

The quality of life at Seton Montessori School is based on students and teachers working together in a spirit of mutual trust and responsibility. Rules exist so that everyone can work together, feel safe, and be glad they are in school. Three basic rules keep the atmosphere of the community pleasant: respect yourself, respect other, and respect the community.

We expect all members of the Seton Montessori community to be well behaved and considerate of others at all times; appropriate language and behavior on school campus, on school trips, and outdoors on school grounds matter as much as behavior inside the building. Students are expected to respond politely to reminders and requests from all faculty and staff, not just the adults they know well.

**Rights of a human at Seton:**

- Treated with respect and dignity
- Being heard, having a voice, access to express thoughts and desires
- Feel safe in an environment of inclusion, both physically and emotionally
- To be seen and accepted as you are
- To be treated fairly and equitably

**The following violations of major school rules will result in disciplinary action:**

- Violence or threatening violence to harass or intimidate others
- Profane, abusive, or disrespectful language
- Reckless behavior that endangers oneself or others
- Cheating or plagiarism in academics
- Theft, vandalism, or graffiti
- Harassment, sexual harassment, or bullying
- Use or possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or dangerous implements

**Harassment and Bullying**

Seton Montessori School takes a strong stand against harassment and bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is a prerequisite for all student learning, and the school takes seriously any behavior that interferes with a student's sense of safety and security or the school's ability to educate its students in a respectful, peaceful environment. Demonstrating civility and respect and not tolerating harassment or bullying is expected of all members of the Seton Montessori School community.

It can sometimes be hard to tell the difference between occurrences of unkindness, teasing, harassment, and bullying. Teasing usually involves two or more friends who act together in a way that seems fun to all the people involved. Often there is some reciprocity, with students teasing each other back and forth, but it never involves physical or emotional abuse. It is possible for teasing to get out of hand – and feelings to get hurt – yet still not constitute either harassment or bullying.

**Harassment** is defined as gestures, words, or acts (whether written, verbal, graphic, electronic, or physical) that are reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. The definition of harassment is three-fold:

1. Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more students;
2. Adversely affecting the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the pupil, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive as to have this effect; and
3. Being based on a student's actual or perceived distinguishing characteristics or on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have such characteristics.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory comments, slurs, unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments that are sexual in nature; physical conduct such as assault, blocking normal movement, or interference with work directed at the individual because of gender; or retaliation for having reported the harassment. Teachers discuss this policy with the older children in age-appropriate ways and assure them that they do need not to endure any form of sexual harassment.

Often, but not always, bullying is harassment taken to the next level.

**Bullying, including cyberbullying**, is defined by the Illinois State Board of Education as: "Any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the Seton Montessori community.

Any incidence of bullying should be promptly reported to a staff member and the Head of School. This can be done in person, by email ([school@setonmontessori.org](mailto:school@setonmontessori.org)) or by calling 630-655-1066. Consistent with State law, the parents of all students involved in an alleged

incident of bullying will be contacted, and additional professional services will be employed as needed.

Incidents of reported bullying will prompt investigation and action including:

1. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the date of the report of the incident of bullying was received, and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
2. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate in the investigation process.
3. Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
4. Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights and providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
5. As appropriate, and consistent with Federal and State laws, discuss with parents and guardians of all involved the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment or bullying may still be prohibited by school rules and common courtesy.

Any reported incidence of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying by any member of the Seton Montessori community will result in an investigation led by the Head of School and disciplinary consequences. Anyone discovered to have falsely accused another person of any form of harassment or bullying will also face disciplinary consequences.

The School neither tolerates nor engages in retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint about interpersonal misconduct or cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint. The School will not take adverse action against a student for making a good faith report of interpersonal misconduct. An individual who is found to have engaged in retaliation against a student for filing a complaint, or participating in the investigation of a complaint, may be subject to disciplinary action. Upon completion of the investigation, the Head of School (or the Head of School's designee) will generally make the following determinations:

- Whether and to what extent the allegation of bullying, harassment, discrimination, hazing, sexual assault or sexual harassment has been substantiated.
- Whether any disciplinary action and/or other remedial action is appropriate and, if so, how it will be implemented.
- Whether counseling, or a referral to appropriate services, should be offered to targets, aggressors, or family members of the affected students or targets.

**Interventions and Disciplinary consequences may include any of the following:**

- Speaking with parents and the Head of School
- Behavioral Improvement Plan, which could include suspension

- Required consultation with mental health providers
- Attendance at specified issue-related courses/programs
- Restorative measures
- Repeated incidences may lead to disenrollment at Seton Montessori

This policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians. This policy will be posted on the school's existing internet website and is included in the student handbook, and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school, and is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

This policy will be evaluated to assess its outcomes and effectiveness by analyzing factors including: frequency of victimization; student, staff and family observations of safety at school; Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; The types of bullying that are common or occurring; Bystander intervention or participation; The information developed as part of the evaluation process will be shared with the school community. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be provided to school administrators, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students, where age-appropriate.

This policy aligns with other policies of the Seton Montessori community. This policy includes a process to investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. The school will provide the victim(s) with information regarding services that are available within the district and community, including counseling, support services and other programs.