

Black Hills Christian Academy 's Anti-Bullying Policy

Biblical illustration of relationships: John 15:12- "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." And the Matthew 18 Principle

RATIONALE: To instill biblical principles/values and create a more loving environment, our school has adopted this policy. From time to time, conflict can occur. Black Hills Christian Academy realizes that while bullying may occur, it is never acceptable. We have zero tolerance for such conduct and consistent with this policy a true violation will result in appropriate disciplinary action. We seek to implement a clear framework for dealing with bullying incidents in order to protect our students and help the bully to learn how to relate in a way that is in line with biblical standards.

DEFINITION: Bullying occurs when a person or group is intimidated, frightened, excluded or hurt by a pattern of behaviors directed at them by others. (Greg Griffiths, "Bullying in Schools- The Hidden Curriculum" (2003). **The following actions in an ongoing form may be forms of bullying and are included in all references to "bullying" herein:**

- Physical aggression-including hitting, punching, kicking
- Teasing or verbal abuse-including insults, name calling or racial/sexual remarks
- Intentional exclusion from activities or friendship groups
- The setting up of humiliating experiences
- Damaging a person's property/possessions or taking them without permission
- Threatening gestures, actions or words
- Written/verbal/ electronic messages that contain threats, putdowns, gossip or slandering
- Cyber bullying through Facebook, texting, tweeting, Instagram or other electronic means

POLICY STATEMENT: From time to time in a community such as a school, conflict and offense can occur. As part of living in a sinful world, bullying can result when we don't always relate to others as we should or when people try to exert power and influence over others. BHCA realizes that while bullying may occur, it is never acceptable and seeks to implement a clear framework for dealing with bullying incidents. The school's response to bullying is based on the pattern of relating to one another found in the Bible. God intended for us to live in a way that acknowledges differences and accepts others because we are all made in God's image.

Our policy is based on the principle that bullying is "not OK at BHCA." Black Hills Christian Academy will not tolerate any mean-spirited, unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, in school-related activities, or that occurs outside of school and creates a hostile school environment for the targeted student. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to restore a safe learning 1 environment for students who are bullied and to prevent further bullying or harassment by students who are identified as perpetrators of bullying.

BHCA recognizes that not all inappropriate behaviors should be considered bullying or willful violation of this policy. Behaviors will be assessed by the teacher and/or administrator and addressed according to the procedures below.

PROCEDURES:

- Reporting an act of bullying to be discussed with first with the classroom teacher (Matthew 18) and/or Encore teacher if the incident happened in that class. It is further recognized that the first and preferred method of resolution will occur at the student/teacher/parent level.

- Level II or III Disciplinary Procedures: (Parent/Student Handbook pg. 19)

1. The staff member will investigate the infraction. Investigations into bullying allegations must be undertaken in a timely manner after the reporting of a bullying incident and should be carried out in such a way as to minimize the risk of escalation.

- All parties will be spoken to: victim, bully and sufficient bystanders to establish the facts of the situation and to hold them accountable for their actions/inaction. Generally, all parties will be asked to give a verified account of what has happened with a view to understanding the whole picture.

2. The student is referred to the school administrator for disciplinary action decided upon by both admin and staff member.

3. The school administrator meets with the student and staff member for resolution.

4. Administrator and/or student call parent for a conference. Parents/caregivers of student accused of bullying and the victim of the bullying will be informed.

5. Administrator will document on Student's RenWeb behavior page of student's behavior, disciplinary action & parent's response. Classroom teacher may also be asked to document and notify parents. Email will be sent of documentation.

6. Parent(s)/caregivers of victim and bully will be informed throughout the process and may be invited to be present in discussions. In some cases, this may apply to parents/caregivers of bystanders also.

7. All incidents of bullying will be followed up in writing to parents/caregivers of at least the victim/s and bully if deemed necessary by the administration as bullying.

8. Bullying incidents will be followed up and students monitored to ensure the incident is resolved satisfactorily. The school will take serious disciplinary action in cases of retaliation.

9. Discipline will follow. (Level II or III Consequences, pg. 19) Any such disciplinary sanctions shall be imposed in accordance with biblical principles, equity and school policies.

Note: The administration of BHCA reserves the right to treat any single act as severe enough to warrant dismissal/expulsion from school. Consequences will only take effect after an incident has been thoroughly investigated and can be corroborated by the students involved, multiple sources or eye witnesses.

RESPONSIBILITIES STUDENTS

- In addition to reporting bullying behavior, student must ask the offending student to stop!
- Students being bullied must promptly report it to school staff, faculty, or administration.
- Students who are aware of bullying must promptly report it to their teacher. It is the responsibility of all students (victims and witnesses) to report all occurrences of bullying behaviors as outlined in this policy, whether directed at them or others. Students who have knowledge of such behaviors are required to report this information and may do so without fear of consequences. The filing of a false or fabricated complaint of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action.
- Students must be willing to resolve bullying situations, employing forgiveness and some changes in behavior.
- Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a teacher or administration.

PARENTS, GUARDIANS, OTHERS

- BHCA expects parents, guardians, caregivers and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to promptly report it to their child's teacher.
- The filing of a false or fabricated complaint of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action.
- Parents need to accept that the whole story may be quite complex and trust the school to resolve bullying matters.

STAFF

- Non-teaching staff should take appropriate action in reconciling the problem and then refer all allegations of bullying to a teacher of the school and the Administration.

FACULTY

- A faculty/staff member will promptly report to the Administrator any instances of bullying or retaliation witnessed by the faculty/staff member or that is reported to the faculty/staff member by a student, parent, or other individual. The requirement to notify the Administration shall not, however, limit the authority of the faculty/staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

- Teaching staff are to refer to their Administrator with all allegations/incidences of bullying. This will be done in a timely manner (within two school days of report).

REPORTING BULLYING

It is the responsibility of all students, parents, faculty and staff members to report all occurrences of bullying behaviors as outlined in this policy. Parents and students who have knowledge of such behaviors are required to report this information and may do so without fear of consequences. Additionally, students who feel that they have been or are the victims of bullying behaviors should promptly notify a school faculty member, Principal or the Head of Schools. Those parents or students who report such behaviors will not be the target of retaliation or reprisal in any way. Any student who withholds information regarding bullying behavior or provides inaccurate or false information will be subject to disciplinary action including possible removal from school. BHCA recognizes that not all inappropriate behaviors should be considered bullying or willful violation of this policy.

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROCEDURES

Written Notices of what constitutes bullying or bullying behavior, that bullying is prohibited, and the consequences of engaging in bullying or bullying behaviors will be posted in each classroom. A copy of the bullying policy will be posted on the school website (www.blackhillschristianacademy.com) and can be made available to any interested party if requested.

The goal of professional development will be to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

Initiatives will be implemented and presented periodically during the school year to also teach students about the student-related sections of the Anti-Bullying Policy. BHCA faculty, staff, students, parents, and others are encouraged to take advantage of any opportunities to participate in programs or activities which promote the knowledge and skills needed to prevent and/or respond to bullying or bullying behaviors.