

Bullying In Schools

Fighting the Bully Battle

**Discussion Activities
for School Communities**

National School Safety Center

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Discussion Guide

Understanding, Preventing and Responding to Bullying in School

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BULLYING AND YOU

Memories of school bullying are as different as the people who recall them. You may remember bullying as something that always happened to someone else. Maybe you were the bully, using your size physical strength, sharp tongue, or relationships to terrorize others. Or perhaps you experienced the fear of humiliation and unfairness of being a target of school bullying.

Educators and law enforcement officers assigned to schools have a responsibility and an opportunity to join others in their school community to prevent or reduce school bullying and its consequences.

School staff members, school resource officers, students and parents who do not tolerate bullying:

- validate and promote the dignity and worth of every student.
- model respect and concern for others.
- take a stand against injury and violence.
- promote a safe and effective school.

UNDERSTANDING BULLYING

Over time, most students are involved with teasing or aggressive behaviors as either a perpetrator or a target. The prevalent and intermittent nature of this fact feeds the notion for many people that school bullying is a natural part of growing up.

It is important to distinguish between occasional taunts, aggressive behaviors, and injured feelings that sometimes happen in the course of a school day and the pattern of negative and repeated behaviors that define the problem we know today as bullying.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is any hurtful or aggressive act toward an individual or group that is intentional and repeated. There is typically a real or perceived imbalance of physical power, a social network, or verbal skills that favor the perpetrator/s.

Dr. Ken Rigby, a researcher in the area of school bullying, proposes a more specific definition to leave no doubt about the kinds of behaviors being addressed when the term bullying is used. The following definition can be found on Dr. Rigby's web site entitled "Bullying in Schools and What to Do About It" (www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/):

“Bullying involves: a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typically) repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.”

WHAT DO BULLIES DO?

Bullying behaviors fall into two basic categories, direct or indirect. Direct bullying behavior is more physical or verbal in nature than indirect bullying behavior. The following behaviors fit this category:

- Punching, poking, pinching, shoving, hitting
- Choking, biting, spitting
- Ganging up or cornering
- Calling names or insults, threatening
- Playing mean or embarrassing tricks or telling cruel jokes
- Touching, propositioning, or assaulting in sexual ways
- Taunting and teasing about race, religion, disabilities, or social status.

Indirect bullying behavior is more emotional or passive-aggressive in nature than direct bully behavior. The following behaviors fit this category:

- Isolating, rejecting, excluding, or blackmailing
- Ranking or rating
- Giving hateful looks
- Using indecent gestures
- Passing insulting or humiliating notes
- Writing hateful graffiti
- Spreading hurtful rumors or gossip
- Manipulating peer relationships
- Demanding servitude, money or property.

WHY DO BULLIES BULLY?

Students who bully are typically more aggressive in nature. They tend to be more impulsive and tolerant of violence. Their bravado is fueled by physical strength or a strong social position. Bullies fully recognize and use their physical, social or emotional power over others.

Boys or young men tend to be involved with bullying more often than girls. They can either be perpetrators or targets.

Of course, for every rule there is an exception, and for that reason it's important to remember that bullies come in both genders and all shapes and sizes. Even a student who is small in stature can manipulate others to bully with or for him, if he has the right skills and social power or position. There is probably no one factor alone that determines the behaviors of a bully. There are, however, a number of influences that could be a part of the bigger picture of why some students bully.

Families play a role as they model the first relationships in a child's life. A family that tolerates and uses bullying as a relationship style teaches a child that bullying is an acceptable way to relate to others and to get what one wants or needs.

Media images and messages contribute to the idea that bullying humor is both popular and acceptable. “Real TV” and entertainment programming, shock radio jocks, and popular movie and video game characters are often admired for the ways they embarrass, humiliate, or destroy others. Images of violence in the media frequently condone violent and abusive behaviors in real-life relationships.

Peer norms are a negative influence when they promote the idea, actively or passively, that bullying is “no big deal” and acceptable to others. Most peers, unless they are taught otherwise, will stand by and, through their silence, conspire with those who bully.

WHAT ABOUT TARGETS OF BULLYING?

The negative emotions associated with being a target of bullying are:

- Fear
- Anger or frustration
- Helplessness
- Humiliation
- Rejection, isolation or persecution
- Loneliness
- Hopelessness
- Anxiety

The short-responses and long-term effects of students who are the targets of school bullying are well documented. Some of the immediate responses might be:

- Failing school work
- Becoming ill
- Displaying unexpected mood swings or withdrawal
- Having trouble concentrating or losing interest in school
- Arguing or fighting
- Changing friends or social groups
- Reporting harassment
- Displaying suspicious bruises or scratches
- Frequently losing money or property
- Avoiding lunch time, recess, social activities or specific students or groups

Over time, the effects of bullying might result in:

- Diminished interest in school
- Depression
- Truancy or dropping out
- Discipline problems
- Withdrawal
- Lowered self-esteem or loss of pride
- Personal blame
- Bullying others
- Plans for retaliation or acts of revenge
- Violence against others
- Running away
- Attempted or successful suicide

WHAT HAPPENS TO STUDENTS WHO BULLY?

