

Bullying Prevention: Students Helping Students

Children and youth play a critical role in the prevention of and early intervention in bullying and cyberbullying. There are more students than adults in school; they often see and hear more than any faculty and staff combined. Adults can help to engage their positive actions to make school safe for all by including students at every level of a school's bullying prevention efforts.

All bullying prevention programming relies on students telling a trusted adult when someone is hurt. The daily work of reaffirming relationships between adults and students is the cornerstone for bullying prevention. Adults work with youth and children daily to learn and practice the social skills that are needed to prevent bullying. Here are key elements of bullying prevention programming that adults can work with students on in creating safe learning environments for all.

Establish school-wide behavior expectations. By working with each class or small group of students adults and students can develop the behavior expectations that all people can follow. The process of developing expectations from the classroom up helps to create the buy-in with all students that expectations that are announced will not have. For examples of school-wide expectations as well as bullying prevention using Positive Behavior Supports, [go to the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports' \(PBIS\) national web site](http://www.pbis.org/school/bully_prevention.aspx) (http://www.pbis.org/school/bully_prevention.aspx)

Affirm bullying prevention rules, such as those from the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program ([view rules](http://www.olweus.org/public/school_bullying.page) at http://www.olweus.org/public/school_bullying.page) which lists these four clear directives for all to follow:

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will make it a point to include students who are easily left out.
4. When someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and at home.

Engage Students in Policy Development and Review: Minnesota State statutes regarding school discipline directs school boards to include students in school building discipline policy development (Minnesota Statute 121A.61) and annual review (Minnesota Statute 121A.65). Administrators can solicit feedback on the policy's effectiveness in reducing bullying or helping to stop it through focus groups, surveys, individual interviews or testimonial. Be sure to sample the general student population, as well as students who have experienced bullying and students who have engaged in bullying.

Encourage Individual and Group Efforts to Prevent Bullying: The StopBullying website offers the following suggestions for youth to help prevent bullying. [View the site](http://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html) at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html>.

Bullying is less likely to occur when there are strong messages against it. Work with your school, community, or other groups to create and support these messages:

- *Get involved with your school and community to find ways to prevent bullying.*
- *Create an assembly, performance, or event to spread the message.*
- *Be a leader and teach younger kids that bullying is not okay and that they can stop bullying before it begins. [View further suggestions](http://njbullying.org/documents/lendingahand.pdf) at <http://njbullying.org/documents/lendingahand.pdf>.*

Engage Students in School Climate Programming: Plan public service programming—print ads, video PSA’s, and school-wide actions such as Stop Everything and Dialogue, Flash Mob, Use Another Word or Mix It Up Day.

Stop Everything and Dialogue (SEAD) was developed in a Minneapolis School to help each classroom contribute to a safe school environment by discussing an issue in circle, and then creating posters or other art expressions that could be put up in the hallways as positive advertising. [View an outline of SEAD lessons](http://www.cordeliaanderson.com/SEAD&CircleTools) at <http://www.cordeliaanderson.com/SEAD&CircleTools>.

USE ANOTHER WORD: An Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Campaign
Students from Springfield High School in Oregon were responsible for launching an Anti-Harassment and Discrimination campaign called, “Use Another Word.” [View a description of the development of the campaign](http://education.uoregon.edu/feature.htm?id=1935) at <http://education.uoregon.edu/feature.htm?id=1935>. [View a training video for middle school students to learn to ‘use another word’](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTptZOZuJ7E) at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTptZOZuJ7E>.

Flash Mobs to End Bullying The Albuquerque Public Schools Safe Schools Healthy Student Initiative in New Mexico worked with their County partner and a professional dance studio to create *Flash Mobs to End Bullying*. [View the website](http://www.abqsafeschools.org/dont-just-stand-there) at <http://www.abqsafeschools.org/dont-just-stand-there>.

