
POLICY: Behavior Management
SUBJECT: Bullying Policy

For 58 years the Little Keswick School has served boys 9-18 years old with social, emotional, behavioral and learning difficulties. The school is nationally and internationally recognized and accredited for its quality of staff, level of detailed care and attention, standards of operation and student success. The immersion in a positive and supportive culture combined with dynamic programming creates the difference for a student looking for a place to belong. Developing both Academic and Social and Emotional growth in a structured environment allows each boy to achieve their highest potential. The school's limited enrollment size of 35 permits small student to staff ratios to target differentiated goals and individualized programs allowing each student to overcome personal obstacles and differences.

Little Keswick School implements a campus wide bullying prevention program to support a positive and supportive environment for students to grow and learn. It is against State law to bully. In accordance with Illinois State Board of Education requirements and in reference to the East Aurora School District bullying policy. LKS enforces a no bullying policy. As seen in the East Aurora School District Handbook: *Bullying is contrary to State Law. No person, including an employee, or student, shall harass, intimidate, or bully a student on the basis of actual or perceived: race; color; nationality; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity; gender-related identity or expression; ancestry; age; religion; physical or mental disability; order of protection status; association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics; or any other distinguishing characteristic.* Details of the program and school interventions are detailed in the policy below.

Our goals at LKS are very similar to the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program®, a widely used school intervention program. Our shared goals are to:

- Reduce existing bully/victim problems among school children
- Prevent the development of new bully/victim problems
- Improve peer relations
- Enhance the overall school climate
- Highlight the connection between the individual, classroom, residential, and entire community

The elements in our program include:

- Awareness and prevention of bullying through highly engaging programmatic activities
- Weekly student award given to the Community Champion
- Weekly dorm and monthly classroom meetings
- Creation of school rules against bullying
- Direct teaching and modeling bullying prevention
- Continued program enhancement through steering committee meetings

The Problem with Bullying

It is important to foster a safe and caring environment so that our students are able to grow and develop as individuals. Bullying has no place at our school and that is why Little Keswick has created a bullying prevention program that is community wide.

At Little Keswick, we realize that many of our students have had histories involving bullying. Research shows that students with exceptional needs are more likely to be bullied than other students. Furthermore, once a child has been a victim of bullying, they are more likely to bully in return. The consequences of being bullied are long-lasting and can include:

- Lower self-esteem
- Higher rates of depression
- Increased anxiety

If left unchecked, the cycle of bullying will continue. However, appropriate bullying intervention can change these destructive behaviors and consequences.

What is Bullying?

"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself." (Owleus 2008)

More specifically, Bullying is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: 1) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; 2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health; 3) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or 4) Substantially

interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying includes three important components:

Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.

Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength. (Owleus 2008)

It is notable, bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

Students Who Bully

Students who bully have strong needs for power and (negative) dominance.

Students who bully find satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to other students.

Students who bully are often rewarded in some way for their behavior with material or psychological rewards. (Owleus 2008)

Behind the Bullying:

Some Students Bully ...

To conceal shame or anxiety

To boost self esteem

Mistaking others' actions as hostile

Concern with preserving self-image

Engaging in obsessive or rigid actions (Hazler 1997)

Some Students Bully Because...

They have been isolated

They have a deep need for belonging

They do not possess the social skills to effectively keep friends (Williams 2005)

It's About Power

Students bully to...

Get even

Assert dominance

Protect territory

Define roles

What Bullying Looks Like:

Planned and/or Unprovoked insult and disrespect. (Provocation may come from different stimuli and in turn appear as bullying.)

Intent to harm, humiliate, and debase others.

Mob mentality towards one student or another faction of students.

Low grade, consistent teasing in front of or at a distance from the victim.

Attacking others for personal attributes (family, physical attributes, financial status, etc.)

Targeting a specific student who the bully views as inferior/superior to them.

Back handed compliments.