As time passes, a bully can progress toward a number of ends:

- A bully might be identified by a caring adult and mentored in the attitudes and relationship skills that curb or replace bullying behaviors.
- A bully’s behaviors may be short-circuited by a school-based bullying prevention program, peer norms that do not tolerate bullying and a system of social support.
- The lack of school programs or support systems to help a bully could result in a lifetime of bullying behaviors

or even criminal activity.

- For the bully who is motivated by severe mental health problems, the failure to be identified, diagnosed and treated could mean serious trouble and consequences for the entire school community.

HOW CAN SCHOOL BULLYING BE PREVENTED OR DIMINISHED?

Most experts agree that the following list of elements is part of any successful program that prevents or responds to school bullying:

- A school community committed to promoting a safe and welcoming school for all students
- Partnerships with key stakeholders.
- District policies that define and promote bully-free schools
- School site safety assessment
- School and classroom rules against bullying
- Teacher and staff training
- Awareness building activities for students and families
- A classroom anti-bullying curriculum (prevention, intervention and advocacy)
- Support programs for both students who are targets of bullying and bullies
- Mental health services and resources
- Law enforcement services and resources.

CAN TALKING ABOUT BULLYING HELP?

The answer is yes! Talking about key safety issues and challenges can emphasize their importance and build awareness. It can also influence the resolution of safety problems. Communication among children, youth and adults can help build understanding, rapport, and ultimately partnerships that can help make a school safe, welcoming and effective for all students.

Statistics show that children and youth who communicate with parents, teachers and caring adults are less likely to become victims of school violence. Statistics also show that those who are victims say they feel isolated from responsible adults.

While young people are likely to share what it is like to not be talked to, listened to or understood, these are not problems that are uniquely theirs. Our own personal sense of community and connection is challenged when we lose touch with others, their knowledge, their perspectives and their basic wants and needs.

Chalk talk (conversations or informal presentations about key social issues) respond to the need for dynamic dialogue about school safety issues. For school resource officers, chalk talks can be used in the classroom setting with students or as presentations for staff training and parent outreach.

Conversations about bullying can help when they are used to:

- assess the problem of bullying at a school site
- build awareness about bullying and its consequences
- promote a school community's value for a bully-free school
- teach students, staff and parents about bullying and its consequences
- build student norms that value a bully-free school
- solve problems that are a part of bullying
- communicate rules against bullying
- communicate and enforce laws that relate to bullying
- intervene against acts of bullying
- support students who are targets of bullying
- intervene on the bullying behaviors of perpetrators, as well as identify, refer, diagnose and prescribe treatment in severe cases
- model respectful and tolerant attitudes and words
- build partnership to prevent and respond to bullying.

Classroom Chalk Talk: Talking About Bullying

Using the following “Chalk Talk” lesson, a teacher or a school resource officer can open, lead and guide viable discussions that will promote a school where bullying is not tolerated.

- ✓ Review and modify the steps and activities of “Chalk Talk” to meet the needs of your school community.
- ✓ Review the “Guidelines for Leading Student Discussions about Bullying” found on page 21.
- ✓ Review the “Roles of the School Based Law Enforcement Officer in Bullying Prevention” found on page 22.

Time: 45-50 Minutes

Materials:

- Student Activity Sheet (Use this model to create an advocacy activity for your school and students.)
- Chalk and chalkboard (Use the chalkboard to list student’s responses to questions posed.)

Purpose of the Chalk Talk:

To provide students with the opportunity to:

- define and build an understanding of bullying and its consequences
- build empathy classmates who are bullied
- explore peer norms regarding bullying behaviors
- deliver a no-bullying message
- promote the reporting of bullying
- identify sources of support and help
- identify the rewards of having a school where bullying is not tolerated
- help students to advocated for a school where bullying is not tolerated

STEP 1: *STUDENTS BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING
ABOUT BULLYING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES*

Ask & discuss: What is teasing? (Write the word “teasing” on the board.)

Summarize:

- Teasing makes fun of a person or something about them. It can hurt a person’s feelings. Kids who tease might say they didn’t mean it or they were just playing or kidding around. Some kids will that teasing is no big deal. Most kids are sorry for the kind of teasing that hurts someone’s feelings.
- Teasing, when it doesn’t hurt feelings, can be a way of showing friendship or that you like someone and want to get their attention.

Ask & discuss: What is bullying? (Write the word “bullying on the board.)

