

Philippine Christian School of Tomorrow

Bullying & Cyber Bullying Policy

I. Introduction

The Bible teaches that man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and that we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). It is the belief of Philippine Christian School of Tomorrow that all students have the right to attend a school that provides a safe and secure learning environment. It is the intent of the Philippine Christian School of Tomorrow to provide all her students with an equitable opportunity to learn. To that end, PCST has a significant interest in providing a safe, orderly, and respectful school environment that is conducive to learning.

The concept of bullying is in direct violation to the Biblical mandate found in Ephesians 4:32 *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”* Bullying is detrimental to the learning environment, student achievement and well-being. It interferes with the mission of the school to educate students and disrupts the operation of the school. Bullying affects not only students who are targets but also those who participate and witness such behavior. These behaviors must be addressed to ensure student safety and an inclusive learning environment.

PCST does not intend to prohibit students from expressing their ideas, including ideas that may offend the sensibilities of others, or from engaging in civil debate. However, PCST does not condone and will take action in response to conduct that interferes with students' opportunity to learn and the operation of the school. The mission statement of PCST is *.....To provide preparation for life, addressing unique and individual children’s needs, assisting students in reaching their God-given potential through the use of Bible-based methods and curricula.*

In order to provide utmost clarity for this subject the following glossary of terms is included prior to policies.

411: Information. The scoop, the lowdown, the background.

24/7: Twenty-four-seven; twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; all the time.

ally: A friend; somebody who is on your side and willing to support you.

anonymity/anonymous: Keeping one’s identity hidden from others. Online bullies can stay anonymous with user names that hide their real names.

avatar: A computer user’s picture of himself or herself; an alter-ego used online. Avatar pictures often represent the user’s screen name or gamer tag.

blocking: To make settings on a device or in an online service that stop specific people or categories of people from contacting you and viewing or posting to your site.

blog: An online personal journal or diary.

bullying: Repeated, unwanted, hurtful, negative behavior against someone. Bullying involves a lack of empathy and an imbalance of power where the person bullying is either stronger or thinks he or she has more power than the target.

bystander: Someone who observes bullying. By their inaction or nonsupport of the target, a passive bystander increases the target’s feeling of isolation and encourages the person doing the bullying, who may take their inaction as a sign of

approval.

captcha: Slang for “capture,” a funny-looking word or phrase which you may be asked to copy when signing up for, logging on to, or otherwise accessing a site. A “captcha” is used to make sure that you are a real person and not another computer trying to access a site.

cell phone (or mobile phone or smart phone): A handheld phone, some of which can connect to the Internet so they can be used to visit Web sites, send e-mail or text messages, and take and send photos. (Examples: iPhones, Blackberries, Droids.)

chat: A real-time, interactive, online conversation that takes place in a chat room.

code of conduct: A set of rules governing how people should behave in a certain setting, such as on a social networking site. (See: terms of agreement)

cyber-: A prefix that is commonly used to mean “electronic” or “online.” It is sometimes used as a synonym for “virtual.”

cyber bullying: Bullying using technology. Online bullying, harassment, or intimidation; e-bullying, mobile bullying, digital bullying, Internet bullying, and cyberstalking are other terms for hurting others using online tools.

device: Any piece of equipment you use to access the Internet. devices include personal computers, laptops, cell phones, iPods, gaming consoles, and personal digital assistants (PDA).

email (or e-mail): A software program for sending written messages and attached documents to others online. (Examples: Hotmail.com, msn.com, gmail.com, verizon.com.) Email addresses are also used for personal identification verification.

empathy: Understanding of or being sensitive to another’s feelings.

evidence: Something that provides proof. Evidence of cyber bullying might include a text message, email, or instant messaging transcript.

flaming: Sending messages with angry, insulting language, especially using all capital letters or bolded words.

game console: A device, such as Nintendo, Xbox, Playstation, or Wii, that allows you to play electronic games; some game consoles allow you to access the Internet to play interactive games online.

gamer tag: The screen name a gamer goes by when playing an online game.

harassment: Bullying that is often based on some specific characteristic such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, or sexual preference.

henchman: Someone who supports a person who is bullying, either by encouraging him or her to bully, or by actively engaging in the bullying activity.

instant messaging (or IM): Exchanging real-time messages with someone else who is online, using a programs such as AIM from AOL.

