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Bullying Prevention Policy

Reviewed: 2014

Next Review: 2019

*Grow in Grace
and Knowledge*

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A MINISTRY OF THE CASINO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - SINCE 1995

CASINO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

The term *bullying* evokes thoughts of oppressive and malicious attitude and behaviour. For this reason the school has a zero tolerance to bullying. The school values and ethos are intended to promote God-honouring and positive relationships.

Introduction

In 1 Peter 5 we read that we are to be shepherds of God's flock that are under our care. The Bible also reminds us of Christ's words: "A new commandment I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34) It is therefore essential that we do everything to ensure that Casino Christian School is safe both physically and emotionally for all students.

This document is an attempt to define, identify, minimise and appropriately deal with all forms of bullying.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

School definition

School bullying involves the psychological, emotional, social or physical harassment of one student by another.

School bullying typically manifests as:

- an initial desire to hurt
- this desire is expressed in action
- the action is directed by a more powerful person or group
- it is without justification
- it is typically repeated
- it is carried out with evident enjoyment

Bullying not carried out at school can still be classified as "school bullying", eg. at the bus stop or on the bus, or cyber bullying.

National Safe Schools Framework Definition of Bullying & Harassment

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately; however both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference' These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! National Website)

The Casino Christian School Policy is consistent with the NATIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following vision:

“All Australian Schools are Safe and Supportive Environments.”

It is an agreed national approach to address the issues of bullying, harassment and violence, and child abuse and neglect.

Guiding Principles for the Provision of a Safe and Supportive School Environment in Australian Schools:

1. Affirm the right of all school community members to feel safe at school.
2. Promote care, respect and cooperation, and value diversity.
3. Implement policies, programs and processes to nurture a safe and supportive school environment, eg. lessons on this in PDHPE classes.
4. Recognise that quality leadership is an essential element that underpins the creation of a safe and supportive school environment.
5. Develop and implement policies and programs through processes that engage the whole school community.
6. Ensure that roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in promoting a safe and supportive environment are explicit, clearly understood and disseminated.
7. Recognise the critical importance of pre-service and ongoing professional development in creating a safe and supportive school environment.
8. Have a responsibility to provide opportunities for students to learn through the formal curriculum the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for positive relationships.
9. Focus on policies that are oriented towards prevention and intervention.
10. Regularly monitor and evaluate their policies and programs so that evidence-based practice supports decisions and improvements.
11. Take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect.

Key Elements/ Approaches that Inform Good Practice:

The following are listed in the NSSF as key elements that a school would have in place to effectively prevent and respond to bullying, harassment and violence, and child abuse and neglect. These approaches are not intended to be exhaustive, but are examples of good practice to guide schools in creating and maintaining safe and supportive learning environments:

1. School values, ethos, culture, structures and student welfare.
2. Establishment of agreed policies, programs and procedures. This includes an agreed definition of bullying, harassment and violence, or an agreed statement of expected and unacceptable behaviour in relation to bullying, harassment and violence, and a statement of consequences for these, and a coordinated whole school plan outlining how the issues are to be addressed.
3. Provision of education/ training for school staff, students and parents.
4. Managing incidents of abuse/ victimisation.
5. Providing support for students.
6. Working closely with parents.

EDUCATION

Prevention through education is the most effective way of dealing with bullying. At Casino Christian School, the education aims to develop the following understandings:

1. The Bible teaches us to treat each other with love, respect, and in a way that we would like to be treated, ie. to promote a positive feeling of well-being, and to develop empathy towards others, eg, "How would you feel if...?"
2. The most important thing we as a staff at Casino Christian School must do is make every child aware that this behaviour (bullying) **is not acceptable, and will not be tolerated**, and to ensure that if it does occur they will be followed up. Every child has the right to feel safe.
3. Students must learn that nothing is so bad that you can't talk about it, ie. it's OK to tell others about what you saw, how you were treated, etc.
4. A school **definition** is needed that the staff, students and parents are familiar with and can understand. (Rigby, 1995, p.2; Harrison, 1993).
5. The **education process** aims to mobilise support from the majority. This can be done through regular sharing in class, class work, assembly, and Bible studies.

Action Plan for Education Process

The following steps will be taken on an annual basis in order to educate students and therefore minimise bullying:

- Term 1 Assembly talk – define bullying. Give a Biblical perspective. State what it is, and that it is not tolerated at Casino Christian School.
- Class discussion – discuss and agree on the school definition of bullying.
- Hand out/ Note/ Definition in Parent Letter – promoting a non-bullying culture at Casino Christian School.
- Term 3 Use of selected questions in the annual school survey. This is at start of term. Brief reminder in parent letter, or newsletter.

DOES BULLYING OCCUR AT CASINO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Evidence from staff and students as well as communication from some parents suggests that bullying does occur here. Whilst bully may occur from time to time we do not have a culture of bullying within the school.

Audits and Surveys

The NSSF recommends regular audits (see survey above) to keep track of this issue.

Strategies

- All students must be encouraged to report bullying behaviour. Staff should immediately investigate any allegations of bullying. If students know that this will occur, the behaviour is less likely to occur.

- A “Bully Bystanders” program will be run once a year in the school by the Principal, with help from the School Captains, eg. drama re-enactments on assembly, and in-class art and writing competitions.
- Cyber bullying presentation on Secondary assembly annually.

ACTION PLAN

This is an outline of the steps that will be taken if an incident occurs, to ensure that each incident is recorded, dealt with appropriately, and communicated in a consistent and thorough manner:

1. Incident – this occurs and is reported by victim or seen by a witness.
2. Victim/observers (staff or students) report incident to a staff member. The staff member must pass on a written report to the Primary or Secondary Co-ordinator.
3. The Co-ordinator will investigate, and interview the victim. The Co-ordinator needs to consider the facts of the incident. Is it an isolated, one-off situation, or is it bullying (school definition)?
4. The Co-ordinator records the incident on PCSchool regardless of whether it is a one-off event or actual bullying (ie, deliberate and repeated).

If it is classified as bullying (ie. it is behaviour that is deliberate and recurring)

- The Principal will be informed/consulted in the actions taken by the Co-ordinator.
- Parents of both the victim and the bully will be notified.
- Through open dialogue efforts for reconciliation will be made between the victim and perpetrator.
- Consequences will occur for the perpetrator based on the discretion of the Co-ordinator.
- Continued Bullying will go to the Principal and will likely result in expulsion of the perpetrator from school.

If it is not classified as bullying

- if this is the case, consider the need for an appropriate sanction – withdrawal or ‘time out’ from play, caution note sent home, or detention for serious misbehaviour.
5. Co-ordinator will make notes on student records on PCSchool outlining the action taken and student responses to discipline.
 6. Co-ordinator follows up both bully and victim over following days/weeks. Regular contact has a dramatic effect on reducing the impact of bullying, and decreasing the chance of it recurring.
 7. Give **feedback** on progress to students and parents. All stakeholders appreciate a sense of closure if this is possible.

Services available to parents & students

- Pastoral Care of Staff
- School Counsellor
- School Chaplains
- School Liaison Police (Kim Mewing ph: 66260574)