Kamehameha Schools is one of the 10 largest charitable organizations in the world. It enrolls more than 5,400 K-12 students, employs 4,000+ staff, and supports community-based educational programs for an additional 40,000 learners throughout Hawai’i. Under all Kamehameha’s educational, environmental, and charitable efforts lies the consistent theme of preserving the Hawaiian culture and ensuring the largest number of children of native Hawaiian descent are given the necessary opportunities to succeed.

The Challenge

As an educational institution, student safety is a top concern for Kamehameha. With the volume of staff employed, the number of students enrolled and the delicate nature of various dynamics involving adults and students, Kamehameha needed a system to ensure any issues of misconduct or potential misconduct were discovered and addressed immediately.

“There is nothing more important than the safety of our children,” says Kamehameha Schools CEO Jack Wong. “Everything we do is focused on achieving our mission of improving the capability and well-being of the Hawaiian people through education. The best way we can do that is to make sure our students have safe and healthy learning environments in which to flourish.”

Taking an innovative and forward thinking approach to faculty and student safety, Kamehameha decided to expand its compliance helpline with NAVEX Global to make it as easy as possible for all members of the Kamehameha family – students, parents and staff – to report concerning behavior.
The Solution

Kamehameha first implemented the EthicsPoint hotline 10 years ago as an incident reporting tool for staff. In 2014, it expanded the hotline to allow students to report as well. This effort not only ensured compliance on a staff level, but also nurtured an environment of safety and respect among its student population.

As well as being one of the first of its kind by using a compliance hotline to resolve student incidents, Kamehameha utilized the software’s flexibility to capture inappropriate interaction with students as a stand-alone category. Incidents include issues such as singling out a student, forming an inappropriate peer relationship, use of inappropriate language or physical conduct of a threatening or sexual nature.

“This category is intended to include a wide variety of student-related concerns,” said Eric Sonnenberg, Kamehameha Schools Vice President of Legal Services – the group in which compliance is housed. “Tracking issues in this way not only emphasizes ‘students first,’ it allows these cases to be prioritized for prompt investigation and sensitive handling. And the data analysis we are able to perform in this category enables us to see reporters speaking up very early in the development of a concern.”

Results

Kamehameha has made awareness and adoption of its hotline service a priority. All 400 managers at Kamehameha have received scenario-based training, and when asked if comfortable using the reporting service, 96 percent agreed. For the larger school community including students, families and community members, promotion of the hotline will be part of school messaging, assemblies, classes and regular dialogue to consistently increase awareness.

“We piloted this program on our Maui campus in 2014 and are pleased to be expanding the Student helpline to our O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island campuses and 30 preschools statewide as well in 2016,” said Kamehameha Schools Executive Vice President of Education Holoua Stender. “Students are encouraged to share personal concerns, concerns for fellow students, or observations of these issues within their educational environment.”

Following trends for many programs, Kamehameha has seen reports go up year over year, which is a testament to the school’s work to increase awareness. Along with increased reporting, it has seen, specifically for students, reports being made earlier in the progression of events, which enables Kamehameha to handle concerns before they evolve into major issues.

In the words of Kamehameha Schools Compliance Director Karen Ernst, “Even if it helps just one student, it is worth it. From our data, we see it’s a lot more than that, but knowing the safety and well-being of each individual student is improving, is a success for us.”

Find Out How Your Organization Can Benefit From NAVEX Global’s Ethics Point Incident Management Software

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