

First United Methodist Church, Olympia, Washington
Anti-Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Policy
June 2, 2004

Policy Overview

Purpose

It is the purpose of First United Methodist Church to promote positive relations among its community and especially to oppose bullying, harassment, and intimidation (BHI) in all of its forms by all members of the church community.

Scriptural Basis

Jesus taught the Greatest Commandment: first, love God with all of your heart, mind, and strength, and secondly, to love your neighbor as you love yourself. (Matthew 22:37, 39) Further, Jesus has given the Golden Rule as direction: "Treat others just as you want to be treated." (Luke 6:31)

Definition of Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation

A conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror. It is not about anger, nor about conflict; it is about contempt --- a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless/inferior/undeserving of respect.

BHI always includes these three elements:

- **Imbalance of power** --- the bully can be older, bigger, stronger, more verbal, higher on the social scale, a different race, the opposite sex, or a large number of kids banded together.
- **Intent to do harm** --- the bully means to inflict emotional harm and/or physical pain, expects the action to hurt, and takes pleasure in witnessing the hurt.
- **Threat of further aggression** --- both bully and bullied know that the bullying can and probably will occur again.

When bullying escalates unabated, a fourth element is added:

- **Terror** --- systematic violence used to maintain dominance.

Our Position on Rights and Responsibilities

Based on our belief that all persons are of sacred worth, we declare that it is the right of all individuals of all ages to be free of victimization. It is the responsibility of those who witness victimization to stop it and/or to speak to a trusted adult/pastor. The leadership of the church will intentionally seek to prevent and deal with BHI through:

- Establishing a policy supervisor to oversee policy use
- Setting rules concerning BHI behavior
- Responding to incidents in a prompt manner
- Seeing that both the bullied and bully are dealt with in a responsible and caring manner
- Overseeing training and education of staff and congregation concerning BHI

Summary of Rules Concerning BHI

The church will be a safe sanctuary for all. We prohibit acts of BHI as well as active or passive support of BHI. All staff and volunteers who work with children and youth will be expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior; treat others with civility, kindness, and respect; and refuse to tolerate BHI.

Guidelines for Responding to Bullied and Bully

The church will have specific guidelines written out to respond to both complaints of incidents of BHI, as well as dealing with the bully as a child of God.