Mix It Up at Lunch: Mix It Up encourages students to break out of their normal social circles and make new friends. It’s easy to organize. Organized by Teaching Tolerance. [View Mix It Up](http://www.tolerance.org/?source=redirect&url=teachingtolerance) at <http://www.tolerance.org/?source=redirect&url=teachingtolerance>.

Help Students Learn and Practice Intervention Skills: Students need time in class to practice intervention strategies, or to discuss successes and challenges they face in preventing bullying. Here is a list of key actions from **Stopbullying.gov**.

What to Do When Someone is Being Bullied?

- **Take a stand and do not join in.** Make it clear that you do not support what is going on.
- **Do not watch someone being bullied.** If you feel safe, tell the person to stop. If you do not feel safe saying something, walk away and get others to do the same. If you walk away and do not join in, you have taken their audience and power away.
- **Support the person being bullied.** Tell them that you are there to help. Offer to either go with them to report the bullying or report it for them.
- **Talk to an adult you trust.** Talking to someone could help you figure out the best ways to deal with the problem. Reach out to a parent, teacher or another adult that you trust to discuss the problem, especially if you feel like the person may be at risk of serious harm to themselves or others. [View more information](http://www.stopbullying.gov/teens/stand_against_bullying/index.html) at http://www.stopbullying.gov/teens/stand_against_bullying/index.html.

Teach Cyber and Media Literacy: Many students turn to the web for resources. Media literacy lessons can help them learn to evaluate the Web's many sites on bullying. Here are a few to use as examples of useful sites.

PACERS's National Bullying Prevention Center provides resources for adults, teens, schools and children. [View the home page](http://www.pacer.org/bullying/) at <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>.

PACER'S Kids Against Bullying is a creative, innovative, and educational site designed by and for elementary school students to learn about bullying prevention, engage in activities, and be inspired to take action. [View more information](http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/) at link: <http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/>.

PACER's Teens Against Bullying Created by and for teens, it's a place for middle and high school students to find ways to address bullying, to take action, to be heard, and to join an important social cause. [View more information](http://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/#/home) at <http://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/#/home>. The site has a variety of resources including [this document](http://www.pacer.org/publications/bullypdf/BP-17.pdf) (<http://www.pacer.org/publications/bullypdf/BP-17.pdf>): Drama: Is it happening to you? *Advice for teens experiencing bullying.*

The American Psychological Association website has [a bullying help center, with advice for students](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/bullying.aspx). (<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/bullying.aspx>)

The "Stop Bullying Now!" campaign (<http://www.stopbullying.gov/>) was developed by the Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The website has resources for educators, health and safety professionals, parents, children, and the general public.

Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender Health: The CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health has a web page on the topic of LGBTQ youth and bullying. [View the page](http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm) at <http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>.

Safe Schools Coalition (http://safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-bullying_harassment_schoolbasedviolence.html): Resources for students, parents, teachers and administrators on bullying prevention. In English and Spanish.

Encourage Net-etiquette: Students need to discuss and review their own use of the internet and social media. The Internet is a public space, used by everyone—employers, college application

reviewers, military recruiters and old and new friends. Taking the time to clean up one's "virtual house" is as important as cleaning out one's locker. Here are two educational resources from the Washington State Office of Public Instruction regarding personal use of the Internet. [View more information](http://www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/InternetSafety/default.aspx) at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/InternetSafety/default.aspx>.

Mop the Net Day: A school-based opportunity for students to delete, change, modify or otherwise update their online images. The attached materials include a template each for getting ready, spring cleaning, and follow-up. View more information on [Mop the Net Day \(PDF\) \(Word\)](#), [Mop the Net Day - Planning \(PDF\) \(Word\)](#) and [Mop the Net Day - Promise Feedback \(PDF\) \(Word\)](#).

Social emotional learning and cyber literacy are part of a comprehensive bullying and cyber bullying prevention program. Teaching youth social skills and cyber skills by enlisting their knowledge, input and personal experiences will result in safer learning environments, stronger connections between students and adults, and more emotionally literate youth.

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