

# Encouraging One Another

at Rehoboth Christian College

## *What does Jesus have to say...*

...about the way people should treat each other?



*"Do to others as you would have them do to you", (Luke 6:31)*

Elsewhere the apostle Paul tells us ...

*"...encourage one another and build each other up...", (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

So God's intention is for each person in the community of His people to consider the needs of other people, and try to make the lives of other people happier and more fulfilling.

## *What if this doesn't happen...?*

Most students at school have at one time or another experienced some sort of distress caused by other students. Distress may be caused by words spoken, by exclusion from a group, by physical abuse, by interference with clothing or property, or by facial expressions or gestures.

A student experiencing distress in this way is likely to be unable to work and learn at school effectively. In addition, he or she is not being recognised appropriately as a worthwhile bearer of the image of God.





## ***Secret Behaviour***

Behaviour which must be done in secret, hidden from parents and staff because they would otherwise prevent it, has no place in the school community.

This especially applies to things which students say or do to other students, or to their property, which might be hurtful or cause distress. If it would not be done in the presence of your parents or a staff member, then it must not be done at all; students who are identified doing such things must expect to participate in the relevant disciplinary process.



## ***Sexual harassment***

Students of high school age are young people in the process of adjusting to their developing sexual awareness. While it is recognized that issues of a sexual nature are important and of interest to young people, the school community encourages students to adopt the position that sexual activity is not positive or morally appropriate for unmarried young people being raised in a Christian environment.

Positive, upbuilding discussion of sexual matters may take place in the school community from time to time. However, the use of words and phrases relating to sexual matters in a way which may offend other students or staff, has no place in the school community. Students may expect to be free from sexual comments, name-calling, requests, suggestions or approaches, whether made directly or intended to be overheard. Students who offend others by such things must expect to participate in the relevant disciplinary process.

Students should note that such behaviour in the general community is being taken increasingly seriously; sexual harassment is often subject to various penalties and legal actions.

## ***Action which may be taken***

A student who causes distress to other members of the school community will be approached about the matter in one or more of the following ways:

- through an informal talk with a staff member
- through counselling and mediation

- through a formal meeting, which may include the student and parents, staff members, school psychologists or school board members
- through removal from the school, either temporarily or permanently

The emphasis in the first place will be upon solving the problem of the distress being caused, rather than punishing an offender.

A punishment or penalty may however be applied to the student causing the distress where appropriate. This will be especially the case where repeat offences are involved.

### ***What are some examples of behaviour which might cause offense or distress?***



- using racist words or names
- holding, hitting, punching or kicking
- making threats
- using words which may have sexual meanings
- ignoring a person in a group
- posting insults online
- using words normally considered to be crude
- sending unpleasant notes
- joking in a way which may cause distress
- talking about a person's appearance
- spreading rumours
- sending teasing text messages
- interfering with property

### ***What can you do if any of these things happen to you?***

- Don't accept it - it is *not* just 'normal' school behaviour; you *can* do something about it
- Confront the person who is distressing you; tell them that you dislike their behaviour, and ask them to stop it
- Talk to your friends and other students about the problem - don't let it stay 'hidden'
- Tell an adult what is happening - your parents, a teacher you can talk to, your Form Teacher, a Deputy Principal or the Principal
- Ask in the school office for a copy of the brochure *Students Confronting Unwanted Behaviour*, which contains some useful ideas

