



Dear Parents:

Among our most sacred responsibilities as Catholic educators is to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the children entrusted to our care. This is a duty that I take seriously as Superintendent and, with the support of the Office of Catholic Schools and your schools administrative teams, we continue to make student well-being a priority.

To that end, I am proud to announce that the Catholic Diocese of Richmond has partnered with [STOPit Solutions](#), a nationally recognized leader in school safety and wellness. Through this partnership, students in our school communities (grades 5 through 12, lower grades at the discretion of the school) throughout the diocese have access to the **STOPit anonymous reporting app** – a powerful tool designed to deter and promptly address instances of bullying, school violence, self-harm, and inappropriate behaviors.

### **Why STOPit?**

STOPit empowers students to report bullying, safety threats, and other inappropriate or harmful behaviors in a way that is both safe and effective. With the STOPit app, users can anonymously submit tips, attach photo or video evidence, and privately message school leaders with the necessary information to help all involved.

In addition, when a student or anyone in our school community is in need of immediate support, the STOPit app provides direct access to the Crisis Text Line. Users can anonymously connect with counselors (day or night) until they feel safe and calm. School personnel can then follow up with the appropriate resources for the child and their family.

By enabling us to take proactive steps toward prevention and intervention, STOPit promotes a positive school climate where every individual feels respected and protected as a beloved child of God.

### **Implementation Process**

We have been training our faculty and staff on the STOPit system over the past month and are preparing for a full implementation by January. We encourage you to discuss STOPit with your child, emphasizing the importance of responsible reporting and how this tool can positively impact our school.

### **Next Steps**

As we move closer to January, your principal will provide additional information about how your child can access and use the STOPit system, as well as resources for parents and families that will support the use of this platform. Please feel free to reach out to them with any questions you may have.

Thank you for your partnership in creating a safe and supportive school community.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Riley".

Michael Riley, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Catholic Schools



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. What is STOPit, and why is it being implemented in our schools?**

STOPit is a simple, secure platform that allows students to anonymously report concerns about safety, bullying, or other issues. This tool enhances the safety and well-being of our school communities while reinforcing our commitment to providing a supportive, faith-based environment for students to grow and learn. STOPit will be available in all parish and regional schools in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond beginning in January 2025.

### **2. How does STOPit support our school's mission and values?**

STOPit aligns with the mission of the Office of Catholic Schools to nurture a safe, inclusive, and faith-based learning environment at every parish and regional school in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. By empowering students to speak up when they feel unsafe, the platform supports our commitment to care for the whole person and the broader school community.

### **3. How does STOPit work?**

Students can submit reports anonymously via the STOPit app or web platform. Each report is directed to designated school staff (administrators, teachers, and/or counselors) who can assess the situation and take appropriate action.

- All reports that are made during the school day will be responded to by school staff in the building.
- Reports made after hours, on weekends, or during school breaks are monitored by trained STOPit personnel and will be referred to school staff for appropriate follow-up on the next school day.
- In instances where there is imminent concern for an individual's safety, school officials will be immediately notified and local crisis counselors or law enforcement may be contacted if the circumstances warrant.

### **4. How will students be informed about using STOPit?**

Students will receive an orientation on STOPit, including examples of appropriate use and the importance of direct communication with trusted adults whenever possible. There is no obligation for students to utilize STOPit, but it is available for all students in grades 5-12 in Diocesan Schools. Some schools, at their discretion, have included grades 3 and/or 4 in this program as well.

### **5. Is STOPit meant to replace direct communication between students and teachers?**

Absolutely not. The interactions between students and trusted adults remain the cornerstone of our approach to fostering a safe and caring Christ-centered school community. In fact, the vast majority of interactions on the platform will be between students and designated school staff (administrators,

teachers, and/or counselors) within the school building. STOPit is simply an additional tool for when students feel unable to speak up directly.

**6. What types of issues should students report through STOPit?**

Students can use STOPit to report concerns such as bullying, threats, self-harm, or any situation that may impact their safety or the safety of others. While the platform provides a way to address serious concerns, students are encouraged to talk to a trusted adult whenever possible.

**7. How often is STOPit expected to be used?**

We anticipate that STOPit will not be used frequently, as most concerns are typically resolved through direct communication with teachers or staff. However, it is essential to provide this resource for situations where anonymity is necessary for a student to feel comfortable coming forward.

**8. How does the school handle reports submitted through STOPit?**

Each report is reviewed by school administrators and addressed promptly. Responses may include investigation, intervention, or support, depending on the nature of the concern. School administrators investigate all reports to determine validity. False or frivolous reports are addressed through standard disciplinary measures.

**9. Is STOPit anonymous? Will my identity be protected if I submit a report?**

Yes, STOPit is completely anonymous. The platform does not collect personal information, ensuring that students can report concerns without fear of retaliation or judgment. Reports are not tied to a school email address or portal account. STOPit complies with FERPA, COPPA, and HIPAA regulations. Data is securely stored and not sold to third parties or commercial data brokers. Retention periods and access protocols depend on the nature of the report submitted. Access generally requires administrative approval or legal authorization.