



BOARD POLICY MANUAL	
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Review Date	Page 1 of 4
Policy Section School	Identification SCH-1052

SAFE SCHOOL POLICY

PURPOSE

Trinity Christian School is committed to maintaining an independently run Christian school that provides a safe and caring environment for its students by developing a response to bullying that is in keeping with Christian values and beliefs. The purpose of this policy is to promote Christ-like relationships that are positive, respectful, and supportive, (in keeping with our Student Code of Conduct), and to intervene when unacceptable bullying behaviours are identified.

DEFINITION

Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, aggressive behaviour that is directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be know to cause) fear, distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is real or perceived power imbalance (Ministry of Education's Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144).

Bullying:

- can be physical, verbal, and involve property.
- can be direct or indirect (exclusion).
- can take on psychological, cyber, written and physical forms.
- is not a result of provocation or an isolated incident.
- usually consists of name calling and verbal abuse and it usually peaks in the upper elementary grades.
- includes the use of disparaging terms (put downs).
- can prevent students from learning, doing homework, answering and asking questions and it can cause the victim to get into trouble.
- can involve turning friends against the victim.

EXAMPLES

Bullying includes the following examples:

- Physical aggression, pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping.
- Damage to clothes, books, or hiding personal property or belongings.
- Instilling fear by loud aggressive language, body language, threatening looks or expressions.
- Abusive anonymous calls or text messages, or even isolation and exclusion of students from groups or activities.

PREVENTION – COMMUNITY BUILDING

Trinity Christian School will seek to prevent bullying by building a sense of community through the following:

- Fostering Strong and Positive Social Bonds – Belonging**
 - through classroom structures, school teams and productions,
 - by having older students mentoring younger students,
 - by maintaining a positive school approach to encourage students to look out for one another.

- b. Building Positive Peer Pressure – Generosity**
 - by promoting action from bystanders,
 - by encouraging and equipping students to be part of the solution by standing up for the weaker members of the school community.
- c. Expecting Students to Take Responsibility for Their Actions - Independence**
 - by expecting students to act in a way that supports a positive school community,
 - by encouraging those who are feeling bullied to communicate their feelings,
 - by challenging those who are directly or indirectly participating in the bullying to take responsibility for their own community damaging actions.
- d. Positive Social Training**
 - by encouraging students to refrain from using put downs,
 - by encouraging and training students to use “helpful words.”
- e. Modeling Positive Adult Behaviour**
 - by challenging teachers, parents and visitors to model positive behaviours

INTERVENTION – COMMUNITY REPAIRING

Trinity Christian School will seek to respond to bullying by repairing a sense of community through the following:

- a. Observation**
 - by training staff, parents and students to recognize bullying behaviours.
- b. Reporting**
 - by informing students and parents of the proper procedures for reporting bullying.
(Please contact the office for related handouts: *Student Response to Bullying; Parental Response to Bullying.*)
- c. Intervention**
 - by utilizing various techniques and strategies depending on the situation, reoccurrence and severity of the situation,
- d. Investigation**
 - by asking questions of the offender and the victim,
 - by focusing on why the event happened and how it can be fixed (restoration),
 - by highlighting the victim’s need to feel safe again,
 - by using the restorative justice approach to addressing the incident (when appropriate),
 - by involving those involved to help recognize the harm done, to accept responsibility for their actions and to devise strategies to change the situation.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACH

Bullying is damaging to relationships, to the well being of the whole community and to the individual being bullied. Restoration is a process of acting in a way to repair such damage.

The restorative justice approach will be used as a compliment to the Discipline Policy and as a model to be used to combat bullying behaviours. This approach focuses on violations against the students that damage community relationships rather than on rule breaking that violates the institutional trust.

The restorative approach to discipline fits well with the school’s current Discipline Policy. It follows the process of confession, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation with whomever has been wronged. This approach brings the bully and the victim together to repair the harm done to the victim and the relationship. It gives the

bully the opportunity to recognize the consequences that his/her actions have had on the individual and the school community as a whole. The approach highlights the fact that when the individual victim suffers, the whole school community suffers and when individual victims heal, the whole community heals.

In the restorative approach to discipline, the victim is central in the process of restoring the offense and the school community/peers act as the facilitators in the restorative process. When there is a wrong doing, the restorative approach looks at how the behaviour has weakened and harmed relationship and how it has harmed the order and feelings of safety in a classroom, playground and/or school.

GUIDELINES

- Public bullying should involve public restoration.
- Spectators/passive bystanders need to be questioned about their bully-encouraging role and their dislike of the behaviour.
- Spectators should be encouraged to speak of their actions and how they could have done things differently.
- Offender and spectator take responsibility by demonstrating empathy and repairing harm.
- The group needs to include others who are seen as good agents for rebuilding and change.

BASICS OF THE APPROACH

- It is built on a compassionate approach to wrong doing.
- It focuses on requiring the offender to admit his/her offense and hearing how it affected others.
- It is built on “healthy shame” through questions to the offender and the victim about the incident.
- It leads to the “reintegration” of the offender.
- It can involve family and friends of the offender and the victim (group conferencing),
- It is based on the belief that wrongdoing affects the “community” and needs to be addressed in the “community”,
- It seeks to help the victim feel better and enjoy some resolution, which is viewed as important as helping the offender.

THE THREE ELEMENTS OF THE APPROACH

- Accountability (consequence)
- Community Protection (feelings of safeness)
- Competency Development (increasing skills in the offender to not offend again)

THE CONTINUUM OF THE APPROACH

- Practices are from informal to formal.
- Mild offenses need informal practices.
- Informal practices can be done on the spot with statements or questions or impromptu conferences.
- Serious, chronic offenses require more formal, involved steps.

RELATED POLICIES:

- Discipline Policy SOC-2003
- Dispute Reconciliation Policy and Procedure SOC-2006

RELATED HANDOUTS:

- Student Response to Bullying
- Parental Response to Bullying