

East Boston Central Catholic Bullying Policy



Bullying

East Boston Central Catholic (EBCCS) is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying. EBCCS acknowledges that its very foundation is rooted in the mission of the Church. In fulfilling its role within the educational mission of the Church, EBCCS must share and live out, through Catholic tradition, the message of Jesus Christ and be committed to providing an integrated Catholic education environment that permeates all aspects of its daily life and operations. Each child must be challenged to reach his/her fullest potential by fostering in each child a deep spirituality, a love of learning, and an environment that fosters respect, understanding, and appreciation of one another.

Accordingly, EBCCS hereby promulgates this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan as required by the Archdiocese of Boston Bullying Prevention Policy and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This policy is aligned with the new legislation passed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It prohibits bullying on school grounds, as well as "cyberbullying." Through cyberbullying, students spread rumors about one another on websites like MySpace, Instagram, and Facebook. Cyberbullying also includes sending threatening or harassing messages via the web and through text messaging. Bullying, as defined by the bill and this policy, encompasses crimes such as stalking and harassment. The anti-bullying legislation specifically holds provisions for anti-bully training, and mandates that all school employees, including teachers, cafeteria staff, janitorial staff, etc., must report and investigate incidents involving bullying. Teachers must also notify all parents of the students involved in the bullying incident. It also includes an anti-bullying curriculum to be taught in both public and private schools.

Definition of Bullying

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- Causes physical or significant emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or

Bullying materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. By way of example only, Bullying may involve, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted teasing
- Threats
- Intimidating
- Stalking
- Cyber-stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, racial or any other type of harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of School or personal property
- Social exclusion, including incitement or coercion
- Rumor or spreading of falsehoods For the purpose of this policy, bullying does not mean mere teasing, put-downs, "talking trash," trading of insults, or similar interactions among friends, nor

does it include expression of ideas or beliefs so long as such expression is not lewd, profane, or does not interfere with students' opportunities to learn, the instructional program or the operations of the school. *For the purpose of this Plan, whenever the term "Bullying" is used it is to denote either Bullying or Cyber-Bullying (as defined below).*

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- Wire
- Cellular phones
- Any form of text messaging via a cellular phone
- Electromagnetic
- Photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.
- Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.
- Cyber-bullying shall also include 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 conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected. Bullying is prohibited:

- At school and at all school facilities;
- At school-sponsored or school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school;
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, licensed or used by the school; and
- At non-school related locations and through non-school technology or electronic devices if the bullying affects the school environment.