Internet: The internet, itself, is a worldwide collection of computer networks that are connected to form one big network; it allows users to find, manage, and share information. When you are connected to the Internet, you are said to be online.

ISP (Internet Service Provider): A company that provides Internet service to customers, such as AOL, Verizon, or Comcast. ISPs have codes of conduct and a method of reporting abuse. When abuse is reported, and ISP should take action against the person doing the abuse or bullying.

Log in (or log on): To “open” a computer and access the Internet or other documents and information. A person’s “log in” information usually includes a log-in name (screen name) and password.

massive multiplayer online games (MMOGs): Online interactive games that involve many (even thousands) of players. Also referred to as MMORGs and MMORPGs. Example: World of Warcraft.

outing: telling a secret about a target, causing him or her pain or embarrassment.

password: A secret code word that identifies its user. A good password is “strong” and not easy to guess, and completely private.

personal information: Information about an individual that might include address, school, age, gender, phone number, email address, etc.

personal space: the physical space immediately surrounding someone, into which any encroachment feels threatening to or uncomfortable for them. Specifically defined as approximately a one foot radius around a person.

phish/phishing: The act of illegally trying to trick people into giving their private, personal information on the Internet. a person should never share his or her own or another person’s log in, screen name, password, phone number, PIN, or any other personal information online.

photo-imaging software: Software, such as Photoshop, that can be used to change photos, for example placing the image of one person’s head on a different body.

PIN: A personal identification number. Like a password, a PIN is a private number used for identification.

post/posting: Adding, sending to, or otherwise sharing information on a Web site.

prohibited: In this context, behavior or content that is defined as unacceptable in a Web site’s terms of agreement or code of conduct.

report abuse: In this context, behavior or content that is defined as unacceptable in a Web site’s terms of agreement of code of conduct.

screen name: The name of nickname a person uses when he or she is online.

screen shot: A picture of your computer’s screen; a way to capture whatever is on the screen. A screen shot will only capture what a person can see on the screen, not an entire Web site or message, if the message is longer than one screen page.

search engine: A software program that lets you look for information on the Web. Google and Bing are examples of search engines.

self esteem: Feeling good about yourself.

social contract: The (sometimes unspoken, unwritten) rules people follow when they interact; they help show respect and allow people to work together. An agreed-on code of good behavior.

social networking site: Web sites like MySpace or Facebook whose focus is on building online communities of people with similar interests. Members connect online to share information in personal blog pages, through chat rooms, discussion boards, photos, or videos.

(social) responsibility: An obligation to act appropriately toward others.

tag/tagging: Adding names or other comments to photos posted on social networking sites.

target: someone who has been bullied.

terms of agreement (terms of use): The rules and understanding that a user promises to follow when creating a new online service account. Terms of agreement usually include such things as age restrictions, what can and cannot be posted, and ownership of whatever is posted. (See: code of conduct)

text message (text or TM): A short message between cell phones using a keyboard to spell out the message. Shortened words and spellings are often used.

trusted adult: A teacher, parent, or other adult you can go to for help; someone who will listen and understand; someone who can help take action, such as protecting a target, reporting the abuse, or contacting the parents of the person doing the bullying.

virtual: Refers to objects, activities, and locations in the online world. A virtual community is a group that gathers on a particular Web site, for example.

Web (or World Wide Web): All the information, documents, pictures, and so forth, that fill Web sites and Web pages.

II. Prohibited Behavior

The following behaviors are prohibited:

1. Bullying
2. Cyber bullying
3. Harassment and Sexual Harassment
4. Retaliation against those reporting such defined behaviors
5. Knowing of and failing to report bullying
6. False accusations of bullying behavior.

