# Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp Bullying Policy

Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp Inc. seeks to provide a safe, fun and faith filled experience for all youth that come to camp. Therefore, bullying is not tolerated within the four sites of Wapo, Ox Lake, Luther Dell, and Wilderness Canoe Base. The following bullying policy, along with other strategies and procedures, will be taught to our camp staff for their preparation in working with kids.

#### **Definition:**

Bullying is the repeated use of physical act or gesture, verbal, written or electronic expression with the intent to hurt an individual or group that:

- Causes physical harm to the victim or the victim's property
- Causes the victim to have reasonable fear for himself or his property
- Causes psychological or emotional distress to the victim
- Causes substantial interference to someone's camp experience with any combination of the above, while impeding physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

### **Course of Action for Bully, Victim and Bystanders:**

When a bullying incident occurs at Wapo, Ox Lake, Luther Dell, or Wilderness Canoe Base, the first step of consequence or course of action will depend on the severity of the incident and will be determined by the appropriate camp staff and church staff (if available). Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp's bullying course of action is as followed but not limited to:

# General Consequences and Course of Action for the Bully:

- 1. The individual(s) will be taken aside immediately with the appropriate camp staff to effectively communicate the unacceptable behavior and to discuss the consequences of continued behavior with the individual.
  - i. Bullies need to know that their actions must stop immediately and that it will not be tolerated any longer.
  - ii. Bullying hurts all those involved, even themselves.
  - iii. Bullying may cause you to lose friends.
  - iv. Bullying isn't a way to treat others with respect which every child deserves.
  - v. Ask an adult you trust if you feel angry or upset or don't know how to stop your actions.
- 2. The individual(s) will meet with camp director or church staff immediately to discuss parental involvement, change of cabin assignment, loss of privileges or other appropriate courses of action.
- 3. Parents will be immediately contacted about their son or daughter's behavior.
- 4. Camper will be sent home because of conduct detrimental to others and themselves.

# General Course of Action for the Victim:

- 1. The individual(s) will be taken aside immediately with the appropriate camp staff to effectively listen and offer support. The victims must know that adults care for them outside the initial intervention.
- 2. The individual(s) will meet with the appropriate camp staff to help the victim develop strategies for addressing the problem, should it reoccur in the future.

- i. Victims need to know they are not responsible for the bully's behavior and it isn't their fault.
- ii. Victims need to know they should not respond to bullies by giving in, getting upset or fighting back, which will most likely just encourage more bullying. Staying calm but assertive is a great way to combat bullying.
- iii. Walking away or no response can be a good tactic. It gives less attention to the bully that they are seeking.
- iv. Victims always need to be encouraged to seek help from a trusted adult.
- 3. Parents will be immediately contacted about the experience their son or daughter has endured. Parents will have a chance to talk with their child to offer any support or advice to their child. Camp will fully respect and support parental wishes for their child during the process.

#### General communication and course of action with **Bystanders**:

- 1. The individual(s) will meet with the appropriate camp staff to who will listen and offer support for what they experienced. For possible reoccurring or future incidents, bystanders need to know the following:
  - i. Bystanders need to know their involvement makes a huge difference. They should not just sit and watch.
  - ii. Stand up for the person being bullied if you are in a safe environment. Use phrases such as "stop teasing", "quit fighting", "that's not funny", ect.
  - iii. Don't join in. Don't laugh or participate in any teasing or harassing that was going on. This will only encourage the situation and make it worse. Also, encourage other bystanders to not join in as well; this will only help the victim.
  - iv. Get help from an adult. Reporting bullying isn't a bad thing.
  - v. After a bullying incident offer sympathy for the victim and encourage the victim to talk to an adult or even offer to go with.
  - vi. Overall, be a good friend. Offer to include the victim in activities, etc.

# **Bullying Prevention and Management Plan**

Immediate procedures when bullying is suspected: If you as a staff member of Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible camp have witnessed or heard of an incident that involves bullying, the following practices and techniques will help you provide a safe environment for campers, other staff and yourself. Please remember your team leaders and program staff are great resources to consult if you have any concerns or questions in regards to identifying bullying or the best course of action for each case.

<u>Immediate intervention</u> – When nothing is done, bullying becomes acceptable to all those experiencing it. If you as a counselor ignore an incident you saw or heard, the problem may only get worse and your kids will not believe they can trust you. Your kids need to believe that you understand them, care for them and that you can help. If you don't intervene immediately, why would other kids stand up?

