Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Policy Statement

The Heritage College Lake Macquarie (HCLM) community is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all members through a zero-tolerance anti-bullying policy that defines unacceptable behaviour, promotes prevention strategies, educates on identification and reporting, ensures swift intervention, and provides support to those impacted.

2. Context

HCLM aims to provide a safe, respectful, and happy environment; based upon the Commandments of Christ reflecting Bible values and ethics in its organisation, practices, learning and teaching. HCLM aims to support families in developing in their children a love of the Bible and Christ-like characteristics and behaviour. Therefore, bullying in any form is unacceptable and HCLM aims to take the necessary steps to minimise such behaviour.

3. Definitions

Bullying is defined as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons (National Safe Schools' Framework, 2011).

A person is bullied when they are intentionally exposed regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions by one or more people. Bullies deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt one or more people repeatedly.

Kinds of bullying

3.1. There are various kinds of bullying, including:

a) Physical bullying e.g. hitting, poking, punching, kicking, scratching, pushing, and spitting.

b) Verbal bullying e.g. name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, and insults such as racist or sexual remarks.

c) Social bullying e.g. ignoring, excluding, lying, playing nasty jokes, mimicking, deliberately excluding someone, and making inappropriate gestures.

d) Psychological bullying e.g. threatening, manipulation, stalking, spreading rumours, giving dirty looks, and hiding or damaging possessions.

e) Cyberbullying using technology (e.g. email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites) to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

Exclusions from bullying

3.2.   Bullying is not:

   a)   Mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, without an imbalance of power. However, unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

   b)   Single episodes of social rejection, dislike, nastiness or spite random acts of intimidation or aggression unless it becomes a pattern of behaviours.

   c)   Social rejection or dislike unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

4.   Addressing Bullying

4.1.   What you can do about bullying:

   a)   Tell the person(s) involved to stop.

   b)   Ask other people to stop if you observe them bullying someone.

   c)   If you are being bullied, or someone you know is being bullied, report it.

4.2.   You can report it to:

   a)   Friend(s)

   b)   Parent(s)/caregiver(s)

   c)   Teacher(s)

   d)   Counsellor

   e)   Year advisor

4.3.   When to report:

   a)   Report bullying as soon as it happens.

   b)   Do not ignore it.

Response protocol for reported bullying incidents at HCLM

4.4.   HCLM will:

   a)   listen and talk to the person who is being bullied and to the person(s) doing the bullying.

   b)   put negotiated consequences in place for the person who has been bullying others. These may include a formal warning, contact with parents, and / or exclusion from certain activities.

4.5.   Students may be placed on an individual Behaviour Support card and are required to 'check in' with an appropriate member of staff.

4.6.   If a student persists in bullying behaviour, despite being officially warned and supported, an in-school or out-of-school suspension will be considered.

4.7. These steps may change depending on the circumstance – each person and incident is different.

4.8. HCLM will record allegations of bullying, conversations with students and parents and any follow up actions on the school's online management system under the student's name.

Bullying prevention strategies

4.9. To prevent bullying, HCLM:

a) uses our school values to foster an environment of respect during assemblies and in the form of promotional material in the classrooms and around the school.

b) teaches our students about respectful relationships in PDHPE.

c) fosters a caring environment.

d) recognises and rewards positive behaviour publicly during morning and whole school assemblies, and encourages constructive conflict resolution.

e) develops student leadership programs such as Student Representative Council (SRC) that contribute to a positive and inclusive school.

f) annually and at various change points throughout the year creates a supervision timetable for lunch and recess playground areas to ensure a safe environment.

g) implements teaching and learning that promote values, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution, problem solving and positive online behaviour during Bible and Invictus programs.

h) develops policies to promote student safety including HCLM's Welfare and Behaviour Management Policy and Discipline Policy.

Intervention strategies

4.10. Intervention strategies include:

a) Counselling for those bullied and bullying.

b) Contacting parents to discuss strategies.

Post-intervention strategies

4.11. Post-intervention strategies include:

a) Monitoring those bullied to ensure their continued safety and wellbeing.

b) Checking that the bullying has stopped.

5. Responsibilities

A collective effort from every member of the HCLM community is crucial in preventing bullying and cultivating a safe and happy environment. Everyone needs to reinforce that bullying behaviour is not acceptable and that it should be reported and dealt with promptly.

5.1. Staff

a) Model appropriate behaviour at all times.

    b) Ensure that students are adequately supervised at all times.

    c) Provide teaching/learning opportunities which educate students about appropriate strategies to maintain positive relationships and prevent bullying.

    d) Treat each report of bullying behaviour seriously, and act on the report promptly.

5.2. Students

    a) Use positive strategies to deal with incidents.

    b) Report instances of bullying to staff, either if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.

    c) Offer assistance to individuals who are being bullied.

    d) Refrain from engaging in bullying behaviour towards others.

5.3. Parents/caregivers

    a) Support their child in developing positive responses to bullying behaviours consistent with HCLM's Anti-Bullying Policy.

    b) Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying and encourage children to report to staff.

    c) Contact staff if they suspect their child is being bullied or is bullying others.

    d) Work with HCLM in seeking resolution of the problem.

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