

Anti-Bullying Policy

State Park Junior Lifeguard (JG) Program is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work, live, and teach by. All participants of the JG program have a right to be in a secure and caring environment at all times. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment for themselves and others.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It can be planned and organized, or unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups.

PRINCIPLES

- JGs have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.
- The needs of the victim are paramount.
- The program will not tolerate bullying behavior.
- Bullied JGs will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

FORMS OF BULLYING

A Few Examples:

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another person.
- Interfering with another person's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another person.
- Teasing or spreading rumors about another person or his/her family.
- Belittling another person's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another person.
- Excluding another person from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another person's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another person.

The Responsibilities of JGs

We expect our JG students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect a child who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the JG program by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behavior in their children, which might be evidence of bullying;
- Advising their children to report any bullying to (any member of our staff) and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other children.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying;
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- Informing the JG program of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with the JG program, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat and eradicate bullying.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The following is a generalized description of the JG program's procedures for responding to bullying:

- Steps taken to support and respond to the needs of both bullied and bullying children;
- All known incidents documented and records kept;
- Action which may be taken e.g. disciplinary in accordance with the State Parks JG discipline policy.
- Contacting parents/guardians of all pupils concerned in the bullying incident.
- Investigation;
- Feedback to those concerned;
- Sanctions/disciplinary action when necessary;
- Contacting relevant professionals when needed e.g. CPS, law enforcement officials, etc.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS POLICY

It is our goal to stop incidents of bullying wherever and whenever we can, and we rely on the vigilance of our staff, our parents, and our JGs to do their part to help us achieve this objective. In short, if we are not aware of a bullying incident, we cannot do anything about it. Therefore, we urge you to take some time to review this policy and the policies listed in our Parent Handbook with your child, and to keep the lines of communication open.