

What Every Teacher Needs to Know about

BULLIES AND SCHOOL SAFETY

Kindergarten Edition

*A resource guide for educators
and school personnel.*

Brought to you by:



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Dear Educator:

We are pleased to provide you with this resource packet to help you address the difficult issue of Bullies and School Safety.

As a teacher or other professional involved in the education of our children, you have a special opportunity and a special responsibility to protect the children in your care. Bullying can be a big issue in schools and keep both the staff and students from reaching their full potential.

By talking about bullying and the ways to prevent it, the Kids on the Block program encourages kids to be secure and confident in their own right and wrong doing and to not tolerate unacceptable behaviors in others. Promoting safety in a school environment should be number one on the list for making learning a fun and enjoyable experience.

Working together, we can both prevent and confront bully behavior that robs so many children of their childhood, their sense of security, and well-being. You can help by scheduling a Kids on the Block Performance at your school or youth community group.

This teacher's guide was designed to equip you with the information you need to be a resource to children and families. It provides various solving techniques, increases awareness and acceptance of human similarities and differences, and encourages students to talk about their feelings and unjust situations.

Family Nurturing Center's mission is to end the cycle of child abuse by promoting individual well-being and healthy family relationships. For more than 30 years, we have been at the forefront of providing quality, innovative and effective programs to help children and parents build strong and healthy family relationships. The Kids on the Block Program is one of many vital resources we offer to the community.

Information sited in this resource guide is courtesy of ©The Kids on the Block, Inc. 1999, 2009.

Thank you for your commitment to children and families! *You can make a difference in the life of a child!*

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WHAT TEACHERS AND OTHER ADULTS SHOULD KNOW

ABOUT BULLIES

Bullying has long been considered a “normal” part of growing up. It is still often shrugged off by adults who may not know how to respond to it. However, those who have been bullied as a child or teenager remember the pain, humiliation, and terror that accompanies what was once thought of as “harmless child’s play”. Today, children must cope with an ever-growing number of stresses in their lives. Often, the stress of peer rejection and bullying can send a child into a very real depression, causing them to live in constant fear that the bullying will recur. In the saddest and most desperate situations, the end result may be violence or suicide. With potential consequences like these, it is crucial that adults prevent, intervene, and assume responsibility for stopping this behavior.

Since bullying most often occurs at school, teachers, principles, and other adults have the responsibility to intervene. Research surveys of teachers and children noted that teachers thought they intervened often or almost always in bullying situations while children felt that teachers did little or nothing to stop the bullying. Fear of retribution, embarrassment, humiliation and feeling powerless to change the situation contribute to a child’s reticence to report common forms of playground bullying which often go unseen by teachers who may be responsible for watching 100 or more children at a time. Many teachers also commented that they were not sure exactly what should be done in cases of bullying. Some were hesitant to intervene because of the belief that children should solve- their own problems.

Children often need to be taught HOW to solve problems. When bullies are allowed to continue their bullying, and the bullied are allowed to be tormented, both parties suffer. It is believed by many researchers that bullying creates a vicious cycle. The bully believes that aggression and power will get him what he wants, and the bullied child continues to be submissive and non-confrontational. Neither of these children develop advanced problem solving skills and without intervention both may continue to find themselves in the same types of situations in adulthood.

Teachers can help by talking about bullying in class, stopping it immediately when it happens, being aware of more subtle forms of bullying (such as relational bullying in which a student is excluded socially), and by encouraging students to report when an incident occurs. The students and school personnel should be made aware that bullying will not be tolerated and that there are clearly defined consequences. School administrators should develop procedures to be followed when a bullying incident occurs. Children must understand the difference between “tattling” or “ratting someone out” and *reporting* an incident. Tattling or ratting is when a child tells with the intention of getting another person in trouble, and reporting is used to get someone OUT of trouble. Also, students should be able to report to school personnel with the assurance that their statements and identities will be kept confidential.

It is time to reject the perception that bullying is “just a part of growing up.” If adults don’t tolerate abuse, humiliation or other forms of victimization in the workplace, then a child should not be expected to endure hitting, kicking, ridicule, or isolation at school. It is the ultimate responsibility of adults to see that every child has a safe, secure environment in which to learn and play.

Bullying can be addressed and prevented by clearly defining behaviors and their consequences, teaching problem solving skills, and encouraging empathy and acceptance of differences.

