



Anti-Bullying Policy

STATEMENT OF FAITH

At Rockfish Christian Academy we acknowledge that children have been entrusted to our care. With that care comes the responsibility of providing a safe environment so that physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth can take place. The mandate to care for one another comes from our Lord Jesus. Jesus commands us to love God and to love one another.

Jesus replied: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.”* Matthew 22:37-39

At the heart of following Jesus’ command is a commitment by the faculty and staff of Rockfish Christian Academy to model the love that Jesus has shown to us, to validate the pain caused by bullying behavior(s) and to take immediate action in stopping the bullying behavior(s).

We acknowledge that sin is a part of our human condition. One manifestation of sin is that of bullying behavior(s). Because of the grace shown to us in Christ Jesus, we embrace a conflict resolution model that emphasizes accepting responsibility for our actions and forgiving one another.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1
John 1:9

*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **Colossians 3:13***

BULLYING-A DEFINITION

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Typically, it is repeated over time. A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself.

Bullying can take many forms:

- Physical bullying (such as hitting or punching)
- Verbal bullying (such as teasing or name calling)
- Nonverbal bullying or emotional bullying (such as intimidation using gestures or social exclusion)
- Cyber bullying or bullying through note writing (such as sending insulting messages by e-mail or sending insulting notes to others in the classroom)

Reference: www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

BULLYING MISCONCEPTIONS

Misconceptions regarding bullying behavior create problems in providing a safe environment and in restoring peace to the classroom. We are committed to naming bullying for what it is and to avoiding the excuses that are often given for bullying behavior(s).

Excuses:

- Bullying is a normal part of growing up, a life stage that everyone needs to live through
- Bullying has no serious consequences
- Those who are bullied “ask for it” or are simply getting what they deserve
- Bullying only involves physical attacks
- Adult intervention causes the bullying to escalate
- Students can resolve bullying problems on their own

- Bullies have this type of personality (reality: they are often victims of bullying)
- Bullies have an overly strong self-concept (reality: they bully because of fear and insecurity)

IMPACT OF BULLYING

The presence of bullying has a broad range of effects on the learning environment and on relationships. We acknowledge the effects of bullying are committed to being aware of the results of bullying behavior(s).

- Stress of bullying interferes with a student's ability to engage in classroom activities and interferes with learning
- Stress of bullying can cause depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, health issues and concerns, and in extreme cases, thoughts of suicide.
- Stress of bullying can cause fear of going to school, fear of being in locations such as the bathroom or at recess, fear of riding the school bus or in a car pool situation
- Those who bully can develop serious antisocial and violent behavior patterns, including frequent fighting, involvement in vandalism, smoking and drinking, truancy, and use of weapons.
- Bullying affects those who are witnesses by creating a climate of fear and intimidation and ultimately affects the learning environment.

Reference: [www. stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)

PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING BULLYING

A. Rockfish Christian Academy will practice zero tolerance toward bullying.

B. Teachers will actively and consistently teach and model positive behavior(s), and have zero tolerance for aggressive or harassing behavior(s).

C. Students demonstrating bullying behaviors will be subject to the following discipline process.

1. Address the situation with appropriate apologies given
2. Loss of privileges: (recess, free time, etc.) or time out
3. Visit to the principal's office
4. Inform parents
5. Parent/ Teacher/ Principal/ Student conference
6. Referral: counseling as recommended by the principal and teacher
7. Suspension-because of refusal of counseling
8. Dismissal- to an alternative education program that is best suited to meet the student's individual needs.
9. Proper Authorities will be notified when criminal intent is obvious or when the situation warrants such action

D. Staff members demonstrating bullying behaviors will be subject to a conference and review with the appropriate supervisor(s) with an action plan given to address needed behavior changes. Follow up review(s) will take place at intervals determined by the supervisor(s). Severity of the staff bullying action may result in immediate dismissal.