Summarize:

- Sometimes ideas about teasing and bullying get mixed up.
- Bullying is different and more serious than teasing. When a person bullies someone, they mean to hurt that person. They also bully them over and over. They know they are stronger than the other person. They may be bigger, older or have friends who will bully with them. They might have a place or time they bully because they know that no one will be around who will stop them.
- Teasing crosses the line and becomes bullying when it is done on purpose, when it is done over and over again, and when the bully has more power than the person they bully.
- A bully’s power can come from their age, size and strength, intelligence, social status (popularity), economic

status (wealth), and who they know or hang out with. Bullies can use all kinds of power to hurt others.

Ask & discuss: What do bullies do to others?

Summarize:

- Bullies hit, shove, pinch, kick, trip, pull hair, or corner a person. They threaten, say mean or cruel things, use put-downs, start rumors or spread gossip. They can even use mean looks or silence to make a person feel unwelcome or left out. Some bullies use e-mail, text messaging and the Internet to bully.

Ask & discuss: How might a person who is being bullied feel?

Summarize:

- They might feel hurt, sad, embarrassed, afraid.
- They might feel alone or like no one cares about what is happening to them.
- They might feel like they are unsafe or don't belong at school.

Ask & discuss: Why do you think people bully others?

Summarize:

- Bullies do what they do for different reasons. They may not like someone who is different. They might like using or showing off their power. They may have been bullied or are being forced to bully by others. They may think that bullying makes them popular.

STEP 2: *STUDENTS EXPLORE PEER NORMS REGARDING BULLYING*

Ask & discuss: What do you think about bullying?

Summarize:

- The majority of kids believe that bullying is unfair and disrespectful.
- Some kids will say that a person who is bullied deserves what they get. If this is how they think, they are only making excuses for something that is wrong to do to others.
- Some kids may deny bullying is a problem.
- Often kids may not say anything because they are being bullied or are bullying others.

STEP 3: *STUDENTS RECEIVE THE MESSAGE: "BULLYING IS WRONG AND NOT ALLOWED AT THIS SCHOOL"*

Explain:

- Every student has the right to be safe and feel welcomed at this school. Bullying is disrespectful and wrong. "Bullying is wrong and not allowed at this school." (Write this message on the board.)
- When bullying becomes stealing, racial slurs, attacks or threats that involve weapons or other serious acts, it breaks the law.
- At this school, kids who bully will be told to stop and they can be disciplined. In very serious cases, they can be suspended or expelled, placed on probation, placed in juvenile detention or be made to pay serious fines.
- "Bullying is wrong and not allowed at this school."

STEP 4: *STUDENTS LEARN TO ACT TO PREVENT OR REPORT BULLYING*

Ask & discuss: What are some things you can do to avoid or stop bullying at this school?

Summarize:

- Think ahead and steer clear. Avoid situations where you might be bullied.
- Choose not to bully others. Let others know you think bullying is wrong.
- Ask for help. Report bullying when it happens to you or others.

Explain:

- Asking for help with a bullying problem is sometimes a hard thing to do. You may feel embarrassed, or maybe someone has threatened you not to tell. Asking for help is the safe and smart thing to do. Until bullying is reported, nothing can be done about it.
- Do not risk doing anything that could make the situation worse, or get you and others hurt.

STEP 5: *STUDENTS IDENTIFY SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND HELP FOR BULLYING PROBLEMS***Ask & discuss: Where can you go for help with a bullying problem?****Summarize:**

- A friend
- Your parents
- A teacher or other caring adult at this school.

Explain:

- Along with all the other people you named, you can come to me. I will help you to be safe and respected at this school.

STEP 6: *STUDENTS IDENTIFY THE REWARDS OF HAVING A SCHOOL WHERE BULLYING IS NOT TOLERATED***Ask & discuss: What would be the rewards of having a school where bullying is not tolerated?****Summarize:**

- Kids would feel safe.
- Kids would feel like they belonged.
- Kids would feel comfortable enough to learn and try new things.
- Kids would learn how to treat others now and in the future.

STEP 7: *STUDENTS ADVOCATE FOR A SCHOOL WHERE BULLYING IS NOT TOLERATED***Create and Share:**

- Explain that when a person believes in something, it's natural to want to tell others about it. This is called "advocating." Share that they are going to have the chance to advocate for a bully-free school.
- Give each student a copy of the No Bullying at Our School activity sheet. (Use the sample activity sheet on the following page or design a students advocacy activity sheet for your students.)
- Help the class choose a place to post their sheets for other students to read.

STEP 8: *SUMMARIZE AND CLOSE THE CHALK TALK*

- Using the notes on the chalk board, review key points of discussion.

