

## **MLCS NO BULLYING POLICY**

### **Introduction**

It is the policy of Martin Luther Christian School to provide and maintain a safe and secure learning and work environment for all students in the school building, on the school grounds and school busses and at school sponsored activities. Students, staff, and the school community are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, Christian manner and demonstrate a level of respect and dignity towards others, at all times. Bullying has a harmful social, physical, and psychological and academic impact on bystanders and victims. MLCS will vigorously address bullying, so that there is no disruption to the learning environment and learning process.

Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. This behavior is against the fundamental tenet of “love your neighbor as yourself,” and destroys respect and dignity of the student, undermines the Christian atmosphere of the school and deprives the student of a safe and caring learning environment.

**Any form of bullying directed toward any member of our school community by another member of the community is contrary to our Christian values and is not acceptable at any time and will not be tolerated.**

### **Definition**

Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation, or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic or family status.

**Bullying** – when a student (or group of students) attempts to take power over another student. Bullying can be repeated over time or consist of a single interaction, with students adopting the roles of target, bully, bully-follower or bystander.

**Physical Bullying** – using physical force to hurt another student by behaviors that may include but are not limited to hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, spitting, pinching, getting in the way or holding. It is also physical bullying to interfere with another student’s belongings, to take or break their possessions, and to demand or steal money.

**Verbal Bullying** – directing words at another student with the intention of putting them down or humiliating them. This includes but is not limited to threatening, taunting, intimidating, insulting, sarcasm, name-calling, teasing, put-downs, and

ridiculing. It is considered verbal bullying when a student uses hostile gestures towards another student, such as making faces, staring, giving the “evil eye”, and eye rolling.

**Relational Bullying** – when a student influences other students’ friendships and relationships by actions that include but are not limited to deliberately leaving them out, ignoring, being unfriendly, spreading gossip and rumors, whispering about them, giving the silent treatment, alienating, ostracizing or scape-goating. Relational bullying also includes writing words or creating cartoons, posters or drawings about another student designed to hurt or humiliate that student.

**Psychological Bullying** – Any act that instills a sense of fear, dread, or anxiety, etc. Any act that insults or demeans an individual in such a way as to cause distress, or reluctance to attend school, accompanied by a decline in work standard or development of problem behaviors.

**Cyber Bullying** – the use of cell phones, text messages, e-mails, instant messaging, web blog and postings to bully another student in any of the ways listed above. Other sources of electronic communication used for the purpose of bullying are Facebook and MySpace.

### **Prohibition**

Bullying behavior is prohibited in the MLCS school building, property and educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased or used by MLCS. Any public or district transportation regularly used by MLCS students is also included in this. Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision.

### **Aims**

The aims of the MLCS Bullying Policy are:

- To stop the bullying behavior
- To develop appropriate social skills and attitudes in the victims, perpetrators and bystanders of bullying
- To promote and reinforce the Christian ethics of care and respect for each individual at MLCS
- To rebuild relationships
- To help staff identify bullying when and where it occurs
- To provide clear procedures to deal with bullying
- To support and restore those who have experienced bullying
- To deal with bullying behavior swiftly with no tolerance

### **Awareness**

As part of annual in-service training, the school staff, the principal or designee shall arrange for Bullying Awareness and Response Training. Staff must take the initiative in combating bullying and watching for bullying warning signs closely

supervising children on the playground in the classroom, hallways, rest rooms, gym etc.

Teachers and staff will plan lessons on Bullying. They will conduct class discussions, role-playing, and activities to educate the students in seeking help from an adult, reporting incidents, speaking up and supporting the victim, expressing disapproval of bullying behavior, responding assertively to the bully, walking away from bullying behavior, etc. This information may be presented in Bible lessons, Health, Social Studies, and/or other classes or assemblies. New students will be educated by the teacher as part of their first week of orientation and expected to follow the Bullying Policy upon entry to MLCS. Anti-Bullying resources will be made available to teachers and students to help aid in the development of educational and social components.

At the beginning of the school year there will be an all school assembly or similar event where the entire student body is informed and made aware of the MLCS No Bullying Policy. (MLCS has used the "Have You filled a Bucket Today" Anti-Bullying strategy, in the past.) School and class policies, rules and/or consequences will be posted in classrooms/hallways. Bullying Incident Reports will be available in each classroom, school office, and on the website. Anti-bullying messages will be posted in the hallways and gym. We expect everyone to "TELL" a teacher or staff member, if they see or suspect bullying is happening.

Bullying tips and awareness may be included in the quarterly parent newsletter and the No Bullying Policy will be listed in the Student Handbook and on the website. The principal or designee shall also encourage parents/guardians to sign a "No Bullying" contract, at the beginning of the year, to acknowledge that they support the school's efforts to implement a "No Bullying" Program.