Even if you are not sure actions you have experienced fall under bullying behavior, immediate intervention is still important. Even if it isn't bullying, aggressive behaviors in your cabin need to be stopped. As counselors, you may not be able to prevent everything, but you can respond fast to stop any other affects bullying may have throughout the week.

Do not expect or ask children to work things out for themselves. Bullying is different from a normal argument or conflict. Bullying involves a power imbalance that requires your intervention immediately.

<u>Physical Separation or Time out</u> – If you as a counselor experience bullying in the act, immediately separate those involved. Stand between or near the victim and the bully, separating them, so as to stop any continued bullying, intimidation or physical harm. This may also be a time for young children to be removed from the environment they are in. If you are in the cabin, take a time out on a picnic table outside. If the incident happens during chapel, take the individual(s) outside to walk around.

<u>Verbal description and response</u> – After immediate intervention, make sure that you explain the unacceptable behavior you observed and that the seriousness of the situation is conveyed to all those involved. Response needs to be firm and appropriate for the situation, but at all times the counselor must remain calm. The counselor must make sure the bully(s) know the behavior must stop immediately.

Do not respond aggressively. Using aggressive behavior as a counselor sends the wrong message to those involved. Aggressive behavior may also prompt a bully or bystander to increase his or her bullying behavior or even become aggressive towards you.

Avoid lecturing the bully in front of his or her peers. For most situations it is best to take the individual aside and solve the issue, but by giving the bully attention in front of his or her peers, you may be giving the bully what he or she wants. The goal is to end the behavior, not to humiliate anyone.

#### Helpful Communication Pieces for the Bully:

- Bullies need to know that their actions must stop immediately and that it will not be tolerated any longer.
- Bullying hurts all those involved, even themselves.
- Bullying may cause you to lose friends.
- Bullying isn't a way to treat others with respect which every child deserves.
- Ask an adult you trust if you feel angry or upset or don't know how to stop your actions.

#### Helpful Communication Pieces for the Victim:

- Victims need to know they are not responsible for the bully's behavior and it isn't their fault.
- Victims need to know they should not respond to bullies by giving in, getting upset or

fighting back, which will most likely just encourage more bullying. Staying calm but assertive is a great way to combat bullying.

- Walking away or no response can be a good tactic. It gives less attention to the bully that they are seeking.
- Victims always need to be encouraged to seek out help from a trusted adult.

# Helpful Communication Pieces for the Bystander:

- Bystanders need to know their involvement makes a huge difference. They should not just sit and watch.
- Stand up for the person being bullied if you are in a safe environment. Use phrases such as "stop teasing", "quit fighting", "that's not funny", ect.
- Don't join in. Don't laugh or participate in any teasing or harassing that was going on. This will only encourage the situation and make it worse. Also, encourage other bystanders to not join in as well, this will only help the victim.
- Get help from an adult. Reporting bullying isn't a bad thing.
- After a bullying incident offer sympathy for the victim and encourage the victim to talk to an adult or even offer to go with.
- Overall, be a good friend. Offer to include the victim in activities, etc.

<u>Get help if needed</u> – Especially if the bully is using physical force or it involves a group of individuals that are hard to manage, if necessary, send a bystander to get another staff for support. This may not only be for the victim's safety but for your own.

<u>Consider the consequences</u> – After any incident that needs consequences, first take a breath and obtain any other information you may need to discern the situation. After you have obtained all information you may need (while getting your supervisor and possible church staff in the know of the situation), decide what the general course of action for the bully and the victim will be.

<u>Complement and praise</u> – Give praise and appreciate to those who were helpful in the process. If there were kids in your cabin that helped inform you of bullying or if they were specifically helpful to the victim, make sure you positively reinforce their behavior.

<u>Stay present</u> – Your presence can be the only thing that prevents a bully from continuing behavior. Especially when an incident occurs, remain in the area until you are absolutely sure the behavior has stopped.

<u>Report the incident</u> - Report the incident to a supervisor and any other staff with whom the children work closely. At this point a detailed record of the incident will be made (who is involved, where the incident occurred, how frequently it happened and strategies used to diffuse the problem. Report any suspected bullying to your team leader and program director.

<u>Follow up with all involved</u> – You will need to rely on your connection and relationships that you have built with those involved to get them to talk openly and productively about the incident and it's effects and consequences for both sides.