

Luther Point Bible Camp

Policy on Bullying

Introduction

In accordance with the mission, vision, and purpose statements of Luther Point, we desire to provide a welcoming atmosphere and a sense of home for all of our campers. The spirit of God through Luther Point fosters relationships, builds character, and creates memories that will last a lifetime. In order to ensure that everyone has a positive and transformational experience, Luther Point is focused on making the physical and emotional safety of each of campers our number one priority. Therefore, any instances of bullying or accused bullying are inexcusable and will be attended to with highest priority.

Each summer, our campers tell us that one of the most special parts of the experience of Luther Point is being able to build relationships with fellow counselors and campers in a safe place where they are accepted for who they are. This bullying policy was not created in reaction to a problem at camp, but rather as a proactive approach to continuing to build a safe and relational community. Luther Point encourages you to contact us with further concerns or suggestions regarding bullying.

Definition of Bullying

(from www.olweus.org)

“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.”

This definition has three important components:

1. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying involves a pattern of repeated behavior over time.
3. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Bullying can take on a number of forms: physical, emotional, verbal, gestures, extortion, or exclusion. Though bullying is defined as repeated behavior, any known instance involving unwanted, negative actions will be dealt with according to the policies outlined below in an attempt to prevent bullying from occurring.

Staff Training

Luther Point recognizes that the single most effective way to prevent bullying at camp is to train camp staff to recognize and counteract bullying behavior the moment they are aware of it. Each staff member will be trained to be positive role models that can effectively manage situations that may lead to bullying.

Guidelines to be discussed during staff training:

1. Remember that staff have authority over campers
2. Set things out from the beginning
3. Make sure campers know bullying is unacceptable behavior.
4. Do not play favorites with your campers. Kids do notice and while some might feel excluded, others may use it as a thing to bully another about.

5. Be aware of potential bully victims.
6. Stress confidentiality with campers so they can feel safe while reporting bullying.
7. Be attentive to the ways in which you relate with other staff. Actions that can be perceived as bullying, though they may be sarcastic or out of fun, will not set a good example for campers.
8. Step in immediately and calmly but firmly when you know of an action related to bullying. Do not react with anger or attempt to shame.
9. Trust your instincts – if something “feels” like bullying, be sure to attend to it.

Bullying Prevention Tactics

Sunday Covenant

Each Sunday of camp, one of the first activities staff do with their cabin groups is to establish covenants for the week that outline how the campers want to live as a community. These covenants cover everything from lights out time to good sportsmanship. During this time, in order to specifically address bullying, the staff will discuss the following with their campers:

1. Unacceptable Behavior – Shoving or physical contact that may harm someone else; Name calling, teasing, or using inappropriate language; excluding another from a group; not sharing; spreading rumors, gossiping, or embarrassing others; putting others down or making fun of others; stealing, destroying, or ruining property; telling on someone just to get them in trouble
2. Expected Behavior – reporting to a staff member if you are the victim of or are witness to unacceptable behavior; speaking out for others if they are being bullied; including others in group activities; helping others to work out a disagreement; treat others with respect
3. If you feel like you are being bullied, the most important thing you can do is tell a staff member. Reporting a bully is not “tattling” and you will never be in trouble for reporting a bully. This is the best way to make you feel safe. Remember, being bullied is not your fault.

Supervision

Luther Point provides regular supervision for campers throughout the time the camper is at camp. This does not mean that campers are supervised for every second of every minute. However, Luther Point does hold itself to high standards when it comes to supervision. It is our goal that no child is left unsupervised for more than 5 minutes at any given time of the day. Staff are trained to recognize the times and places that bullying is most likely to occur, as well as to look for signs that might indicate a bullying situation. Furthermore, staff are trained to react with effective management techniques, as outlined below.

Intervention and Resolution

Luther Point will intervene in all known bullying situations, because we do not condone bullying. Resolution is possible only by working through the situation with everyone involved. Luther Point takes bullying seriously and will investigate each situation as thoroughly as necessary. Resolution will begin with the camper’s assigned staff member or other staff

members that may have been involved, but will also involve the Program Assistant and the Program Director. If necessary, the resolution could also include the Camp Coordinator, the Camp Director, the Pastor and/or Youth Leader, and the legal guardian.

Initial Staff members are those involved in the intervention

The staff member must...

- Intervene to stop the incident
- Calmly separate the parties involved
- Provide any initial discipline necessary in order to keep the people involved safe

Secondary Staff members are those involved in resolution

The staff members will...

- Talk separately with the campers and staff members involved to determine the nature of the behavior
- Support the camper(s) who was/were bullied and prepare a plan to keep the camper safe
- Contact those higher up as deemed necessary
- Intervene with and prepare strategies for the camper(s) responsible for bullying – the most extreme of which is dismissal from camp
- Work with the Initial staff member to fill out an incident report
- Empower the staff member of the camper's family group to talk through the incident (without breaching confidentiality) in order to come an understanding of what occurred