

Montini Catholic School Bullying Policy

2015-16



Dan Olweus, PhD, commonly known as the “founding father” of research on bullying and victimization has defined bullying as **repeated negative, ill-intentioned behavior by one or more students directed against a student who has difficulty defending himself or herself. Most bullying occurs without any apparent provocation on the part of the student who is exposed.**”

The fact of the matter is that bullying is comprised of **direct behaviors** (typically more frequent in boys) such as: teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing and **indirect behaviors** (typically more frequent in girls) such as: spreading rumors, enforcing social isolation, telling stories and utilizing sexual comments. Some key components to keep in mind is that bullying will occur repeatedly over time, the bully is often times physically stronger than the victim, and the victim will find it difficult to defend himself.

Possible **signs of being a bully** include: teasing repeatedly in nasty ways, taunting, intimidating, threatening, hitting may be displayed toward many children; however, typically they select weaker children. Also, it is common for many bullies to induce followers to do their dirty work for them. Bullies tend to exhibit the following characteristics:

- A strong need to dominate
- A need to get their own way
- Impulsive and easily angered
- Defiant, aggressive toward adults, including parents and teachers
- Shows little empathy toward victims
- If boys – they are physically stronger than the victims
- They have difficulty conforming to the rules
- They try to gain advantage by cheating
- They try very hard to talk themselves out of a difficult situation

It also should be noted that research shows quite clearly that bullies have a relatively positive view of themselves, they are average to above average in popularity and they are usually more popular in the primary grades. They begin with normal academics in primary grades moving to low in Jr. High due in large part to their poor attitude.

The typical **passive** or **submissive victims**, according to Olweus' research, generally have some of the following characteristics:

- They are repeatedly teased
- They are repeatedly laughed at
- Picked on, pushed around, punched
- They cannot defend themselves adequately
- They try to withdraw from fights, frequently crying
- They may have bruises and/or torn clothing that cannot be given a natural explanation for

Dr. Olweus also reports some secondary signs of being a victim, which are important to look at:

- They are alone – excluded from peer groups – they do not have a single good friend
- They are most often chosen last for games or competitions
- They prefer to stay close to teachers and other adults
- They do not speak-up in class
- They often appear unhappy, depressed and tearful
- Their school work will suffer

These characteristics are likely to be both a partial cause and consequence of the bullying. There is also another, much smaller group of victims, called **provocative victims** or bully-victims, with partly different characteristics, including frequent reading and writing problems and ADHD characteristics. The behavior of the bully-victims tends to elicit negative reactions from many students in the classroom. Signs of a **provocative victim** include:

- They are hot-tempered and attempt to fight back
- They are hyperactive, restless and tension-creating
- They have a tendency to be clumsy, immature and possess irritating habits
- They are disliked by many adults
- They often times try to bully weaker students

It should be noted that bullies and victims do not necessarily enter the classroom with the destiny of becoming a bully or a victim. Once the bully/victim relationship is set in place, however, it becomes very hard to change. As time goes on, their interactions become more and more stable and harder to stop, especially if it is encouraged and supported by peers. **Parents, teachers, and administrators** can alter this dynamic by taking a stand against bullying behaviors. We all need to understand it is not just a part of growing up and we need to make sure the entire class knows what to do if they witness bullying.

Part of Montini Catholic School's successful preventative measures will be to clearly explain the different kinds of bullying behavior to each grade level and state that it will not be tolerated in the classroom. It will also be important to tell the children what to do if they are bullied, if they see other children being bullied, or if they realize that they are bullying others. It will help greatly if all the teachers explain to their students the importance of telling teachers about something important a teacher should know about. **This is not the same as tattling.**

In our very important task of working together, we must try to understand who are these children that are becoming bullies? Temperament, personal variables and behavior modeled at home combined with other factors such as a lack of a school bullying policy or a teacher who looks the other way can mean that conditions are right for a child to become a bully.

- Aggression that is reinforced at home does increase the likelihood of being a bully
- **However, many more bullies come from homes in which parents are more permissive**
- Studies show children with aggressive tendencies are less likely to demonstrate empathy
- Bullies are much more likely to believe that the victim "brought it on" themselves
- Aggressive children are more likely to find aggressive playmates who reinforce their behavior and take on the role of "henchman"

It is just as important that we all know how children can become victims. Often victims have not learned certain skills that one must have to stand-up for oneself such as:

- Making appropriate eye-contact
- A knack for understanding and fending off teasing

Sometimes, children who tend to be victims interpret ambiguous signals as threats and react with fear and avoidance, making themselves appear to be "easy targets." It has been documented that these children are likely to respond quite well to a social skills training program that would teach them the requisite skills that they need to survive the playground.