Consistent attempts to get the victim in trouble (tattling to extreme amounts, setting them up, manipulating the relationship.)

What Bullying Doesn't Look Like:

Anger Outbursts

Provoked arguing that does not consistently target one student

Anger that does not persist towards another due to specific acts

A singular event

Random events

Limited to the dynamics of size and presence (The big guys aren't always the bullies)

How Do We Respond?

Consistent and accurate labeling

Firm, consistent limit setting

Nurturance for the underlying reasons for bullying

Helping victims find agency

Empowering bullies to use new tools to express needs

Fostering peaceful dialogue between the bully and the victim

Developing Student Awareness

We believe student awareness of bullying problems is the first step in transformation. As a result, we teach our students the cycle of bullying through identifying bullying roles.

Furthermore, the School Rules Against Bullying are posted in all classrooms, dorms, and in the depot. When each student enrolls the rules are reviewed.

They include:

- We will treat all students with dignity and respect
- We will show respect even if we disagree and offer options instead of just opinions
- We will not bully others
- We will help students who are bullied
- We will include other students in conversations, activities, and relationships who are easily left out
- When we know someone is being bullied, we will tell a member of staff

Little Keswick School Bullying Prevention Mission Statement

Through proactive education and programming, our mission is to create and support a community that recognizes how and why bullying happens, knows how to prevent and defend against bullying and celebrates those who work to be champions for inclusion and against bullying in our community.

Ongoing Intervention and Teaching

For many of our students, it takes continual dialogue and interventions to break the cycle of bullying. The residential and class meetings are critical components of the process. Some of the themes discussed include:

- How we affect each other
- Living with others
- Including others
- Listening
- Giving feedback – formal & informal – offhand comments
- Accepting feedback
- Assertive communication
- Blaming
- Boundaries
- Personal Responsibility
- Community

Each week during the Thursday Community Meeting, one student will win the Community Champion Award. The student body and staff vote to select the Community Champion. To win the award, students are asked to engage in the following positive practices:

- Use words to build people up
- End rumors
- Be a team player
- Ask others to join activities
- Offer to help students who are left out or bullied

Students who join the Circle of Champions through winning the Community Champion Award are recognized by:

- Receiving student and staff feedback about their behaviors during the meeting
- Given a t-shirt and certificate
- Parents are notified when their son wins the award

Making a Complaint; Enforcement

Students are encouraged to promptly report claims or incidences of bullying, harassment, or any other prohibited conduct to the Support Counselor, Academic Coordinator, Residential Coordinator or Headmaster.

The Headmaster will use reasonable measures to inform staff members and students of this policy, such as, by including it in the appropriate handbooks and posting it at the school.

Investigation

Upon receiving a report of bullying or harassment, the School will conduct an investigation into the allegations contained in such a report. The School will promptly notify the parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident(s) of bullying and/or harassment, and will advise the parents or guardians of the students involved of the resources available to the students, including involving their treating therapist and administrative contact.

The School will make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 days after the date the report of the incident of bullying or harassment was received, taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation concerning the reported incident.

Through the course of its investigation, the School will involve appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying investigation as deemed appropriate.

The School will also make information concerning the status of the investigation available to the parents of all students involved in such investigation. The parents or guardians of the students involved shall have the opportunity to meet with the Headmaster or administrator to discuss the investigation, any findings resulting from the investigation, and any actions taken to address the reported bullying or harassment.

Marc Columbus, Headmaster, mjcolumbus@littlekeswickschool.net, 434-295-0457.

Findings

Any School employee or staff who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in conduct prohibited by this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Any student who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in conduct prohibited by this policy will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the discipline policy.

Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding prohibited conduct will likewise be subject to disciplinary action.

Evaluation of Policy

The School will review the bullying policy annually to determine if changes need to be made. The School will make any necessary revisions to this policy as it deems appropriate.

Approved by Marc Columbus Date June 1, 2021