Any person who engages in any of these prohibited behaviors that constitute bullying shall be subject to consequences.

The chart below gives clarity to the difference in healthy common conflicts and unhealthy bullying conflicts. Bullying can be in person or through use of the internet.

Healthy Common Conflicts	Unhealthy Bullying Conflicts
Involve equal power between people	Involve unequal power between the bully and the bullied
Occur occasionally	Occur repeatedly
Often unintentional	Always intentional
Seldom serious	Often serious
Not power-seeking	Always power-seeking
Usually result in remorse	Never result in remorse
Occur with the desire to solve the problem	Occur with no desire to solve the problem
Never initiated to cause harm	Always initiated to cause harm

The Bible gives this eye-opening description of the relationship between a bully and conflict..... “A troublemaker and a villain who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks maliciously with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart—he always stirs up

conflict.” Proverbs 6:12-14

III. Bullying and Cyber Bullying Defined

A. "Bullying" includes, but is not limited to, a written, oral or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof directed at a student or students that:

1. Has, or a reasonable person would expect it to have, the effect of:
 - a. Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
or
 - b. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student's property;
2. Interferes with the rights of a student by:
 - a. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment for the student;
or
 - b. Interfering with the student's academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by a school; or
3. Is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, physical or mental disability, gender, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or is based on a student's association with a person with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, and that has the effect described in subparagraph (1) or (2) above.

Examples of conduct that may constitute bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking, put downs, or demeaning humor;
2. Behavior that is intended to harm someone by damaging or manipulating his or her relationships with others, including but not limited to gossip, spreading rumors, and social exclusion;
3. Non-verbal threats and/or intimidations such as use of aggressive, menacing, or disrespectful gestures;
4. Threats of harm to a student, to his/her possessions, or to other individuals, whether transmitted verbally or in writing;
5. Blackmail, extortion, demands for protection money, or involuntary loans or donations;
6. Blocking access to school property or facilities;
7. Stealing or hiding books, backpacks, or other possessions;
8. Stalking;
9. Physical contact or injury to another person or his/her property;

10. Harassment that is based on some specific characteristic such as race gender, age ethnicity, or sexual preference.
11. Disregard for “personal space” - the physical space immediately surrounding someone, into which any encroachment feels threatening to or uncomfortable for them.

B. "Cyber bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, text messaging device and personal digital assistant.

Examples of conduct that may constitute cyber bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Posting slurs or rumors or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, disparaging, violent, abusive, profane, or sexually oriented material about a student on a website or other online application;
2. Posting misleading or fake photographs or digital video footage of a student on websites or creating fake websites or social networking profiles **in** the guise of posing as the target;
3. Impersonating or representing another student through use of that other student's electronic device or account to send e-mail, text messages, instant messages (Text Messages), or phone calls;
4. Sending e-mail, text messages, Instant Messaging, or leaving voice mail messages that are mean or threatening, or so numerous as to bombard the target's e-mail account, TM account, or cell phone; and
5. Using a camera phone or digital video camera to take and/or send embarrassing or "sexting" photographs of other students.
6. Phish/ Phishing- The act of illegally trying to trick people into giving their private personal information.

C. "Retaliation" means an act or gesture against a student for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. "Retaliation" also includes reporting an act of bullying when it is not made in good faith. Such retaliation will in and of itself be considered as bullying.

IV. Application of Policy

A. This policy applies to any student, school employee, contractor, visitor or volunteer who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying or retaliation, all of whom have the responsibility to comply with this policy.

B. This policy applies to bullying that:

1. Takes place at school or on school grounds, meaning: a school building;

property on which a school building or facility is located; and property that is owned, leased or used by a school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training. "School grounds" also includes school-related transportation vehicles.

2. Takes place while students are being transported to or from schools or school-sponsored events;
3. Takes place at any school-sponsored event, activity, function, program, instruction or training; or
4. Takes place elsewhere or through the **use** of technology, but only if the bullying also infringes on the rights of the student at school as set forth in this policy's definition of bullying.

