

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

STATEMENT ON BULLYING

ADDENDUM TO DISCIPLING STATEMENT

Introduction.

Bullying or harassment is commonplace in all parts of society, where-ever there are people who wish to exert their control over others who are less powerful than themselves. Schools, including Christian Schools, are not exempt from the presence of bullying. This statement forms a necessary part of the Discipling Statement of the School [including the Discipling Policy] and is to be read in conjunction with it and with the Sexual Harrassment Policy.

Policy.

Heritage Christian School acknowledges that there will be bullies in our school. In seeking to establish and maintain a safe environment for all children, staff and parents, those responsible for bullying will be identified and disciplined.

Definitions

Bullying can be defined as any act of one or more persons against another person who is perceived to be weaker, which causes the victim to feel threatened physically [including sexually], socially or psychologically. It is interpreted as a negative action. Harassment is used as a synonym for bullying.

Bullying can be perpetrated on children of all ages, of both genders and can take place in or out of school. Harrassment of students by staff, of parents by staff or students or by parents of staff or students are all covered in this statement and will be dealt with appropriately. Apart from the child abuse guidelines on reporting, the staff at Heritage have the responsibility of dealing with cases of harassment whenever children are involved in a school associated activity eg. on the way to or from school on buses, on excursions etc.

Procedures.

Incidents of bullying of students by students shall be dealt with according to the Discipline Policy. Under normal circumstances, bullying would mean students are excluded from classes at least until full investigation of the situation can be completed. This exclusion is particularly important in the case of physical violence.

Suspension of a perpetrator may be recommended to the Principal if the facts indict an individual. Where physical violence is involved, parents may be phoned and asked to come to school to collect their child. Lesser offences may simply involve in-school suspension for a period, ranging from a period or some periods to a full day.

In all cases of out-of-school suspensions, parents are to be contacted and required to come to school for an interview with their child prior to the child re-entering school. The purpose of this time, at which a co-ordinator or assistant principal and/or the principal will be present, is to seek expressions of regret, apology, reconciliation and rehabilitation whereby a program will be put into place to help the bully or bullies.

Bullying is rarely a one-off event. It may be that a result of the interview would be the establishment of a counseling program for the bully/bullies. Such might take place within the school or with an outside counselor. All staff involved in dealing with bullying situations are to bear in mind that there are spiritual issues in any such actions and attempts should be made to focus on Christ-like behaviour through allegiance to Him.

In all cases of bullying, the victims health and well-being are also of high importance and steps should be taken to support victims, even to the point of suggesting counselling.

All students, through their teachers, are to be encouraged to report any incidents of harassment without fear of repercussions. Victimisation of students as retaliation for reporting is itself a form of bullying and will be treated as such.

Reports of bullying are to be written up as reports and presented to the executive member of the department who will bring such reports to Executive meetings. Where suspension of students takes place, reports will be prepared and presented to the Board.

Students who feel they have been harassed by a teacher or a parent, should report the situation to their department co-ordinator who will address the incident with the Principal. Similarly, if teachers feel they have been harassed by a student, should report the incidents to their department co-ordinator who will report to the Principal.

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