IDENTIFYING FACTORS

A. Bully

1. Has a desire to hurt and/or control
2. Operates with an unjust use of control and power
3. Will repeat the hurtful action
4. Enjoys seeing the target suffer
5. Possesses a sense of the target's susceptibility
6. Likes to be in charge
7. Believes he/she should get what he/she wants
8. Misperceives how others treat him/her
9. Has a network of friends that he/she controls
10. Denies feelings of the victim

B. Target

1. Passive Target

Quiet, sensitive, cautious, in interaction with peers
Lacks skills of assertiveness
Has diminished self confidence

May withdraw, run away, breakdown, or cry when confronted by a bully

2. Active Target

- Anxious and insecure
- Pesky behavior
- Repeatedly annoys others
- Lacks appropriate social skills

C. Bystander (Witness)

1. Empowers the bully with silence
2. Feels empathy for the target, but afraid to act.
3. Fears becoming a target if associated with the target
4. Is afraid of causing the situation to escalate
5. Seldom steps forward to defend or speak against the bully
6. May feel guilt
7. Lacks skills and knowledge in how to deal with the situation
8. Doesn't seek help to resolve the situation
9. Sees silence as the only way to avoid being a target

D. Common Misconceptions by Faculty and Staff

1. Belief that they shouldn't intervene because of a lack of conflict resolution skills
2. Belief that teachers alone have the ability to fix problems and prevent victimization
3. Fear that they will cause the problem to escalate
4. Unaware that adults are capable of and sometimes display bullying behaviors
5. Belief that bullying is a natural part of life
6. Belief that teaching core subjects is all that is required.

E. Potential Target

1. New students
2. Those of different ethnic groups
3. Those with learning disabilities
4. Those who are athletically challenged
5. Those with social class issues
6. Those with health and hygiene issues
7. Shy students
8. Those who are easily manipulated
9. Those with physical appearance issues (real or perceived)
10. Those who lack assertiveness skills

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

Teachers and staff will learn strategies to:

- Each teacher or staff member needs to examine his/her own behavior.
- Relationships of staff to staff, staff to students, and staff to parents need to be addressed.
- Consistently confront inappropriate comments, jokes, and gestures.
- Teachers and staff are given opportunities to receive ongoing training in anti-bullying and assertiveness skills.
- Model good behavior by using good communication, anger management and conflict resolution skills
- Help students learn how to express themselves in positive ways.
- Make expectations clear.
- Recognize the importance of supervision in reducing bullying behavior(s).
- Listen, validate, and intervene when bullying occurs.
- Fill out a report form for teachers when bullying occurs.
- Consistently enforce consequences for bullying behavior(s).
- Give as much attention to the target and witness as to the bully when addressing bullying behavior(s).
- Help the student take ownership for his/her behavior(s) by helping him/her accept responsibility, by fostering growth in self-discipline, by encouraging a Christian model of repentance and forgiveness.

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

The Bully will learn strategies to:

- Accept responsibility for his/her behavior
- Change his/her thinking
- Develop personal insight or self awareness
- Understand why he/she bullies others
- Know what to expect as consequences of bullying behavior
- Manage anger
- Identify with feelings of the target
- Explore positive ways to feel powerful
- Gain strength and confidence (self worth)

The Target will learn strategies to:

- Stick up for himself/herself (assertiveness skills)
- Respond immediately to bullying
- Report bullying incidents immediately
- Differentiate between "reporting" and "tattling" (first is to help another/second is to get another in trouble)
- Identify friend(s) for support
- Gain strength and confidence (self worth)
- Learn and strengthen bullying resistance skills
- Build social skills
- Plan ahead to avoid potential problems
- Use power skills to disarm bullies
- Fill out report: I saw _____ I heard _____ I did this _____

The Witness will learn strategies to:

- Recognize bullying behavior
- Differentiate between “reporting” and “tattling”
- Read the emotional cues of a target
- Know when and be empowered to intervene
- Help to physically remove target from situation
- If bullying is physical, get attention of others immediately
- Fill out report: I saw_____ I heard_____ I did this_____

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

- Each parent needs to examine his/her own behavior.
- Relationships of parents to staff and parents to parents need to be addressed.
- Consistently confront inappropriate comments, jokes, and gestures.
- The school will inform parents regarding information about anti-bullying and assertiveness skills.
- Model good behavior by using good communication, anger management and conflict resolution skills.
- Help own children learn how to express themselves in positive ways.
- Make expectations clear.
- When children are present, recognize the importance of supervision in reducing bullying behavior(s).
- Respond immediately to incidences of bullying by first visiting with the appropriate staff person. Follow up with supervisor(s), if necessary.
- Help children take ownership for his/her behavior.
- Empower children to report bullying.
- Differentiate between “reporting” and “gossiping.” Reporting is necessary to conflict resolution. Gossiping prevents conflict resolution.