

Jack Reid Anti-Bullying Law

Required 2026-2027 Handbook Language

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NYS Nonpublic School Anti-Bullying Law was Enacted: The [NYS “Jack Reid Law: Protect All Students Act”](#) was signed into law by Governor Hochul on October 23, 2025 and must now be implemented at all of our Catholic Schools. This bill protects all elementary, middle school and high school students in New York from harassment and bullying by other students by extending many of the protections of the Dignity for All Students Act to nonpublic schools. Please consider this [advice from CSAANYS](#) related to implementation of these new mandates; the CSAANYS advice reminds you to update your policies and procedures in your handbooks, posting the policy on your website, and informing your school community about these policies. Now that this is law, our schools must implement the following:

- a. “Bullying and harassment prevention and response. No student shall be subjected to harassment or bullying, including cyberbullying, by other students on school property or at a school function.”
- b. “Adopt a written in plain-language and age-appropriate anti-bullying and harassment policy, which must be published on the school's website or internal parent/student portal and shared annually with employees, parents, and students. Such policy shall include...information on how bullying and harassment is defined, how incidents will be reported, investigated, and documented, and an age-appropriate process for notifying the victim about the final outcome of the investigation.”
- c. “School employees who witness bullying or harassment, or receive an oral or written report of bullying or harassment, shall promptly notify the principal or head of school or the principal's or head of school's designee, orally not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying and harassment, and must file a written report with the principal or head of school's designee not later than two school days after making the initial oral report.”
- d. “Upon a report of bullying, harassment, or retaliation, the principal or head of school, or the principal or head of school's designee, must investigate promptly, communicate their findings with the victim and take immediate steps and appropriate follow-up action reasonably calculated to ensure that such conduct has stopped and ensure the safety of the student or students including retaliation against any individual who in good faith reports such bullying or assists in the investigation.”

To assist you with the implementation of this new mandate, we will be updating the language currently in Section 570 of our [Elementary School Procedures](#). The [new language found here](#) will be added soon and was used to create the policy language on the next three pages.

Superintendent Dimitroff is requiring all Diocesan elementary schools, including Regional Schools, to include the language below in their 2026-2027 Student and Faculty Handbooks.

Schools are currently being asked about DASA procedures at our schools, which differ from our requirements under this law. Even though the language below is not required for use until 2026-27, make sure you have updated your 2025-26 policies and procedures to ensure you currently are following the law and do not expose yourself to possible legal challenges.

Public-Relations & Risk Management (Noncompliance risks, legal exposure, or reputational harm): By aligning your school's practices with this law, you strengthen your risk-management posture and demonstrate commitment to student safety and wellness—which aligns well with Catholic educational values.

Required Language for 2026-2027 Elementary School Handbooks:

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy:

The [NYS “Jack Reid Law: Protect All Students Act”](#) was signed into law by Governor Hochul on October 23, 2025. This bill protects all elementary, middle school and high school students in New York from harassment and bullying by other students. Our school has the following policies in place that meet the requirements of this law.

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Statement

Our school strives to provide a safe environment for all individuals. All students and employees are to be treated with dignity and respect. Bullying or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated on school property or at school functions.

Anti-Bullying and Prevention Programming

Our school maintains an environment that reflects the values of dignity, respect, and the inherent worth of every person created in the image and likeness of God. In accordance with the *Jack Reid Law: Protect All Students Act*, our school has implemented an anti-bullying and harassment policy that applies to all students. We also have an **anti-bullying and prevention program** designed to:

- Promote awareness among staff, students, and families.
- Provide training and resources for recognizing, reporting, and responding to bullying and harassment.
- Establish a safe and inclusive environment that supports the ongoing mission of preventing and eliminating bullying behavior.
- Offer ongoing opportunities for education and restorative practices.

Annual staff training is provided to recognize, report, and respond to student bullying and harassment.

Definition of Bullying

- **Bullying** is defined as repeated or systematic abuse and/or harassment of another student or group of students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. A student is being bullied when they are exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions by one or more students.

Definition of Harassment

- **Harassment** is the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical

safety; (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates, or would foreseeably create, a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. For purposes of this definition, the term "threats, intimidation or abuse" shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.

Bullying and harassment include **physical, emotional, social, or cyber** forms of harm, such as:

- Physical: intentional harm to another student's body or property
- Emotional: intentional harm to another student's emotional well-being
- Social: intentional harm to another student's group acceptance or relationships
- Cyber: bullying or harassment that occurs through any form of electronic communication

Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment when they meet the definitions (repeated, power imbalance, harmful impact; would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety, or cause physical injury or emotional harm) may include, but are not limited to: teasing, using derogatory nicknames or slurs, spreading rumors or demeaning stories, social exclusion, intentional destruction of property, or sharing demeaning content online.

- Note: Age-appropriate conflict, isolated incidents, or mutual disagreements do not automatically constitute bullying or harassment; these will be addressed through appropriate behavioral or restorative responses.

Definition of Retaliation

- Inappropriate behavior toward any individual who in good faith reports bullying or harassment or assists in any investigation of suspected bullying or harassment.

How to Report Incidents of Suspected Bullying and/or Harassment

All reports of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

- Any student who believes they are a target of bullying and/or harassment or has witnessed another student they believe is being bullied or harassed by another student or students should immediately tell any school employee about the incident(s) either verbally, by email, or in writing.
- Parents who have heard reports of student bullying or harassment from their child or have witnessed incidents that could be student bullying or harassment should report the incidents to any school employee verbally or in writing as soon as they are made aware of the incident.
- Any suspected incidents of student bullying and/or harassment shared with or witnessed by a school employee will be shared with the [principal, head of school, principal's/head of school's designee] by the end of the next school day.

Investigation Process

- Upon receiving a report of suspected student bullying, harassment, or retaliation, the [principal, head of school, principal's/head of school's designee] will investigate the incident promptly by interviewing all parties separately.

- The parents of all students involved will be notified.
- If it is determined that student bullying or harassment has occurred, the child who bullied or harassed another student is subject to consequences as the school deems appropriate. The [principal, head of school, principal's/head of school's designee] will take immediate steps and appropriate follow-up action reasonably calculated to ensure that any confirmed bullying and/or harassment conduct will stop and ensure the safety of the student or students, including retaliation against any individual who in good faith reports such bullying or assists in the investigation.
- The [principal, head of school, principal's/head of school's designee] shall notify the targeted student and his/her parent/guardian of the outcome of the investigation in an age-appropriate manner.
 - If bullying/harassment occurred, any specific consequences given to the student(s) who bullied or harassed the targeted student will not be shared.
- Parents should be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency, if warranted. If determined necessary, the principal should contact law enforcement.
- Referral to counseling should be made for all parties if deemed necessary.
- The [principal, head of school] must follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- All students will be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary actions.
- Any proven bullying or harassment incidents will be reported to the Superintendent's office, including any escalation to law enforcement.

Documentation of Suspected Incidents

- Any school employee who witnesses or receives a report of suspected student harassment or bullying, either verbally or in writing, will submit a written report of the incident to the [principal, head of school, principal's/head of school's designee].
- Documentation of all reported incidents, investigations, and responses related to suspected bullying or harassment will be created by the [principal, head of school, principal's/head of school's designee].

False Reports:

- Any student who falsely reports bullying or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion, and, if warranted, referral to local authorities.

This policy is published on our website at www.stameliaschool.org (or is posted on our internal parent/student portal). The policy is shared annually with employees, parents, and students before the end of September each school year.