Student Activity Sheet: No Bullying at Our School

_____ wants a school where bullying doesn't happen.
(Name of student)

I think bullying is wrong for these 3 reasons.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

When a person is bullied, it can make them feel:

When a school does not tolerate bullying, it is a place where kids:

Three things you and I can do to help make this school safe and comfortable for everyone:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Chalk Talk for School Staff or Parents: Talking About Bullying

Using the following “Chalk Talk” lesson, an educator or school resource officer can open, lead and guide viable discussions with parents or the school staff that will promote a school where bullying is not tolerated for all students. This presentation is an outreach piece — a companion to the Chalk Talk for Students presented on the previous pages. The message that “Bullying is wrong and not allowed at this school” will be stronger if the entire school community is educated and committed to providing a safe school.

- ✓ Review and modify the steps and activities of “Chalk Talk” to meet the needs of your school community.
- ✓ Review the “Roles of the School Based Law Enforcement Officer in Bullying Prevention” found on page 22.

Time: 45-50 Minutes

Materials:

Bully Fact Sheets for School Staff or Parents (to be developed for your particular district and audience)
Chalk, chalkboard

Purposes of the Chalk Talk

To provide a school staff or parent community the opportunity and support to:

- personalize the topic and feelings associated with bullying
- explore adult norms regarding bullying
- build a value for having a bully-free school
- build understanding regarding the acts, influences and consequences of bullying
- identify and promote current policies, rules and laws related to bullying
- engage support for bully-free schools

STEP 1: *THE AUDIENCE PERSONALIZES THE TOPIC AND FEELINGS OF BEING BULLIED*

Ask & discuss: Can you remember a time when you were bullied or a time when someone hurt your feelings, embarrassed or humiliated you, or perhaps threatened and scared you?

Summarize:

- The feelings you remembered are the same kinds of feelings that kids have today when they are bullied.
- The feelings become stronger when a child is hurt in physical ways.
- The feelings become overwhelming when a child is threatened not to tell.
- The feelings become more serious when a child feels like no one cares about what is happening or that they don’t belong at a school.

STEP 2: *THE AUDIENCE BUILDS THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT BULLYING AND ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES*

Ask & discuss: What is bullying? (Write the word “bullying” and the formula on the board as you present the points that follow.)

Intent to hurt + Power to hurt + Hurtful action +
Repetition (most of the time) + Secrecy (most of the time)
= Bullying

Summarize:

- Sometimes ideas about teasing and bullying get mixed up.
- Bullying is different and more serious than teasing. When a person bullies someone they:
 - Intend to hurt the person.
 - Know they are stronger than the person they want to hurt. They might be bigger, older or have friends who will bully with them.
 - Typically hurt a person over and over again.
 - Sometimes do it in places or in ways they won't get caught.

Explain:

- Feeling scared, humiliated, or unsafe at school is not right, fair, or healthy for any child.
- One of the most important things teachers, a school staff or parents can do is to think seriously about bullying. If we think that bullying is harmless fun or is "just a part of growing up," we need to change our ideas. Bullying is unhealthy, unsafe and unacceptable at this school or anywhere.

Ask & discuss: What do bullies do to others? (Write responses on the board.)

Summarize:

- Bullies can bully directly and indirectly.
- Bullies hit, shove, pinch, kick, trip, pull hair or corner a person. They threaten, say mean or cruel things, use put-downs, start rumors or spread gossip. They can even use mean looks or silence to make a person feel unwelcome or left out.
- Bullies can use e-mail, the Internet or other technology to bully.

Ask & discuss: How might a child who is being bullied feel? (List feelings on board)

Summarize:

- They might feel hurt, sad, embarrassed, afraid.
- They might feel alone or like no one cares about what is happening to them.
- They might feel like they are unsafe or don't belong at school.
- A bullied child might also feel: depressed, anxious, restless, unsure, confused, distracted, ashamed, upset, furious, miserable.

Ask & discuss: Why do you think people bully others?

Summarize:

- Bullies do what they do for different reasons. They may not like someone who is different. They might like using or showing off their power. They may have been bullied or are being forced to bully by others. They may not know bullying is wrong.

Additional summary points for school staff regarding why people bully

- No school or classroom rules exist that specifically ban bullying.
- Rules banning bullying may not be clearly communicated to staff, students, or parents.
- Existing rules are not consistently enforced.
- Students have not been educated about the topic of bullying.
- Not all staff members intervene on or report bullying behaviors.
- Students may be exhibiting bullying behaviors as part of a more serious problem.

Additional summary points for parents regarding why people bully

- A child may not be aware that bullying is wrong or unacceptable.

- A child may need help coping with an academic or social problem.
- A child may be the target of bullying and is bullying back.
- A child may need help understanding and respecting others who are different.

Ask & discuss: What are some of the consequences of bullying when it happens in a school?

Summarize:

- Students are not comfortable to learn and do their best.
- Students may feel unsafe and begin to avoid school.
- Parents want solutions.
- A school may gain a reputation for its bullying problems.
- A bullying problem may escalate into very serious acts of violence.

Explain:

It's important to know that bullying breaks the law when it becomes: extortion, theft, verbal assault, battery, weapons, possession, murder, arson, hate acts or crimes, hazing, sexual abuse or harassment, rape or a violation of civil rights.