V. Reporting

Bullying or suspected bullying is reportable in person or in writing (including anonymously) to school personnel.

- A. School staff, coaches and advisers for extracurricular and co-curricular activities are required to report incidents of bullying to the school principal or other school personnel designated by the school director.
- B. Students who have been bullied or are aware of incidents of bullying are strongly encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator.
- C. Parents and other adults who are aware of incidents of bullying are encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator.
- D. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited. Any student who is determined to have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

VI. Responding

The school principal or any member of the Child Protection Committee (CTC) will:

- A. Promptly investigate and respond to allegations of bullying behavior;
- B. Keep written documentation of all allegations of bullying behavior and outcomes of the investigations, and report substantiated incidents to the superintendent;
- C. Apply disciplinary actions, which may include but are not limited to, imposing a series of graduated consequences that include alternative discipline. In determining the appropriate response to students who engage in bullying behavior, school administrators will consider the type of behaviors, the frequency and/or pattern of behaviors, and other relevant circumstances.

Discipline includes, but is not limited to:

First Offense: Verbal warnings; counseling, reflective activities such as

requiring student to write an essay about the students' behavior.

Second Offense: Meeting with the parent, Community service, restorative conference. Possible one week suspension depending on the degree of seriousness of the incident.

Third Offense: Expulsion or asked to withdraw depending on the degree or seriousness of the incident.

D. Remediate any substantiated incident of bullying to counter the negative impact of the bullying and reduce the risk of future bullying incidents, which may include referring the victim, perpetrator or other involved persons to counseling or other appropriate services.

E. Communicate to the parent of the student who has been bullied the measures being taken to ensure the safety of the student who has been bullied and to prevent further acts of bullying;

F. Communicate with a local or national law enforcement agency if the school principal believes that the pursuit of criminal charges or a civil action might be appropriate; and

G. Notify parents, guardians and students of the right to appeal a decision of a school principal or a superintendent's designee related to taking or not taking disciplinary action in accordance with this policy. The appeals procedure must be consistent with other appeals procedures established by the school board and may include an appeal to the school Founder.

VII. Assignment of Responsibility

A. The Child Protection Committee is responsible for:

1. Annually providing written versions of this policy and related procedures to students, parents, volunteers, administrators, teachers and school staff.
2. Posting this policy and related procedures on the school administrative unit's publicly accessible website.
3. Including in student handbooks a section that addresses in detail this policy and related procedures.
4. Providing professional development and staff training in the best practices in prevention of bullying and harassment and implementation of this policy.
5. Filing the policies to address bullying and cyber bullying with the Department of Education

Student/Parent signature contract is on separate document.

Philippine Christian School of Tomorrow

ANTI-BULLYING AGREEMENT

As students of PCST we agree with the Biblical mandate that man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and that we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14) we recognize that to engage in any form of bullying or teasing is in conflict with God's teaching and plan for us as stated in Jeremiah 29:11.

Bullying can cause both emotional and physical pain and stress to victims and is never justified or excusable as "kids being kids," "just teasing", "joke lang" or any other excuse. The victim is never responsible for being a target of bullying.

By signing this pledge, I/we agree to:

1. Value the difference in God's creation and treat others with respect.
2. Not become involved in bullying incidents or be a bully.
3. Be aware of any school policies and support system with regard to bullying.
4. Acknowledge that whether I am being a bully or see someone being bullied, if I don't report or stop the bullying, I am guilty of supporting bullying.
5. Be alert in places around the school where there is less adult supervision and bullying is more likely to occur.
6. Support students who have been or are subject to bullying.
7. Work with other students, teachers, and administrators to help the school deal with bullying effectively if it should occur, and
8. Be a good role model by upholding my pledge in supporting zero tolerance toward bullying.

Student's Signature over Printed Name

Date

Parent's Signature over Printed Name

Date

Supervisor's Signature over Printed Name

Date

Principal's Signature over Printed Name

Date