suspension;
- Out-of-school suspension;
- Expulsion.

It must be understood that the final decision on punishments up to and including expulsion must rest with the administration of the school.

**VI. Anti-Bullying Support Resources**

WNCS Principal, Pastor and Faculty  
WNCS Parental Involvement  
WNCS School Board  
Prince George's County Community resources  
Prince George's County Dept. Social Services  
Prince George's County Law Enforcement

**VII. Related School Policies and Procedures**

WNCS & General Church Child Protection Policy  
WNCS Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy  
WNCS Handbook, including Discipline Protocols