STEP 3: *THE AUDIENCE IDENTIFIES EXISTING AND FUTURE PRACTICES
THAT WILL HELP PREVENT AND RESPOND TO BULLYING*

Ask & discuss: What things are you doing now that help prevent and respond to bullying? (List responses on the board.)

Ask & discuss: What are some things you would like to start doing to prevent or respond to bullying? (List responses on the board.)

Summarize:

Summary points for school staff

You may already be doing or want to do the following:

- Communicating and consistently enforcing rules regarding bullying.
- Presenting programs and activities that teach students about bullying.
- Providing bullying education programs for parents.
- Providing support programs for students who are targets of bullying.
- Providing intervention programs for students who bully.
- Having a system of identification and referral for serious cases.
- Promoting awareness and understanding that every staff member on a site can intervene and report bullying.

Summary points for parents

You may already be doing or want to do the following:

- Teaching your child about bullying and its consequences.
- Thinking about the relationships styles in your family.
- Keeping open communications with your child about their school day and experiences.
- Communicating with the schools regarding bullying problems.

Ask & discuss: What are the rewards of having a school where bullying is not tolerated? (Write responses on the board.)

Summarize:

- Students that are safe, accepted and respected.
- Students are able to concentrate and do their best.
- A school that has a reputation for being safe and effective.
- Students who need special help are identified and served.

STEP 4: *CLOSE THE PRESENTATION AND DISTRIBUTE THE BULLYING FACT SHEET***Summarize:**

Using the notes on the chalkboard, review key points of the discussion.

Explain:

One of the most powerful ways we can deliver the message that bullying is wrong and unacceptable is by modeling respectful behaviors everyday in our own relationships with our children or students and other adults.

Share:

- Chalk Talk presentations about bullying are available and will be provided to students, parents and school staff.
- Distribute a “Bullying Fact Sheet for School Staff” (or Parents) that you can develop based on the information contained in this Chalk Talk. (Samples can be found on the next pages) Take this opportunity to create a flyer or basic bullying information sheet to meet the needs of your district or school.

Bullying Facts for Teachers and School Staff

What is Bullying?

Bullying is any hurtful or aggressive act toward a person or group of people that is done on purpose and is done over and over again. **Bullying is cruel, disrespectful and not allowed at this school.** Some acts of bullying break laws when they become extortion, battery, sexual abuse or hate behaviors.

A school that tolerates bullying, tolerates violence.

What do Bullies Do to Others?

An individual or group can bully using actions or words. They might:

- punch, hit, pinch, shove, choke, or bite.
- corner a person, ruin their belongings or take their money.
- give dirty looks, or ignore a person or leave them out.
- call names, use put-downs, or threaten people.
- write nasty notes or start rumors
- make fun of a person's looks, religion, family, or problems.
- use e-mail, text messages or the Internet to bully others.

How does Bullying Hurt Students or a School?

Targets:

- are emotionally or physically hurt
- feel afraid, lonely, embarrassed or humiliated
- sometimes avoid school
- may decide to get even and bully back

Bullies:

- may grow up to be adult bullies
- may miss out on learning
- may become involved in criminal activity

Bystanders:

- may worry that they may be the next target
- assume that no one cares
- may participate in the bullying or risk defending the target

What Can I Do About Bullying?

- Send the message: "Bullying is not allowed."
- Stop it when you see it happening. Report it.
- Be someone who students can talk to.

Think About It

What is my responsibility to prevent and respond to bullying?

Bullying Facts for Parents

What is Bullying?

Bullying is any hurtful or aggressive act toward a person or group of people that is done on purpose and is done over and over again. **Bullying is cruel, disrespectful and not allowed at this school.** Some acts of bullying break laws when they become extortion, battery, sexual abuse or hate behaviors.

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What Can I Do About Bullying?

- Teach your child that bullying and any kind of harassment are wrong.
- Talk with your child about his/her friends and things that happen at school.
- Help your child report bullying.
- Work with the school to resolve bullying issues.

Think About It

What has your child learned about bullying at home?



When Manners Matter:

Can good manners help keep schools safe?

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Do complex problems always need complex answers?

In today's schools, a great deal of time and energy are expended in the search for programs and strategies that promote the safety of students and staff. The trend for using research-based curriculums, blueprint programs, or promising practices is important. But is it possible that in our search for answers to complex school safety problems that we have grown accustomed to complex answers? Is it possible that we are overlooking less complex strategies that can springboard from the principles, ideas, and practices that are already innate to us as human beings, friends, citizens, colleagues, families, and school communities?

Why do manners matter?