### **Procedure for Reporting**

All schoolteachers and staff members who observe or become aware of acts of bullying are required to report these acts to the school Administrator. Any other person, including a student who is either a victim of the bullying or is aware of the bullying is encouraged to report the conduct to the MLCS Administrator or a MLCS teacher who will immediately inform the Administrator. Reports of bullying may be made verbally or in writing and will be confidential. All reports, whether verbal or in writing, will be taken seriously and a clear account of the incident is to be documented. The recipient of the verbal or written report will make a written record of the incident. Upon review and investigation of a report, the teacher may address some concerns within the classroom, while more serious and repeated concerns will be referred to the Administrator for further action.

### **Procedural Principals for dealing with the bullying incident**

- All parties involved in the bullying incident will be interviewed – victim, bully, and bystanders to establish the facts of the situation and to hold

- them accountable for their actions/inaction. (Not all conflict constitutes bullying; however any and all unwanted physical contact is the exception.)
- Staff members and teachers will document all harassment or bullying incidents of which they become aware (whether the staff receives a report from someone or witnesses the behavior). All reports will promptly be shared with the Administrator.
  - Acknowledgment of the allegation of bullying and initial assessment of student safety will take place within 1 school day of the initial report.
  - Investigation of the facts and seriousness of a complaint or alleged incident will take place in a timely manner to verify the validity and seriousness of the report.
  - If the situation warrants, parents of both victim and perpetrator and possible bystander will be informed and summoned to the school immediately.
  - If the situation does not warrant the immediate presence of the parents/guardians, the parents/guardians will first be informed through a written Incident Report and/or if warranted a phone call.
  - The bullying behavior or threats will be investigated quickly and fully. The message to the child who bullies will be, "Your behavior is unacceptable, and mean, and must stop immediately."
  - After the incident has been thoroughly investigated and dealt with, faculty and administration will monitor both the victim and the perpetrator to ensure that harassment and bullying does not resume or reoccur.
  - Copies of the Bullying Incident Report will be given to the victim's and the offenders teachers, and placed in their student files in the main office. All parents/guardians of students involved will receive a copy of the Bullying Incident Report, at this time, if they have not been issued one prior to this.
  - The report will serve as a reference for the school staff in determining whether or not a pattern of bullying behavior or abuse exists in regards to the offender or the victim.
  - MLCS shall maintain the confidentiality of the students/persons involved in the Bullying incident and any related pupil records to the extent required by law.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against another person for good faith reporting any suspected harassing or bullying behavior as described under the bullying by definition is prohibited. Retaliation against any person for harassing or bullying is also prohibited. Students should report harassing or bullying behavior, not retaliate or try to get even themselves. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as the alleged harassing or bullying behavior. Retaliation is subject to disciplinary action also.

### **Intervention**

Intervention in bullying concerns, like all disciplinary matters at MLCS, will be addressed with the two MLCS goals in mind: to maintain safety and order within

the school community, and to identify, teach, and practice the skill(S) needed to prevent the bullying and other identified negative social behavior from occurring again.

As a Christian school we expect our students to display courtesy, respect and responsibility at all times. At MLCS we will address not only the bullying itself, but also attempt to build strategies for resilient responses to bullying behavior, including forgiveness, appropriate reactions, and the promotion and development of positive relationships in a supportive caring school culture. Our policy is based on the principle that “bullying is not OK at MLCS, we look after each other here” and reflects a firm commitment to acknowledging and dealing with bullying behavior with **No Tolerance**.

### **Sanctions and supports**

If it is determined that student participated in bullying behavior or retaliatory behavior, and are in violation of this policy, the MLCS Administrator may take disciplinary action, including: detention, suspension, expulsion, withdrawal and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action as appropriate.

Students found in violation of the bullying policy may be referred to pupil services or counseling, anger management counseling, or other educational programming designed to prevent subsequent bullying behavior.

*Depending on the severity of the bullying behavior, parents/guardians may be called to immediately remove their child from the building. Other consequences will be at the discretion of the Administrator and will be determined by circumstance.*

*Attending MLCS is a privilege. Those who choose not to follow MLCS policies as described in the Parent/Student Handbook will be asked to leave.*

Employees found to have participated in bullying behavior, or having become aware that bullying was taking place and failed to report the behavior, are considered to be in violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action as deemed necessary.

### **Disclosure and Public Reporting**

The MLCS Bullying Policy will be distributed annually to all students enrolled in MLCS, their parent/guardians and employees. MLCS will provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

Records will be maintained on the number and types of reports made, and sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the bullying policy.

Legal Reference: Wis. Stat. 118.46

+ 2009 Wis. Act 309