ABOUT CYBER BULLIES

Electronic communication has made life easier in some ways and harder in others. Children use computers for homework, entertainment and socializing with friends. Adults can help make a child’s online experience positive and ensure steps are taken to protect children from online victimization and cyber bullies. Cyber bullying is a type of verbal harassment. It may come in the form of repeated text messages (notes) sent to a cell phone, threatening e-mails, rude instant messages, using the victim’s screen name and assuming their online identity, sexually harassing or mocking someone on social networking or other types of websites and even forwarding “private” communications such as e-mails, messages or pictures to others.

Placing the computer in a public area such as the kitchen or family room can help parents be more aware of a child's online activities. Young people should be instructed to NEVER share personal/private information including passwords, pins, name, address, phone number, school name or family and friend's names. That kind of information can be used by bullies as well as other harmful types of people on the Internet. Passwords and pins should not be shared with friends as they could be misused in anger. Adults should engage kids in discussions about their online activities just as they do their real-world activities, stressing that even though the Internet is different from the real world in many ways, words still have the power to hurt those who read them, so we should always try to treat others with kindness. Remind youngsters that they should not respond to messages that are angry or mean, nor should they open messages sent from people they don't know. Discuss the difference between the real people we interact with face to face as friends and the people we "meet" online who we don't really *know*. Finally, acknowledge that the Internet can be fun but "if you're online and something doesn't feel right, you should leave the site."

ABOUT SCHOOL SAFETY

School staff and students deserve a safe place in which to work. For some schools, violence and crime are minor issues, for others they are daily occurrences. For the majority of schools, extreme forms of violence are rare. Nonetheless, the threat of any kind of violence may keep students out of school, prevent participation in after-school events, and create an undermining climate of fear within the school.

An important first step in preventing school violence is recognizing when a child may be in trouble and in need of help. The U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Justice have published an early warning guide for spotting trouble in schools. Some warning signs of kids at risk include:

- Lack of interest in school
- Absence of age-appropriate anger control skills
- Seeing self as the perpetual victim
- Obsessions with violent video games or entertainment
- History of bullying
- Self-isolation from family and friends
- Talking about or bringing weapons to school

Evidence of one or more of these warning signs should not be looked at as an inevitable predictor of violent behavior. School administrators must also consider a child's history and act accordingly. The sooner an at-risk child gets help, the more likely the problem can be solved.

Every school should conduct an annual school safety assessment. To be most effective, administrators should involve teachers and students in the assessment process. Numerous issues can be uncovered in a dialogue with students. Students may avoid certain areas of the school where they may be more likely to be victimized, there may be certain initiation rites for incoming students (hazing), or there may have been times when weapons were present in the school without staff knowledge. By making students part of the assessment process, school administrators might gain valuable insights.

Many school districts have taken the extra step of getting students involved in developing a school safety plan. Often, young people will serve on committees which are supervised by adults. These committees might explore the types of crimes (vandalism, theft, assault) which are most prevalent in school, decide what other issues (conflict resolution, bullying) need to be addressed, and make recommendations for prevention strategies. Of course, the amount and type of involvement will depend on the age of the kids.

Although there is no simple solution, one thing is clear—restoring an environment of safety requires the diligent involvement of everyone in the school community.

WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW

ABOUT BULLIES

Bullying is the act of a person or group purposely trying to hurt or upset a person or group by saying or doing mean and hurtful things over and over again. Also, some bullies hit or kick another or force that person to hand over personal belongings. Sometimes, bullies tease or embarrass a person or make a person do humiliating things he/she doesn't want to do. The person who is being bullied has difficulty making this treatment stop and starts to feel terrible. These types of bullying are fairly easy to recognize, but some bullying can be more subtle-harder to recognize. Sometimes a person decides to ostracize or isolate another person by not including that person in social plans, making up awful rumors or convincing others to dislike that person.

Bullying most often occurs on school grounds in the lunchroom, hallways or classrooms, on the playground or on the way to or from school. It usually makes everyone feel terrible, sad, or uncomfortable. When some children were asked what they did when they saw another child being bullied, some said they tried to intervene and help the person. Many said that they thought they should help the person but didn't know what they should do, and others said they would do nothing because it was "none of their business". What happens at school is *most certainly* a student's business. School should be a safe place to learn where every child feels respected and secure. Bullying is everybody's business: students, teachers, administrators, custodians, cafeteria workers, and parents. A child should not be left to deal with the humiliation and fear from being the target of a bully by him/herself.

