



Bully Prevention Initiative

The 2008 Legislature amended the anti-bullying statute and effective July 1, 2008, requires school districts to adopt and implement a plan to address bullying and cyberbullying; adopt policies prohibiting bullying and cyberbullying on school property, in school vehicles, or at school-sponsored activities; and include provisions for training and education of staff and students.

Wichita Public Schools' plan consists of four components.

The development of a common definition of what constitutes bullying behavior:

Bullying is purposeful behavior that intends to cause harm or distress. It is usually repeated over time and occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power.

Implementation of curriculum materials:

Curriculum materials and other resources on bullying are available for check out through the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. Contact your Drug and Violence Prevention Specialist @ 973-2260 for suggestions and assistance.

Mandatory training for all administrators, staff, and students:

In the spring of 2008, all administrators and staff were trained in recognizing and responding to bullying. Beginning in the fall of 2008 annual Bully Prevention training, which focuses on understanding the definition of bullying, appropriate responses and possible consequences, is mandatory for all staff and students.

A media campaign to provide information to parents and community members:

A variety of media tools including magnets, posters and brochures are being distributed to the schools as part of this prevention campaign.

We teach math and reading with daily instruction. Yet we somehow think students can learn how to get along with each other merely by being thrown together at school. Some do...but many more students would get along if schools made problem-solving and pro-social skills part of the curriculum. (Elliot Aronson, 2000)

TRY IT!

Want to reduce bullying behavior and improve your school's climate?

- Ask each administrator, teacher and staff member to be in the hallways before school.
- Greet each student by name and shake hands.
- Take time to visit with a student about something that interests him or her.

Cyberbullying

STOP, BLOCK and TELL

Cyberbullying occurs when a child is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to have a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor. Cyberbullying is usually not a one time communication.

If targeted by a cyberbully...

STOP!

Don't do anything. Take 5 to calm down.

BLOCK!

Block the cyberbully and limit all communication to those on your buddy list.

TELL!

Tell a trusted adult. You don't have to face this alone.

Report cyberbullying to: www.wiredsafety.org

Source: www.stopcyberbullying.org/

Reporting

A Change of Perspective



In our culture, we start teaching our children very early not to “tattle.” As our kids get older, they teach each other not to “snitch” or “rat.” Further, this is considered a survival tactic in some of our neighborhoods and is reinforced by parents. In order to effectively address bullying we have to teach when and how to report, and we need to allay fears by letting those who report know how the report will be handled.

Especially in bullying cases, reports don’t get made because of the fear of retaliation. Victims don’t report because they’re afraid of further attacks from the bully, bystanders don’t report because they don’t want to become the target of the bully or have their social status threatened, and parents don’t report because they don’t want their child dealing with reprisal from the bully. Following are suggestions for working toward change.

1. Make reporting acceptable in your school’s culture.

- Students need to hear from the principal that reporting is acceptable and expected.
- Teachers need to know how to handle reports and should reiterate expectations in their classroom.
- Inform parents in a manner that doesn’t compete with other school news, such as in a letter home.

2. Tell all stakeholders in bullying cases, information will be confidential.

- Let reporters know that when you talk with the bully or *anyone* involved, that you will use the phrase, “I have received a report . . .” and that the reporter’s name will remain confidential.
- If the name of the reporter is requested, explain that in cases where retaliation is a concern, the reporter’s name is not shared. If the reporter is an adult witness, and it is safe to share the information, then it is appropriate to share.

3. Follow up!

- Let the reporter know that you will follow up once you have addressed the issue, and give an estimated time as to when you will do so. Do this no matter who the reporter is, and do this even if your only role will be to pass the information on to the appropriate person.
- Let the reporter know that you have every expectation that once the issue is addressed, there will be no further issues, but sometimes there are, and you want them to report again.
- Once you have addressed the issue, make a point to check with those involved to make sure that there have been no further problems.
- Be thorough.
- Talk with bystanders whenever possible; get written reports about what went on. Take the opportunity to discuss that if they join in, they are bullying, too. Discuss with them ways they can help the situation.
- Let the teachers of all students involved know to be on the look-out. Follow up with hall monitors and playground supervisors, so they can be even more vigilant.

Best Practice

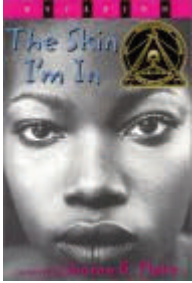
A major advance in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support. These systems include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments.

Attention is focused on creating and sustaining primary, secondary, and tertiary systems of support. These systems improve lifestyle results for all children by making problem behavior less effective and desired behavior more functional.

For more information on the Positive Behavior Supports model, including a free manual on bullying prevention visit the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports website at <http://www.pbis.org/main.htm> .