Stop for a moment to ask yourself the following questions about manners:

- How do you react when others say please, thank you, or excuse me; offer help or a sincere apology; or hold open the door for you?
- How do you feel when you use good manners?
- Can using good manners help children, youth, and adults feel more confident or help them to be more successful?
- Can good manners make others feel comfortable, respected, or valued?
- Can using good manners help set the tone for amicable relationships with friends or strangers alike?
- What manners do you consistently show or model for others?
- Can good manners be used to communicate, manage tensions, or to help make decisions that can diffuse or deal with difficult situations?
- Could teaching about and modeling good manners for children and youth help make our schools safer?

While the idea of using social manners to promote school safety may seem simplistic, nothing is further from the truth. Take a closer look at why teaching and modeling good manners are valuable to the issue of school safety.

What are manners made of?

Good manners in themselves are made up of:

- codes of conduct or courtesies, social agreements;
- rules to govern respectful communication and actions;
- protocols of deportment, polite ways of social behavior;
- ethics, distinctions of right or wrong;
- skilled dealings with others;
- peace-keeping strategies;
- critical thinking/critical choices;

- consideration, tact, courtesy, discretion, artfulness, finesse, poise, generosity, charm, elegance, and self-discipline;
- responsibility, altruistic inclinations, and empathy;
- diplomacy, inclusion, goodwill, moral strength;
- dignity, integrity, character, fairness, justice, trust, kindness;
- grace, honor, civility; and
- reciprocity and mutual regard.

Not only are good manners valued by many parents and taught in the home, they are valued and rewarded in our larger society as well.

Manners can be taught and reinforced at any school level. They can be introduced, explained, and taught with simple words and actions. Manners are often modeled as a matter of habit by thoughtful adults.

Good manners:

- can help avoid, defuse or deal with difficult or unsafe situations;
- exercise critical thinking and reasoning;
- provide a choice of responses in social settings;
- teach and practice communication, decision making, stress management and advocacy skills;
- are the expressions of trust and respect;
- are the social foundation of professional protocols and diplomacy; and
- can be practiced daily over a lifetime.

A “good manners” approach initiated in the early years and articulated through later school years could provide a school safety strategy that is an integrated, holistic, and preventative approach. Such an approach promotes student and school staff relations built on trust, respect, and mutual regard for others.

Can good manners help keep schools safe?

The answer is yes, if you believe in the power of these words: *Please, Thank you, Excuse me, I’m sorry, and Can I help?* When spoken and acted upon, these words can help shape or transform everyday interactions within a school community into exchanges that reflect care, thought, concern, and respect among students and staff.

The teaching and use of manners in our school communities might possibly deliver more powerful and longer lasting results for school safety than some of today’s popular prevention and intervention programs. Many of these prescribed programs tend to target single or limited grade levels, address single school safety issues, and, in many ways, challenge “real world” schools to maintain fidelity to the program design. A foundation of social practices based on good manners would enhance the success of these prevention and intervention programs.

Can good manners help make our schools more effective?

Again, the answer is yes. It is impossible to separate school safety from school effectiveness. Well-mannered words and actions can help promote peaceful school environments where students feel safe and secure. In such environments, students spend less time feeling anxious, angry, frustrated, or afraid. Students often expend energy trying to avoid danger, hurt, or harm at school or observing such behaviors as they happen to others. Attendance is better at safe schools. In general, parents and the larger community are more positive and supportive of schools with reputations for being focused on student safety, well being, and academic achievement.

Are manners and ethics connected?

The work of the late Harvard psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg helps support the connection between ethics and manners.

Kohlberg was among the first researchers to argue that ethics could be taught. As he delivered his

findings, he reaffirmed that ethics encompass motivations, such as honesty, compassion, and fairness, and that ethics are developed in stages. He concluded that one of the most crucial factors contributing to the development of ethics is education.

Kohlberg found that during the earliest stages of moral development, children depend on adults to model and define a social code of acceptable behaviors. This code of right and wrong ways to treat others could be easily related to a code of good manners. Kohlberg maintained that the rewards and consequences that follow actions such as these would communicate and reinforce core values. In the case of good manners, such values include politeness, respect, and the fair and thoughtful treatment of others.

At the next level of development, Kohlberg found that youth respond to the norms of their peers, families, and society. The degree of loyalty or connection they have for these groups affects the behaviors they adopt. It then follows that teaching about manners would be beneficial in creating and conveying a norm for the dignified treatment of others—a norm or social code that would benefit schools, families, and society in general.

The last stage of moral development has the greatest potential for good. In this stage, an individual moves beyond group loyalties and norms to develop a more universal way of thinking and reasoning. Individuals at this stage promote and act upon more universal ideas, such as justice, human rights, and human well being.

The most enduring issue directing the work regarding ethics has been what role ethics play in living a truly human life. A similar question could be asked about the role that manners play in living a truly human life!

What about manners and different cultures?

A list of values shared by most world cultures includes honesty, truthfulness, generosity, helpfulness, kindness, honor, courage, justice, and tolerance. All of these ideals can be foundational to the value and expression of good manners. The use of manners belongs to cultures that recognize the importance of trust and respect in relationships. Diverse cultures may not display manners, propriety, or etiquette in the very same fashion, but intentions and meanings behind the actions are often very similar if not the same.

