



Bullying/Harassment Philosophy and Procedures

It is the mission of Sayre School to foster and provide an environment that encourages, supports, and values the individual, her/his person, and property. Therefore, we do not endorse or condone, accept or abide any form of bullying/harassment, be it emotional, physical, psychological, or sexual, and we encourage bystanders to bullying/harassment to speak up against the behavior and to report the aggressor.

Bullying/harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Punching, shoving, and other acts that hurt people physically
- Behaviors or actions that cause emotional pain
- Spreading bad rumors about people
- Keeping certain people out of a “group,” or other means of exclusion
- Teasing people in a mean way
- Getting certain people to “gang up” on others
- Sending mean text, email, instant messages, pictures or videos
- Posting inappropriate pictures or messages about others in blogs or on websites
- Impersonating someone online to spread rumors or lies about someone

Simply put, bullying/harassing is the act of hurting one person or a group of people repeatedly as a way for the bully to feel superior, and we realize that recognizing acts of bullying/harassment is a complex and personal social issue. As an independent school, we know that a one-size-fits-all, zero tolerance disciplinary policy is ineffectual and often counterproductive to our mission. Therefore, our approach is both programmatic and disciplinary. We work with the victim and his/her parents to provide them with both emotional support and strategies; we encourage spectators of bullying/harassment to report the aggressor, and we discipline the aggressor with appropriate consequences, from punitive to therapeutic. Reported incidents will be handled as sensitively as possible. However, as part of the school’s response, victims, bullies, and by-standers will be addressed about specific issues.

Standards of Practice:

*Clearly defined expectations

*Clarification of terms

*School-wide and age- appropriate programs including: LS class meetings using the Responsive Classroom model; Kindergarten and fifth grade buddies; Community Matters (life skills classes) and grade level meetings in Lower and Middle Schools; advisory groups in Middle and Upper Schools; student clubs such as the Gay Straight Alliance, Anti-Harassment Committee, Community Matters Club in US; and Kids to Kids program

*Escalating consequences for incidents of bullying/harassment

*Parent contact for repeated or egregious behaviors

*Documentation of bullying/harassment incidents kept in individual student division files

*Structured opportunities for aggressive students to think about their actions and make amends

*Work with bullied students and their parents to facilitate strategies for positive interactions

Tips For Parents:

- Talk to your child about the definitions of bullying/harassment shared by the school
- Encourage your child to talk to you about his/her social life, but avoid questioning too directly and too often to draw attention to everyday interactions
- Share strategies to stop bullying/harassment that are developmentally appropriate
- Watch for parent education sessions offered by the school on the topic
- If an incident occurs outside of school, we encourage parents to speak to each other directly
- Incidents that take place outside of school sometimes impact the social climate at school. The school will intervene appropriately as needed
- Contact teachers, administrators, and/or the counselor if you have questions or concerns