There are several different ideas about why some people are bullies. Sometimes a child is bullied at home by an adult, a brother, or sister and repeats the behavior with his/her peers. Sometimes a kid acts like a bully to feel powerful or to get attention. Regardless of why a person is a bully, this behavior is destructive, wrong and unacceptable.

ABOUT CYBER BULLIES

Cyber bullying is when a person uses a computer, cell phone or other device to hurt, embarrass or upset somebody. It may be easier for people who wouldn't normally be bullies in real life to write mean and hurtful things about someone else on a computer because it's not as "real" as saying something horrible to another person's FACE. Although it may *seem* less real, the hurt a cyber bully can cause is *very* real. A cyber bully might send repeated text messages, threatening e-mails or rude instant messages. They might post mean things on websites about the person they are bullying for other people to read. Cyber bullies might pretend to be someone else while online to try to embarrass that person or they could even forward "private" things like e-mails, messages or pictures to other people.

NEVER share personal/private information including passwords, pins, name, address, phone number, school name or family and friend's names. That kind of information can be used by bullies as well as other harmful types of people on the Internet. Passwords and pins should not be shared with friends as they could be used against you if you stopped being friends because of an argument or something. Remember that the real friends we talk to face to face are not the same as the people we "meet" online who we don't really know. When you are using the Internet, be careful and always follow the Online Safety Rule: *"If you're online and something doesn't feel right, LEAVE THE SITE."*

Sometimes no matter how careful you are, something bad might happen. If you are the victim of a cyber bully, TELL an adult right away. Your parent or the grown-up taking care of you might need copies of the things the cyber bully has sent, so don't delete anything, but if you get messages that are angry or mean, DO NOT respond. If someone is being hurtful or nasty on a website or in a chat, leave that site. If you receive unwanted or upsetting instant messages, log out or turn off the computer. Being the target of any kind of bully can make someone feel confused, angry and hurt. It will be important to talk with an adult about those feelings and what steps you might take to stop the cyber bully such as changing cell phone numbers, e-mail address or avoiding websites/chat rooms where you're getting picked on.

It is important to remember that the rules we follow in the real world: being smart and staying safe, acting responsibly, and being kind and respectful to others should be followed online as well.

ABOUT SCHOOL SAFETY

There are lots of things we can do to make school a safer place. Perhaps the first and most important step is to choose to settle disagreements without violence. There will always be times when two people (or groups of people) will not agree with one another. Those times of disagreements will test the ability of everyone involved to find ways to talk it out, work it out, or walk away and let it go.

We can also refuse to bring weapons to school, refuse to carry weapons for others, and refuse to keep silent about those who carry weapons. No one wants to be looked upon as a “tattletale”, but it’s important to remember that crimes, suspicious behavior, or threats of violence put everyone in danger and *must be reported immediately* to school authorities or police.

We can set good examples for our friends by helping others solve conflicts without violence. This is sometimes called “peer mediation” or “peer counseling.” Some schools even have youth courts where students hear cases and serve as judges, prosecutors, juries, and defense counsel, just like in a real court of law.

Often, adults will use the term “peer pressure” to mean something that has a negative effect on young people-when kids feel compelled by friends or others their own age, their peers, to do things that are wrong. But we can also use “positive peer pressure” to accomplish GOOD. The more students are willing to reject violence, weapons, and acts that hurt or endanger others, the more likely your school will be a positive place where kids feel safe to make friends, play, and learn, too.



Kids on the Block

Bullies and School Safety Script Summaries

“I like Myself by Karen” Beaumont

“At once silly and serious, this exuberant ode to self esteem is sassy, soulful – and straight from the heart.”

Throughout this book we are reminded to like the little things about ourselves like our eyes, ears, nose, fingers and toes; but we also need to like ourselves on the inside, too, for all the things we think, say and do. This book reminds children and adults alike that we shouldn't care what someone else may think or say. Even when we look a mess, we still don't like ourselves any less.

It is important for our well-being to have high self-esteem and to like ourselves for what makes us unique. This book is used alongside questions for children to help them think about their physical and emotional selves and point out aspects of themselves that they like or what makes them special. This book and the message being delivered are also utilized through questions to help children think about the unique characteristics they like about others around them. Lastly, this text is used to help children recognize and understand the impact of being kind to one another.

“Lucy and the Bully” by Claire Alexander

“Lucy loves everything about school – except Tommy, who is a bully. Tommy rips her books and breaks her things, and he told her not to tell – or else! Now every day she comes home scared and sad. What can Lucy do? And who can Lucy tell?”