Bibliotherapy

Classroom Resources



The purpose behind *bibliotherapy* is to assist students in overcoming the emotional turmoil related to a real-life problem by having him/her read literature on that topic. The story can then serve as a springboard for discussion and possible resolution of that dilemma. Thus, the adult provides guidance in the resolution of personal crisis through the use of directed readings and follow-up activities. Below are some literature selections, along with a brief summary. Please contact your Safe & Drug-Free Schools Specialist for lesson plans and activity ideas: 973-2260.

Elementary

Recess Queen by Alexis O'Neill

Mean Jean is the reigning Recess Queen that finds herself friends with the puny new girl that catches Mean Jean completely off-guard. Not only is little Katie Sue not the least bit intimidated by Jean, she actually asks her to jump rope with her. In no time flat, Jean and Katie Sue are best buddies, and the playground is safe for all again.

The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes - 1945 Newberry Honor Book

Wanda Petronski, a little Polish girl in an American school, is laughed at because she always wears a faded blue dress, until her classmates learn a lesson.

Middle School

The Misfits by James Howe

Four best friends try to survive the seventh grade in the face of all too frequent taunts based on their weight, height, intelligence, and sexual orientation/gender expression. Motivated by the inequities they see around them, they create a new political party during student council elections and run on a platform aimed at wiping out name-calling of all kinds.

The Skin I'm In by Sharon G. Flake

Maleeka, the narrator of *The Skin I'm In*, is "blacker" than most of her classmates in seventh grade. Teased for her skin color, by pupils who are also "black" - just a little bit less so, she gets frustrated. Miss Saunders helps Maleeka appreciate who she is and stand up to those around her.

High School

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Students call Melinda names and harass her; her best friends from junior high scatter to different cliques and abandon her. A girl at a school pep rally offers an explanation of the heroine's pariah status when she confronts Melinda about calling the police at a summer party, resulting in several arrests. However, readers do not learn why Melinda made the call until much later.

The Queen Geek Social Club by Laura Preble

If you're somebody like Shelby Chappelle, a smart, witty, pretty geek army of one, you can't just put a poster up at school and advertise for somebody to be your best friend. But now freakishly tall Becca Gallagher has moved to town, with her dragon tattoo and wild ideas, and they become best friends instantly. Becca wants to shake things up at school and look for "others of our kind" ...and decides to form the Queen Geek Social Club.

Michael Phelps & Dealing with Bullies



What...???

do I do?

Young Michael Phelps was bullied because of his looks and behavior. He was diagnosed with ADHD; couldn't sit still, focus or be quiet. His mother stated, "he also grew unevenly; his arms were unusually long and made him a target of hurtful, insulting bullying." Because of these struggles, Phelps described himself as, "quiet, introspective and angry growing up, deeply hurt of being bullied by other children."

Ms. Phelps couldn't undo her son's ADHD, or his body type, so she focused on what she could do. She worked with his teachers to make sure they figured out ways to teach Michael successfully. She helped him study and when necessary, found tutors. She also found something he was good at and loved – swimming.

Michael's story should not make us think that being bullied is advantageous because it toughens a kid up or will turn targets into champions. However, it does show that there are many strategies parents can use when their child is bullied.

- Work with your child's teachers.
- With your child, determine where it is safe to be, in school and out.
- Discuss qualities they want in friends and how to respond if friends do not treat them respectfully.
- Together, work on developing social skills that will be appreciated by their peers.
- Help your child determine their interest in activities/hobbies such as sports, music, computer games, and crafts. Help your child find others who are interested in the same activities.
- Discuss how to respond, non-violently, if someone does or says something that is abusive or hurtful. Talk about when to go to you or another trusted adult if the bullying continues.

Source: <http://stopallbullyingnow.blogspot.com/2008/09/michael-phelps-his-mom-and-dealing-with.html>

Resource: www.balanceeducationalservices.com/

The Prevention Chronicle is a publication of the...

Wichita Public Schools - Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

973-2260

www.safeschoolswichita.com (official launch date Jan. 1, 2009)

"My son is regularly bullied at school. I've told him to ignore it and walk away, but that's not working."

"What Do I Do?"

If the bullying has been ongoing, help is probably going to be needed from his administrator. Talk with your son, and let him know that either he can talk with his administrator or you will do it - or you can do it together. He will probably tell you that he's afraid of retaliation, but make it clear to him that what's been done up to now hasn't worked, and that his situation is not acceptable. If he wants to handle it, discuss with him what he will say to the administrator. If he chooses to let you handle it, again, tell him you will use his words, and decide together what you will say.

Beyond the immediate issue, help your child develop self-confidence by getting involved with a group or an activity he is interested in. Talk with him about how he responds to students – bullies or otherwise – and help him to develop ways of answering that are self-assured. You might also check into the book *Don't Feed the Bully* by Brad Tassel.

Parent Tips

Cyberbullying continues to be a serious problem due to the expansion of electronic media and access to the internet. Here are some tips to help protect your children from bullies and online sexual predators.

- Establish clear rules & guidelines
- Keep the computer in a common room
- Familiarize yourself with the internet, know & monitor the sites your child uses
- Remind children to communicate **only** with people who are real-life friends

Source: www.netsmartz411.org