As teachers at Montini Catholic School, it will be important that we do not provide the conditions in which bullies and victims are able to develop. However, this is easier said than done. These are things that our teachers will be able to do:

- Create an environment that has sanctions against, rather than ignores or condones, the kinds of continuing hurtful actions that occur in bully/victim relationships

- Our teachers must take into account the fact that many factors help to maintain the bully/victim relationship, therefore **the most successful interventions take place simultaneously at the individual, peer, classroom, school and family levels**

Our anti-bullying school policy will include:

- Consultation between teachers, students, parents and other school personnel
- Increase adult supervision at key times (lunch, recess, etc.)
- Ascertain the level and nature of bully/victim problems in school
- Discuss bullying at staff meetings and with children and parents

Explore possible social skills training programs that will help:

- Develop empathy among all children
- Develop anger management skills for bullies
- Develop effective conflict-resolution skills for bullies
- Develop assertiveness training for victims

In the classroom, our teachers will utilize:

- Classroom discussion – agree on classroom rules regarding bullying
- Role play exercises – how to assist victims, etc.
- Give clear message that bullying is not acceptable at school
- Consistently use agreed upon rules and punishment
- Encouraged reporting of bullying
- Praise for avoidance of bullying

All teachers will teach this creed against bullying in their classroom (Olweus, 1993)

- We shall not bully other students
- We shall try to help students who are bullied
- We shall make a point to include students who are easily left out

Montini Catholic School's Bullying Prevention Program

This will be the first year the Montini Catholic School's bullying prevention program will be active. We are a Catholic, PreK through 8 school with approximately 300 students. This program is based on the research of Norway's Daniel Olweus, PH.D... he and his colleagues wrote:

“(A bullying prevention program) strives to develop a school (and ideally a home) environment characterized by:

- Warmth, positive interest, and involvement by adults;
- Firm limits to unacceptable behavior;
- Non-hostile, nonphysical negative consequences consistently applied in cases of ...unacceptable behaviors; and
- Where adults act as authorities and positive role models.”
(Olweus, Limber, Mihalic 1999)

Mission Statement

Montini will attempt to develop, among staff and parents, a consensus so together we enforce the same expectations consistently. Together we will make a commitment to change bullying behavior no matter what it takes. This includes physical bullying, verbal bullying, and social exclusion. This also will include consistent enforcement of effective consequences for verbal and physical aggression, which are predictable, immediate, and escalating and based on uniform expectations for all. Consequences will begin small (so they can be used consistently), and escalate with repeated acts of aggression. They typically will involve loss of unstructured times like recess, lunch with peers or extracurricular activities.

Our main goal will always be to build positive connections between staff and students and to set a positive tone in all staff-student interactions. As always we will monitor to make sure that consequences and education are effective. We will be diligent in our effort to show support for targets, including protection from repeat victimization. Also, we will empower bystanders to tell adults, support targets, and discourage bullying.

This school year Montini will work toward:

- Building a discipline system that helps young people solve problems without hurting each other. Give consequences for hurting that are predictable, fair, and immediate

- Encourage staff-student involvement and positive staff-student interaction. Staff as always, will model positive interactions, and protect targets of harassment
- We will help young people who do hurt each other to think about what they have done, what was wrong with their behavior, what they were trying to accomplish by their actions. This will be accomplished through the use of the Personal Development forms
- We will help young people with continuing behavior problems through school-parent teamwork, counseling, and rewards for improved behavior
- Work with families
- Support targets of bullying
- We will teach classroom lessons in consideration of others, how to express feelings without hurting, solving problems respectfully, and supporting peers as an active bystander
- We will build peer support through encouraging students to speak up to bullies, tell adults, and make isolated students a focus for friendship

THESE ARE THE GOALS WE HAVE SET FOR EVERY SCHOOL YEAR.

