



# PARRISH CHARTER ACADEMY

SOARING BEYOND EXPECTATIONS!

## BULLYING

Although it is difficult to conceive that bullying, cyberbullying and harassment may occur in the early grades of Kindergarten through Third Grade, the astonishing yet realistic fact, is that they do.

There are a variety of extraneous variables that determine why these deplorable acts thrive in some

primary grade schools while in others, bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment are an **exception,**

**instead of the rule.** The schools that are rarely under siege by a student population that readily participates in bullying, cyberbullying and harassment on a regular basis, are those elementary schools where there exists an effective administrative team coupled with a faculty and staff that possess a teaching characteristic known as, “withitness.” A concise definition of the educational term “withitness,” is as follows:

*“Withitness,” is the capacity of a teacher to perceive the needs of their students with accuracy and care. Teachers who possess “withitness,” quickly notice the behavior of all students and respond quickly to unexpected events including acts of bullying or harassment. They address these acts of maladaptive behavior instead of ignoring them, as was once the norm re: these forms of aggression relating to power and control of others. Moreover, these educators pay close attention to students’ nonverbal and verbal responses. When events deviate from expectations, a teacher who retains “withitness,” responds by quickly addressing any forms of bullying or harassment disrupting the educational process, changes the pace in a lesson based on students’ comprehension and application of a new concept, recognizes when and how to utilize differentiated instruction, always moving about the room, and interacting with students in an effort to redirect and refocus attention and learning (“Withitness – WikEd”, 2008). It is also the ability to realize when any form of bullying or harassment is taking place in the classroom, at breakfast or lunch, recess, or while on an Experiential Learning field trip, etc.*

The two factors, i.e., the schools that have an effective administrative team coupled with a faculty and staff that possess the teaching characteristic known as, “withitness,” are combined with dynamic anti-bullying and anti-harassment programs, such as “The Expect Respect Model”

with the administration and self-motivated teachers that are competent in fostering a student's sense of a strong self-worth, along with a clear student awareness that consequences do exist for those students that practice these unacceptable behaviors, delineates between those schools that are inundated with ongoing forms of bullying and harassment versus those effective schools who rarely have to intervene in this maladaptive conduct and thereby, fosters additional significant learning gains in a majority of the student population.

PCA is committed to providing a safe and caring environment with a positive school climate that enables healthy relationships to be formed among all students and staff and encourages student self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude towards learning and teaching. A clear bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment prevention ideology will inform the school community, moreover, the community-at-large that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated at PCA.

### **An Overview of Bullying, Cyberbullying and Harassment**

**Bullying** is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behavior by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

#### **There are three broad categories of bullying:**

1. **Direct examples of physical bullying** – hitting, tripping, pushing, poking, excessive tickling, hair pulling, strangling, biting or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying** – pejorative name calling, insults, defamation of character, humiliating comments, excessive teasing, and general verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect or Emotional bullying** – this form of bullying is harder to recognize and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation:
  - malicious gossip, lying and spreading rumors
  - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
  - mimicking
  - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - rejection
  - comments regarding someone's disability
  - perceived sexual orientation
  - peer pressure
  - terrorizing
  - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
  - extortion and blackmailing

**Cyberbullying** is the act of bullying someone through electronic means such as posting mean or threatening messages about the person online or through text messages and is usually done anonymously. Cyberbullying can also be verbal via the telephone or mobile phone. Finally, this act can be conducted through the written word using various mediums that are available:

- defamatory personal websites
- defamatory online personal pooling websites
- to support deliberately and repeatedly hostile behavior by an individual/group towards another individual or group
- threatening to harm others, or that which would substantially disrupt the educational process or, interferes with the overall successful operation of

a

school or interferes with a student's ability to receive an education.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcomed, which could reasonably cause the recipient of this conduct to be offended, humiliated and or, intimidated.

Students who engage in bullying, cyberbullying or harassment shall be subject to a range of punishments: verbal or written reprimand, out-of- school suspension, or change of placement or expulsion.

Retaliation is defined in the dictionary as meaning "to pay back (an injury) in kind." When a student engages in an inappropriate manner or behavior, especially bullying, to another student, the common reaction of the "victim" is to be angry and want to pay the "bully" back (retaliate). Retaliation must not occur and will not be tolerated. Bullying will not be tolerated and will lead to possible suspension, expulsion and or transfer from PCA.

## **HARASSMENT**

State and federal law specifically prohibit harassment. Instances of harassment may result in both civil and criminal liability on the part of the individual harasser as well as the school board.

Harassing activities by students or employees will not be tolerated.

Harassment is when a person continually teases, annoys, threatens or insults another person in either a verbal, physical or written manner. Harassment occurs when a person subjects another person to any unwelcome conduct because of sex, race, origin, religion, etc., on school property or at a school-sponsored event.

Sexual harassment is when a person bothers another person using sexual words, pictures, gestures, or conduct that the other person would find offensive. Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to the following: verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature; and discrimination against students or employees because of real or perceived sexual orientation/gender identity or expression thereof.

Confidentiality must be maintained as much as possible during any harassment investigation. Confidentiality is maintained when the identity of the people involved or the circumstances surrounding the incident are kept private. For example, you do not maintain confidentiality if you tell your friends that John Doe or Jane Doe harassed you.

PCA policy forbids harassment. The school will not tolerate harassment of any kind at any of its sites or activities. Personnel, at all levels, are responsible for taking corrective action to prevent harassment. Allegations of harassment will be promptly investigated, giving due regard to the need for confidentiality.