

# DIOCESE OF ORLANDO MISCONDUCT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

## **POLICY:**

Whoever witnesses abuse that involves a parent and a child, an adult on any child or an employee on any child MUST report it IMMEDIATELY.

The procedures set out by the Diocese of Orlando to report any abuse – physical, sexual or emotional - are posted below.

## **PROCEDURE:**

Any employee who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect by any person including another employee shall immediately make a report directly to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). That report shall be made by calling the toll free Florida State-wide child abuse or neglect hotline at # 1-800-962-2873.

The witnessing employee shall then promptly notify the Pastor, School Principal, Director of Religious Education or other responsible supervisor, who in turn, shall notify the Vicar General or Chancellor.

The person reporting the abuse or neglect shall confirm the report “verbally and in writing” to the local DCF office # 321 984-4780. A copy of the written report shall be sent to the Pastor, School Principal, Director of Religious Education or other responsible supervisor who shall, in turn, send a copy to the Vicar General or Chancellor.

## **SIGNS OF ABUSE & RESULTING BEHAVIORS**

**Physical Abuse:** Unexplained bruises and welts  
Unexplained burns  
Unexplained lacerations or abrasions

**Behavior:** Wary of contact with adults  
Apprehensive when other children cry  
Aggressive or withdrawn  
Frightened of parents  
Afraid to go home

**Physical Neglect:** Constantly hungry, poor hygiene, inappropriate or dirty clothing  
Unattended physical or medical problems

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**Behavior:** Begging or stealing food  
Extended stays at school – early arrival/late departure  
Poor attendance, tardiness  
Fatigue, listlessness, falling asleep in class  
Alcohol or drug abuse

**Sexual Abuse:** Difficulty walking or sitting  
Torn or bloody underclothing  
Bruises or bleeding of external genitalia  
Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens  
Delinquency or running away

**Behavior:** Unwilling to participate in P.E.  
Withdrawn, fantasy or infantile behavior  
Bizarre or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge  
Poor peer relationships  
Delinquency or running away

**Emotional Abuse:** Speech disorders  
Lag in physical development

**Behavior:** Habit disorders, i.e., sucking, biting, rocking  
Conduct disorders, i.e., antisocial, destructive  
Neurotic traits, i.e., sleep disorders, inhibition of play  
Psychoneurotic reactions, i.e., hysteria, obsession,  
compulsion

### **ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES:**

In addition to the above Diocesan policy on physical, sexual and emotional abuse, St. Joseph School has adopted and updated policies and procedures. Harassment and abuse of any individual because of sex, race, religion, national origin, age or disability either at school or during extra-curricula and sporting events is not tolerated. Such behavior is subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Bullying & Sexual Harassment**

It is a policy of St. Joseph School that bullying and peer sexual harassment is not tolerated. Using words – verbally or in writing – or comments towards another person that are associated with racism, sexism or violence is bullying and it will not be tolerated. Victims and witnesses to such behavior are required to report any incident to a staff member, teacher or administrator. Any student who witnesses bullying and fails to report it, will

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also be held accountable. All reports will be investigated and students responsible will be held accountable. The Principal will determine the consequences for such behavior on an individual basis. Consequences may include mandatory counseling, lunch detention, Friday detention, suspension or expulsion from St. Joseph School.

### Legal Issues

St. Joseph School reserves the right to discipline students for off-campus conduct.

- ▶ On occasion, disciplinary actions have been called for resulting from something a student did outside of school or the school day, or something a student did on his or her own time. In these cases, the Principal may issue consequences because what a student does off-campus can detrimentally impact a school or a school sports program's reputation.

St. Joseph School will discipline any student who defames another student, St. Joseph staff member, or others in the school community. Deliberate defamation of others is not consistent with Christian values. Students and parents will be held accountable for intentional harm they cause others.

- ▶ In the legal arena, teachers are *no longer considered* quasi-public figures, thereby expected to take a certain amount of "grief" from parents and students. Courts have ruled that a teacher is entitled to the same right to their reputation that other people have. Therefore, if defamed, educators have a right to sue; courts have found in favor of teachers who brought defamation suits against parents or students.

St. Joseph School will discipline any student who makes e-mail threats to or about another student. Threats are threats whenever and however they are made.

- ▶ On occasion, a parent or student has registered a complaint with a teacher or Principal that their child is receiving (directly or indirectly) threatening or derogatory e-mails via Instant Messenger, Blogging, MySpace, FaceBook, or conveyed through other e-mail means. Parents must be vigilant in keeping their own children from initiating or receiving such threats. The Administration may impose a consequence if a matter of this nature is brought before them.