Grades K-1

**OUR GOAL FOR THE YEAR:
WE WANT EVERYONE TO HAVE FRIENDS
How we will make this happen:**

- We will ask people to play with us
- We will play with people
- We will look and make sure no one is left out
- When someone doesn't want to play we can ask them again another day
- We can smile and say hello to people

Grades 2-3

**OUR GOAL FOR THE YEAR:
WE WANT NO NAME CALLING OR TEASING HERE AT MONTINI
How we will make this happen:**

- If your friend is calling people names, ask the friend nicely to stop
- If someone is being called names, help them get away
- If people call you names, get away from them or ask for help
- If you are thinking about calling someone a name, count to 10 or take a breath and think about what you say before you say it

Grade 4

**OUR GOAL FOR THE YEAR:
WE WANT PEOPLE TO PLAY BY THE RULES AND BE FAIR
How we will make this happen:**

- It is easy to play by the rules if you are winning
- It is hard to play by the rules if you are losing or if someone else cheats
- We can remember that if you win by cheating you feel bad later
- We can remember not to complain if we are losing but to try harder instead

Grade 5

**OUR GOAL FOR THE YEAR:
WE DO NOT WANT TO HAVE A POPULAR GROUP, WITH OTHER PEOPLE
LEFT OUT
How we will make this happen:**

- When someone tries to start a popular group, don't go along with them
- Play with everyone; include people who are left out
- Stick up for people if someone is leaving them out
- If someone is being mean, ask them to stop in a nice way
- Help people get away if they are being teased
- Don't give people too much power by going along with them if they say: "I will only be your friend if you..." If they do that, say "No thanks"

Grade 6

**OUR GOAL FOR THE YEAR:
WE WILL UNDERSTAND THE ROLE THAT PEER PRESSURE AND CLIQUES
PLAY IN BULLYING
How we will make this happen:**

- Through role play we will learn to help those in need
- Skills will be developed in finding supportive friends
- Through role play we will learn to ignore certain situations
- And we will learn to change a situation that currently exists

Grade 7

OUR GOAL FOR THE YEAR:

OUR FOCUS WILL BE ON LEARNING ANGER MANAGEMENT SKILLS

How we will make this happen:

- Students will learn to recognize anger triggers
- Become familiar with their anger cues
- Identify the ways they express their own angry feelings
- We will learn to consider the consequences of angry behavior
- And we will learn constructive ways of handling our feelings

Grade 8

OUR GOAL FOR THE YEAR:

WE WILL HAVE AN EXCELLENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORD HARASSMENT

How we will make this happen:

- Straightforward discussions about issues related to harassment
- Know the difference between teasing and harassment
- Introduce legal issues related to harassing behavior
- Bring an understanding of the school policy governing harassment

Montini Catholic School's Bully Discipline Outline

Our strength as a school will be our ability to maintain positive relationships with our students and not to take their behavior personally. We will maintain good behavior best when we greet students, tell them specifically what they do right, and have clear, specific expectations in our classrooms and in other situations. We will maintain good relationships with parents by telling them what their children are doing right on a regular basis. Our focus will be to discipline with a positive feeling, tone, and without anger.

Student misbehavior will **fall into six categories. Each type of behavior requires a different response** from the school staff.

1. **Low-Level peer problems not on our list of rules** (low-level, mutual friendship conflicts not involving name-calling, systematic exclusion, rumors, threats, or hitting). We can best respond to these behaviors with a suggestion of a few ways to resolve the problem (play with someone else, tell the person you want to be their friend, meet with a staff member together).
2. **Quiet, non-disruptive refusal to do schoolwork:** Notify parents after two incidents. Set up a conference between teacher, parent, and principal after three incidents to develop a plan and/or screen for learning difficulties.
3. **Inappropriate but not aggressive or unsafe actions:** (rough play, or swearing **not** directed at another child). These behaviors are best dealt with by staff-created consequences such as removal from activity or a call to parents.
4. **Bullying:** (Name-calling, systematic exclusion, rumors, threats, or hitting) Use immediate consequences such as “you hit, you sit” for Kindergarten and first grade students. Write up and submit a Personal Development form if you see, hear, or have this behavior reported to any staff member. The staff does not have to investigate students’ reports, though we may ask for more information if there is time. Each outside staff member will take a clipboard out to recess. Aggressive students should only be sent directly to the office if they represent a continuing threat to others. We will use our best judgment in reporting rumors, exclusion, and “fighting”. It is asked that our staff lean toward reporting if the behavior seems one-sided and likely to hurt. If there are three such incidents, we will schedule a conference with the parents and principal to plan a strategy.
5. **Class disruption:** (Disrespect to teacher or disrupting others’ learning) Suggested interventions include a warning or asking the student to sit away from other students in the classroom. If the behavior continues, send the student to the office for 15 minutes and have her/him stay in at the next recess for detention as a consequence. We will inform parents of events. If there are two such incidents, we will schedule a conference with the principal to plan a strategy.