Lucy is afraid that telling her Mom or teacher she will make everything worse but does eventually tell her Mom about Tommy putting a hoof-print in her cake. Mom calls Lucy's teacher and Lucy is very scared but the next day she hears Tommy's Mom explaining that he would not like it if someone was mean to him. That day Tommy seems sad, but Lucy sees him drawing a great porcupine and decides she wants to tell him exactly what she thinks about it! Lucy's act of kindness helps Tommy apologize for all the mean things he has said and done to Lucy. Maybe he was just feeling jealous or bad about his own abilities.

Claire Alexander's simple story and bright illustrations will help young children talk openly about bullying and reassure them that telling an adult is the only way to help stop a bully situation; that being kind to others can help you open doors to people, even if they are not so kind to you, and helps us all become the best versions of ourselves.

“Safe At School”: Puppet Show

Mika tells the group about his friend Donte who is getting picked on by Mitchell on the playground. Mika sees that and how everyone in their class is standing around watching. Mika decides he can help his friend by hollering loudly for Donte to come play with him by the swings; this distracts the bully and Donte is able to get away. Mika and Donte talk about all the things Mitchell has been doing, Donte doesn't want to tattletale on anyone but Mika talks him into telling his Dad in order for him to get help. The difference between tattling and reporting is explained. Donte's Dad praises Donte for having the courage to tell him what's been happening and ensures he is there to help. Donte's dad gives Donte advice on how to stand up to a bully:

- A. Ignore him. Most Bullies just want attention, but if that doesn't work then...
- B. Tell him to stop in a firm tone. It's ok to tell someone that they are not being nice and that their words can hurt. If it keeps happening then you know it is time to...
- C. Walk away and tell a grown-up. Once you tell it becomes a shared problem that can be solved.

Donte feels better knowing he has a good plan of action on how to stand up for himself. Mika shows the audience that standing up for a friend or someone in need is a whole lot better than being apart of the crowd that just stands around watching.

Interactive Game Play Kids have a chance to practice what they've learned in the form of group game play where they can decide what the right thing to do is in different scenarios given.

INDICATORS of CHILD ABUSE and NEGLECT

Type of Abuse	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Abuse	Unexplained bruises and welts Human bite marks Bald spots Unexplained burns: Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso Unexplained fractures Unexplained lacerations or abrasions	Wary of adult contact Apprehensive when other children cry Behavioral extremes: Aggressiveness or Withdrawal Overly compliant Afraid to go home Reports injury by parents Exhibits anxiety about normal behavior (i.e., napping) Complains of soreness and moves awkwardly Destructive to self and others Early to school or stays late as if afraid to go home Accident prone Wears clothing that covers body when not appropriate Chronic runaway Cannot tolerate physical contact or touch.
Physical Neglect	Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods Unattended physical problems or medical needs Abandonment Chronic Lice Distended stomach, emaciated	Begging or stealing food Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep in class States there is no caretaker at home Frequent school absences or tardiness Destructive School dropout Early emancipation from family
Sexual Abuse	Difficulty in walking or sitting Torn, stained or bloody underclothing Pain or itching in the genital area Bruises or bleeding in external genitals, vaginal or anal areas Frequent urinary or yeast infections Frequent unexplained sore throat Encopresis (involuntary soiling) Enuresis (inability to control urination)	Unwilling to participate in certain physical activities Sudden drop in school performance Crying with no provocation Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge Anorexia Sexually provocative Poor peer relationships Reports sexual abuse by caretaker Fear of or seductiveness toward males Suicide attempts Chronic runaway Early pregnancies
Emotional Maltreatment	Speech disorders Lags in physical development Failure to thrive Asthma, severe allergies or ulcers Substance abuse	Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.) Conduct disorders Neurotic traits Behavior extremes: Compliant, passive Aggressive, demanding Overly adaptive behavior Inappropriately adult Inappropriately infantile Delinquent behaviors

Reporting suspicions of child abuse and neglect is mandatory in Kentucky and Ohio!



To report suspected child abuse or neglect:

KY: Call Centralized Intake 859-292-6550 (weekdays)
 Call 877-KY SAFE 1 (statewide hotline—nights/weekends)

OH: Call 513-241-KIDS

*For information on child abuse prevention, education or treatment services
 Contact Family Nurturing Center at 859-525-3200 or visit www.familynurture.org.*