What is the most effective manners curriculum?

The most effective curriculum to teach and reinforce manners costs nothing. It is the human curriculum of ideas and actions that are written each day with every well-mannered word and interaction that is modeled and shared with others. Good manners cannot just be a nice idea or thought. Students must see manners applied and the advantages and benefits of using manners collected. They must be able to experience, analyze, and assess the use of manners in their personal lives.

Show your manners!

Manners can be the rules of the road for busy schools. They can help direct social interactions among the students, staff, and school guests. You can promote, teach, and model well-mannered intentions, words, and actions by the following:

At early grade levels

- Begin talking and teaching about manners in the earliest grade possible.
- If you prefer to use a prepared and packaged life-skills curriculum, select one that teaches and promotes the use of good manners, respect for others, or making and keeping friends.
- Stress the use of manners as a tool for keeping oneself and others safe.
- Help students launch a “good manners campaign.”

At middle and high school levels

- Teach about first impressions.
- Use important social events throughout the year to promote the value and use of manners.
- Select curricula that teach and promote personal and social skills.
- Stress the use of critical thinking and manners as a tool for problem solving and managing tensions when appropriate.

- Integrate the idea of manners into discussions about ethics, moral conduct, social values, or codes of right or wrong.
- Offer manners or etiquette workshops for students.
- Stress the value of social graces during activities like proms, community events, job interviews, or part-time employment.

At all grade levels

- Walk the talk. Model thought, care, and consideration in your own interactions with students, parents, and staff members.
- Help students create a code of manners for your school and integrate the code into posters and year-round school activities.
- Promote and share your school code of manners with parents and other members of your school community.
- Dedicate staff meeting time to discussion about the role of manners in helping to keep a school safe. Use the opening questions in this article to prompt discussion.

Teaching, reinforcing, and modeling the daily use of personal manners in our schools provides protocols of kindness and consideration, promotes acts of grace and selflessness, and helps build a sense of connection. Manners provide a choice of responses while demonstrating respect and responsibility. Manners are tools for negotiating and peace keeping. At a minimum, manners can deliver the sense of civility that we often talk about wanting for our students and schools.

Adults: Show your manners at schools!

Use your role as a leader in the school community and your manners to promote professional ethics, protocols of diplomacy, courtesy, and tactful ways for keeping the peace at your school. The following ideas can help.

As a school leader, use professional ethics, poise, and social tact to promote a controlled and peaceful school or diffuse low-threat situations to keep students and your school safe.

As a *problem solver*, urge the use of well-mannered attitudes, words, and actions as peace-promoting strategies.

As a *community liaison*, use your social skills to establish and maintain a rapport with your school community that is built upon respectful attitudes and communication. Promote and protect the dignity of school stakeholders. Model generosity and empathy at every given opportunity.

As a teacher, use the classroom or teachable moments to help students and other staff understand the power of manners in helping keep a school safe and comfortable for everyone.

Use the following prompts to create a mini-presentation for the classroom about manners. Modify the prompts and discussion to meet the needs of your school and grade levels.

Ask and Discuss:

- What are manners?
- Are manners important to have and use?
- In what ways are manners important to you?
- What do people say about someone who has manners?

Build the Power to Act:

- What kinds of attitudes, words and actions show manners?
- What are some examples of manners you use?

Practice:

- Name times and places manners can be used at school.
- Show what these manners look and sound like when used at school.

Problem Solve:

- In what ways could manners help keep us safe at school?

Create and Share:

- Create a list of manners that would help make your school safe.
- How can we share our list of manners with others?

Identify the Rewards:

- What would happen if everyone at our school chose to use manners?

Guidelines for Leading Student Discussions About Bullying

Facilitating a discussion with students regarding bullying at school offers a number of benefits. Both students and staff members who participate are given the unique opportunities to:

- Establish a common definition of bullying
- Express a value for a school that is free of cruelty, harassment, and bullying
- Explore current norms regarding bullying at their school
- Build knowledge and understanding regarding bullying at school and its consequences
- Identify and “name” specific bullying behaviors at school
- Identify safe and respectful ways to deal with bullying at school
- Reinforce the need to report bullying when it happens
- Identify systems of support at school for responding to bullying

Facilitator Tips

Be aware that for some students, bullying can be a difficult subject to discuss with their peers. Some students may not trust that other students view bullying as a serious problem. Some may fear retaliation for expressing their experience and knowledge of bullying.

For some students, the discussion becomes the voices of support they need to do something about the problem. For bystanders, the experience may become a call to action.

