

Providence St. Mel Harassment/Bullying Policy- *Reviewed and revised 8/8/24*

Providence St. Mel seeks to be a community in which every individual is treated with sensitivity and respect. This means that the school will not tolerate harassment of individuals because of culture, race, ethnic origin, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Bullying is contrary to State law as well as Providence St. Mel School policy.

- Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.
- Bullying is prohibited based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, physical appearance,
- socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, homelessness, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic.
- Students shall not be subjected to bullying:
 - during any school-sponsored education program or activity.
 - while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
 - through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment; or
 - through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of Providence St. Mel. This item applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require a school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.
- Bullying includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 - placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property.
 - causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health.
 - substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
 - substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by Providence St. Mel.
- "Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a

wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo electronic system, or photo optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" 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 effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. "Cyber-bullying" also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

- Any student who believes he or she is being bullied, should immediately report the incident to a teacher, counselor, social worker, or Student Services Administrator.
- Any student who witnesses what he or she believes is bullying by anyone has a responsibility to report the incident to a teacher, counselor, social worker, or Student Services Administrator.
- When the School receives a complaint of bullying, it will promptly begin an investigation. The procedures for investigating and addressing reports of bullying are as follows:
 - Students are encouraged to promptly report claims of incidences of bullying, Intimidation, harassment, sexual harassment, or any other prohibited conduct to the Counselor or any employee with whom the students is comfortable speaking.

Complaint Manager
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- The School will inform parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the students' involvement in the incident. Additionally, school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within the 24-hour period.
 - The School will involve the appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
 - The Counselor, Teresa Cullen or Student Services Administrator will be notified of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
 - The School will follow rules that are consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights and providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
 - The investigation ordinarily will include individually interviewing all parties and witnesses involved in the incident. Information regarding the complaint and investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible and will be disclosed within the School only on a "need to know" basis.
- If the complaint of bullying proves valid after an impartial and thorough investigation, the School will take appropriate disciplinary action designed to stop the bullying immediately

and prevent its recurrence. The School will impose the appropriate level of discipline against the offending student(s), up to and including expulsion of student(s).

- If the complaint proves to be an intentionally false allegation after an impartial and thorough investigation, the individual who provided the intentionally false information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion from Providence St. Mel.
- No individual will be retaliated against or subject to coercion, intimidation, threats or discrimination for making a good faith claim of bullying. If a student(s) retaliate against the student who reports bullying said student(s) will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from Providence St. Mel.
- Providence St. Mel will also provide interventions to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.
 - Is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including the students, parents or guardians, community members such as pastors, board of trustees, administrators, and employees.
 - Is included in the student navigation guide, which is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, school personnel, including new employees when hired, and sent to parents and guardians three times a year via Power Announcement.
- Providence St. Mel will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.
- As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy under subsection (d) of this Section, contains a policy evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, surveys with all stakeholders, and factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The non-sectarian nonpublic school may use relevant data and information in the following ways it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, licensed social work, teachers, counselors, parents, guardians, and students.
- Reviewed annually, it is consistent with the policies of the non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, physical or visual contact of a sexual nature. Faculty and students are prohibited from sexually harassing other students and/or faculty.

Providence St. Mel takes an active role in the prevention of sexual abuse to students. Procedures are in place to identify, investigate and report such cases if they occur. Providence St. Mel has zero tolerance for any sexual abuse of its student by other students, staff, volunteers, parents and temporary or contracted workers. This zero tolerance policy extends to female/male, male/male, and female/female relationships.

Behavior perceived to constitute harassment should be brought to the attention of the Student Services Administrator or a counselor.

Behavior that interferes with another student's sense of well-being, through rumor or gossip will be referred to the Student Services Administrator as conduct unbecoming of a PSM student.