

ANTI-BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is a type of harassment that involves some sort of force, whether overt or subtle. Bullying can come in many forms such as verbal, mental, or physical abuse or harm, or the threat of harm, and can also be the intentional exclusion or ostracizing of another student. Bullying conveys a message without intent of legitimate communication or address by oral, nonverbal, written or electronic means; is composed of more than one act over a period of time, however short, evidencing a continuity of conduct; and causes temporary or permanent emotional and/or physical distress.

Cyber bullying is a form of bullying that occurs in an electronic format, often on social media platforms and through text messaging. Under Pennsylvania law, cyber bullying falls under harassment and stalking laws. Cyber bullying is a criminal offense and may be charged as harassment if the bully communicated with the victim in a threatening way with the intent to alarm or annoy the victim. (18 Pa. Con. Stat. Ann. § 2709.) Cyber bullying may also be charged as stalking when the underlying behavior includes repeated acts that show an intent by the bully to put the victim in fear of bodily injury or serious emotional distress. (18 Pa. Con. Stat. Ann. § 2709.1.) A person commits the crime of cyber harassment when the person engages in a continuing course of conduct by electronic means or by publication through an electronic social media service. Cyber bullying includes:

- Making a seriously disparaging statement or opinion about a person's physical characteristics, sexuality, sexual activity or mental or physical health or condition
- Communicating to or about a person using any lewd, lascivious, threatening or obscene words, language, drawings or caricatures
- Threatening to inflict harm

The Mount Saint Joseph Academy Community will not tolerate any forms of bullying. If a student at any time feels afraid or threatened by another student immediate action will be taken, even if the bullying does not occur on campus. Our number one concern is the safety and well being of each and every student. If a student is involved in a bullying incident the following steps will be taken:

1. Students will immediately be removed from any threatening situation.
2. The administration will meet with all students involved to ascertain the details of the situation.
3. Allegations of bullying or cyber bullying will be authenticated by evidence, including online posts and images.
4. The administration will contact the parents of the students to advise them of the situation.
5. The administration will determine what disciplinary action will be taken. A student involved in bullying or harassment of any kind may be immediately

suspended, placed on probation, and expected to participate in an educational program which includes the consequences of any form of bullying.

6. The administration will follow-up with all the appropriate parties to make sure that the situation has been corrected; to prevent recurrence; and to ensure that no one is subjected to acts of retaliation.
7. If the bullying/cyber bullying has not stopped, the administration will conduct a further investigation.
8. If bullying is found to have continued, the Mount reserves the right to dismiss or ask the student to leave.
9. Mount will comply with all state anti-bullying laws, including reporting the bullying to the proper authorities.

ANTI-HAZING POLICY

Hazing involving students, student groups or any individuals at Mount Saint Joseph Academy, is strictly prohibited. The State of Pennsylvania (Act 175) defines hazing as “any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any organization. The term shall include, but not be limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. Any activity as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be ‘forced’ activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding.”

All students, faculty, and staff are responsible for abiding by this policy, both on campus and off campus, including on privately owned facilities and/or property. Responsibility will apply equally to situations in which one or more members knew or should have known of the activity, did not report the activity to the Principal, and failed to make every reasonable attempt to prevent or stop it.

Anyone who witnesses or suspects that hazing has occurred shall immediately report what was witnessed, or the basis for the suspicion that hazing has taken place, to the

Principal. If the hazing has occurred in connection with a school club, organization or sport, then the incident shall also be reported to the person or coach responsible for the club, organization or sport.

The Mount administration shall have discretion to impose any discipline deemed appropriate for an incident of hazing against both the individual who engaged in the conduct and the school organization of which they were a member. Discipline and penalties shall include, but not be limited to, withholding diplomas or transcripts, the imposition of fines, restitution, probation, suspension, dismissal or expulsion. In the case of Mount organizations or sports' teams, penalties may include withdrawal of permission for the club, organization, or team to continue to operate on campus or other school property or to otherwise operate under the recognition or sanction of the Mount. Imposition of discipline by the Mount does not preclude any criminal penalty which may be imposed for violation of criminal laws and the Mount will fully cooperate, and share information, with law enforcement as part of any investigation.