Use the following tips to lead a successful discussion about bullying with your students:

1. Be sure to review your school’s rules and policies prior to the discussion.
2. Help students focus on the patterns of behaviors that are defined as bullying.
3. Don’t rush the discussion. Be ready to tolerate silence. Some students need time to reflect and choose their words carefully.
4. Help students summarize their discussions following each question.
5. Give equal “air time” to every student in the group.
6. Gently ask for comments, agreement or disagreement from the quiet members of the group.
7. Immediately stop any put-downs or inappropriate comments during the discussion.
8. Sharing your own experiences with bullying can contribute to the discussion. Some students find it surprising to hear that an adult they know has also experienced bullying.
9. Recognize that this discussion might serve as a confidence builder for students to continue to confide in you or other caring adults about bullying or similar problems.
10. Model respect for student differences.

Roles of the School-Base Law Enforcement Officer in Bullying Prevention

Due to the nature of their standing within the school and the local community, school resource officers have a variety of roles, actions and voices that can be used to promote a school where bullying is not tolerated. Examples include:

The SRO as an Educator

- Use teachable moments to deliver no-bullying messages.
- Offer and accept classroom invitations to teach and talk about bullying to students, staff and parents.
- Promote the message: ***“Bullying is disrespectful, unsafe and not allowed at this school.”***

The SRO as an Enforcer of School Rules and Law

- Be aware of the education codes and district policies that govern your school and address bullying.
- Protect the rights of all students.
- Enforce the law when bullying becomes a criminal activity.
- Promote the message: ***“You cannot ignore an act of bullying that breaks the law.”***

The SRO as a Community Liaison/Problem Solver

- Offer and apply your law enforcement training, experience and resources to help create a bully-free school.
- Apply a problem-solving approach to bullying reduction.
- Promote the message: ***“I will work to help keep your children and your schools safe from bullying.”***

The SRO as a Role Model

- Model the attitudes, words and actions of a respectful and tolerant person.
- Promote the message: ***“I believe that every student has the right to be safe and welcome at school.”***

The SRO as a Youth Advocate

- Become a vigilant observer of the relationships between students and between students and staff.
- Work to build an awareness of bullying and its consequences.
- Promote the message: ***“If you come to me, I will help you be safe and respected at this school.”***

The National School Safety Center

OUR MISSION

The National School Safety Center serves as an advocate for safe, secure and peaceful schools world-wide and as a catalyst for the prevention of school crime and violence. NSSC provides school communities and their school safety partners with quality information, resources, consultation, and training services. The National School Safety Center identifies and promotes strategies, promising practices and programs that support safe schools for all students as part of the total academic mission.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

The National School Safety Center believes that schools have the choice to create and maintain safe schools or to return their institutions to safe, secure and effective places of learning. We believe that this work is best done with the help of school safety partners. We believe that today great opportunities exist to apply the best of school safety research and practices to the vision of safe schools for all students.

WHAT WE DO

The National School Safety Center:

- Advocates for school safety as part of the total academic plan and mission for a safe and effective school.
- Trains educators, law enforcers and other youth-serving professionals in the areas of school crime prevention and safe school planning.
- Presents school safety keynote addresses for local, regional and national conferences and workshops.
- Develops and delivers customized school safety training and services.
- Provides international leadership to the safe school movement through its 21 years of experience in the field of school crime and violence prevention.
- Provides on-site technical assistance to school districts and communities facing significant safe school crises and challenges.
- Assesses school site safety for individual schools or school districts interested in developing or analyzing their school safety plans.
- Provides expert witness and trial consultation.
- Publishes an informative and user-friendly web site.
- Furnishes media commentary, information and resources.
- Produces publications and videos highlighting school safety research, practice, strategies, trends, and resources.

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Meet
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Hilda Clarice Quiroz is a keynote presenter, program developer, training specialist and author for the National School Safety Center. Ms. Quiroz presents at local, regional and national levels. She has written numerous books, articles, pamphlets, and training designs about bullying, hate-bias crimes, school safety, team building and cultural issues. Having teaching experience in both public school and community settings, she serves as a consultant trainer for schools, communities, and law enforcement agencies. She serves as a master trainer for the California Department of Education.

Most recently, Hilda has completed a video about cyber-bullying and a training curriculum and video on the role of schools in homeland security. She received special congressional recognition for her work in the community regarding bullying prevention. She is currently developing a book on bullying. Her current efforts also include the training of more than 6,500 school resource officers and school administrators associated with the federal COPS in Schools Initiative, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Hilda has authored two prevention curricula developed for the Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association: *Welcome to School: Helping Kids Belong* and *Talking About Hate Can Make a Difference*.

Recent participant comments regarding Ms. Quiroz's presentations include:

"An excellent and extraordinary presenter... passionate and honest."

"She opens minds with her approach to training."

"Hilda is an excellent storyteller... thought-provoking and inspirational."

"Her presentation was eye-opening and heartfelt."

"Hilda is an excellent instructor. She is joy to listen to..."

For more information about fees and services, contact NSSC.