6. **Severe Behavior:** (Putting self or others' safety at risk; continued disruption of teaching; refusal to leave the room; continued or severe aggression; threats)
The staff must call or take the student to the office immediately.

Responsibilities of all staff school wide:

- Acknowledge effort, courtesy, consideration for others, and other positive behavior. Let kids know what they are doing right
- Maintain a positive tone in interactions with students and parents
- Greet and talk with students in the halls
- If students report friendship troubles that are not against our rules, help them think about how to solve those problems
- Report aggression to peers (hitting, name-calling, systematic exclusion, and threatening) to the office
- If you are on duty, have clear expectations of student behaviors such as listening to adults, playing safely, and eating neatly and use your own consequences such as having a student sit away from activity when those expectations are not met. Talk with the principal about students who break these rules habitually

Classroom teacher responsibilities:

- Have clear classroom behavior expectations
- Use consequences for classroom disruption and disrespect to you. Communicate with parents about this behavior. If any student has three incidents of any of these behaviors, initiate a meeting with principal
- If a student in your class has three confirmed incidents of aggression to peers (you will get a notice from the office), set up a meeting to develop a plan involving parents and the principal

Principal responsibilities:

- Investigate all reports of aggression to peers
- Determine consequences from the rubric
- Assist students in calling home
- Assist teachers in developing interventions for students habitually defiant or disruptive
- With teachers and parents develop and find ways to implement individual plans for students who are repeatedly aggressive to peers
- Assist teachers in setting up and trouble-shooting classroom behavior systems

Montini's Aggressive Behavior Rubric

Behavior	First time	Second time	Third time	
Teasing (name-calling, insulting, or other behavior that would hurt others' feelings or make them feel bad about themselves) Systematic exclusion (including telling others to exclude someone and starting rumors)	Warning Student calls parent	One inside recess Student calls parent	Three inside recesses Student calls parent	After the third time a student shows this behavior in a year, school staff and parents meet to develop an individual plan
Hitting (pushing, slapping, grabbing)	One inside recess Student calls parent	Three inside recesses Student calls parent	Five inside recesses Student calls parent	
Severe hitting (punching, kicking, and similar behavior that may injure others) Harassment (racial, ethnic, or sexual name calling or other severe harassment)	Five inside recesses Student calls parent An after school detention may be given for grades 5-8 Other possible disciplinary action (suspension, expulsion) will be determined by the school	Classes only for three days Student calls parent Other possible disciplinary action (suspension, expulsion) will be determined by the school	School will determine whether suspension or expulsion is necessary	

NOTE: Students in grades 1 and 2 may receive one additional warning. Kindergarten teachers and supervisors will use more immediate brief consequences with Kindergarten students. Consequence for intentional destruction or taking of others' property: double restitution or replacement.

Consequences may be more severe depending on severity of actual behavior.

Montini's Playground Rules and Discipline Procedures

Playground supervisors at our school praise, circulate, and make every effort to catch problems before they escalate. We want students to tell us when others are mean to them or when they are concerned about others. We may not always respond to reports of little things, but we will avoid using the word “tattling” because that discourages kids from telling us about more serious things. We will set limits and talk about consequences calmly and with a positive feeling tone.

What are the basic playground rules?

- We don't allow hitting or name calling, whether the students are friends or not
- No one should shut other students out of a game or activity
- Students should follow adults' directions without arguing
- Students should play safely
- Toys are not allowed at school

If students do these things they will stand against the wall for all or part of a recess:

- Low-level hitting (pushing, bumping) even if careless
- Low-level name-calling (not about intelligence, family, gender, or other serious issues)
- Not following directions
- Unsafe play

If students do these things they will stand against the wall AND fill out a Personal Development form from the teacher and/or principal:

- Repeated low-level hitting or name calling
- Repeatedly not following directions
- Serious hitting (punching, kicking, knocking down, etc)
- Name calling focused on intelligence, family, gender, race, or other serious issues)
- Overt defiance/disrespect to adults
- Sexually-oriented behaviors-kissing, pulling down clothes, etc.
- Stealing others' possessions

Note: if students tell us someone did something on this list (and we didn't see or hear it), we ask the person what they did and encourage honesty by telling them their parents will hear that they told the truth. If they say they didn't do it, we write a report including the names of witnesses. If they say yes, we write a report and commend them on the form for their honesty.

We send students to the principal immediately when there is:

- Continuing aggressive behavior after we ask them to stop
- Continuing defiant behavior
- Risk of harm to others or self

We usually expect students to deal with or solve these problems themselves:

- When someone says “I don’t want to play with you today”
 - When other people won’t play the game they want to play
- We usually suggest that they solve these problems by playing with someone or something else

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The National Mental Health Information Center has reported that much research on family conditions and the upbringing of children has led to this important conclusion: A lot of love and involvement from the people bringing up children, clear limits for what behavior is allowed and not allowed, as well as the use of nonviolent methods of upbringing, creates non-aggressive, harmonious, and independent children.

What Can Parents/Guardians Do If Your Child is Bullied at School – by the School District of Philadelphia Bullying Prevention Program

- Take a breath, relax – it's important that you approach the situation with an open mind
- Ask questions, gain information from your child, listen to and support your child
- Begin communication with the school – talk to your child's teacher
- Take action – be your child's advocate
- Offer your child strategies to deal with the person doing the bullying
- Continue communication with your child's school – talk with the principal
- Seek professional assistance, if necessary

What DOESN'T WORK

- Encouraging your child to fight back
- Blaming the school/teacher
- Encouraging your child to ignore it
- Approaching the child who is bullying

If you are reasonably sure that your child is being bullied, a good starting point for taking up the situation with the school can be to ask your child (along with you, if it seems appropriate) to keep a concise log book describing the incidents of harassment or bullying – when they occurred, who took part, and what was said and done. This way you can make a more concrete presentation when you contact the school.

It is important to note that many students who become victims of bullying would probably develop quite normally if they did not have to face aggressive fellow students. An essential part of counter-acting bullying in school is to stop or change bullies' and their accomplices' behavior. The parents of children who are victims of bullying should not view bullying as an unavoidable part of growing up.

At the same time, it is also clear that many victims of bullying are unsure of themselves and somewhat anxious by nature, with relatively low self-confidence and few or no friends. So in some cases, it may be sensible for you to try to help your child adapt better to school life and other environments – maybe regardless of the actual bullying situation.

Steps You Can Take

Help your child strengthen his or her self-confidence, for example, by stimulating the development of any talents or positive qualities.

Help your child join other groups of children of the same age (who preferably are not in the same class at school) in sports, music, or other leisure time activities. Physical training in particular, if your child has the interest or ability, results in the child “giving out different signals” to those around him or her.

Encourage your child to make contact with (and perhaps bring home) a friendly student from the same class, or from another class. As socially excluded children often lack relationship – making skills, it is important that you, or perhaps a counselor, help your child with concrete advice on how to go about making friends with peers.

Sometimes a child (especially the provocative victim of bullying) behaves in a way that irritates and provokes those around him or her. In such cases, you have the task of carefully, but firmly and consistently, helping your child find more suitable ways of reacting and interacting in friendship groups.

How To Find Out If Your Child Is A Bully

It can be difficult to discover and to acknowledge that your own child is a bully. Bullying other students is obviously not something a child will talk about at home. But if several of the points described under “Who bullies?” fit your child, you should take this seriously and look more closely into the matter.

Bullying can be seen as a part of a general pattern of anti-social and rule-breaking behavior. Children who are bullies during their school years are at a much higher risk of later becoming involved in crime, misuse of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. If your child is bullying others, it is important to break this pattern, not just for the sake of the victim, but also for your own child’s sake.

Who Bullies?

Your Child –

- Has a marked need to dominate or manipulate others
- Is aggressive, nasty, spiteful, and generally in opposition
- Seems to like to insult, push around, or tease other children

It is time for Montini Catholic School to make a commitment. How much bullying takes place in our school and other youth environments depends on the role that committed adults will play in our school, in our families, and in our community.

2015-2016
MONTINI CATHOLIC SCHOOL'S BULLYING POLICY

SIGNATURE REQUIRED!!!

Please complete the information below and return to the school. (If child(ren) do not live with both birth parents, only the signature of the custodial parent is needed.)

I have received and read the Montini Catholic School's Bullying Policy. As parent/guardian of a child that attends Montini, I will see that my children are informed and also agree to follow the rules and regulations set forth in this very important policy.

Parent Name – Please Print

Parent Signature

Parent Name – Please Print

Parent Signature