



INTERVENING: BULLYING SITUATIONS

What's inside?

The following packet contains handy and concise resources that will help you effectively intervene in and follow up on active bullying situations.

Have you ever asked yourself "what do I do in-the-moment when I see bullying happening?" If so, this resource is for you. We have curated a packet of the best tips and tricks to implement in-the-moment when trying to appropriately handle a bullying situation. We hope in using these resources you feel confident and able to effectively intervene and resolve any bullying that may arise in your classroom or school.



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BULLYING BASICS

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when a strong person hurts or frightens a less strong person, on purpose, again and again (or has a strong likelihood of occurring again), and that person who is being bullied cannot easily defend themselves.

REPORTING

Bullying is **very different** than harassment or intimidation. If a student lets you know they are experiencing harassment, intimidation, or physical violence, you will need to **report it to an organizational official**. Even if something was shared in confidence, you are responsible for passing on information if a student's safety is in question. Organization officials will address the issue according to their safety protocols.

LANGUAGE MATTERS

Whenever possible, use terms that describe the "**bullying behavior**" rather than the "bully," so the emphasis is on a action—not the whole person.



INSTEAD OF: "Have you been a bully?"

SAY: "Have you ever engaged in any type of bullying behavior?"

INSTEAD OF: "It seems like she's a bully."

SAY: "It seems that she engaged in bullying behavior by taking the teasing a little too far."

WHY DO PEOPLE BULLY?

WHEN ASKED: "Why do people bully?"

SAY: "There are many reasons, but people who engage in bullying behavior learned how to act that way either through family, friends, or the media. People who bully frequently get pleasure—an emotional payoff—from the student who is being bullied (target) response. So kids who get upset become targets; those who shrug off bullying behavior are left alone."

WHEN ASKED: "How do I defend myself against someone who is bullying?"

SAY: "Your first instinct is to defend yourself—after all, you're being attacked in some way. But research shows that one effective defense, in the moment when bullying is happening, is to show that insults don't affect you. Research also shows that there is power in numbers, and the role of the bystander can impact a potential bullying situation." **Review "WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT..."**



INTERVENING IN A BULLYING SITUATION



Step One

Stop the bullying situation.

Physically separate the students while verbally calling attention to the situation.



Step Four

Empower the bystanders. Show appreciation to the students who supported the person being bullied and equip them with information about how to act in the future.



Step Two

Support the student who has been bullied. Help the person who is going through a traumatic experience in a way that allows them regain control of their emotions.



Step Five

Impose immediate and logical consequences. Give the student who bullied a consequence right away. The consequence will depend on where the incident happens.



Step Three

Address the student who bullied. Use a verbal reprimand and specifically name the bullying behavior. No questions: let them know what you saw.



Step Six

Follow up after the bullying situation. Take steps to ensure that the student being bullied will be protected and that students bullying will change their behavior.



INTERVENING DOS AND DON'TS

STEP	DO	DON'T
 <p>Step One Stop the bullying situation.</p>	<p>Stand between the student(s) who bullied and the student who was bullied.</p> <p>Set ground rules for all participants (e.g. "I want you each to stand here, listen, and not talk.")</p>	<p>Don't get into a physical or verbal tussle with any student.</p> <p>Don't send any students away - especially bystander(s).</p> <p>Don't ask about or discuss the reason for the bullying or try to sort out the facts now.</p>
 <p>Step Two Support the student who has been bullied.</p>	<p>Stand close beside the student who has been bullied.</p> <p>Make minimal eye contact - just enough to gauge their emotions.</p> <p>Consider physically comforting the student (e.g. pat student on the shoulder) only if you think it will not cause embarrassment or loss of control.</p>	<p>Be careful in showing too much overt attention to the student who was bullied. Too much sympathy (when expressed in public) may be uncomfortable to the student.</p> <p>Don't ask the bullied student to tell you what happened.</p> <p>Don't offer lots of sympathy (words of actions) on the spot - wait until later.</p>
 <p>Step Three Address the student who bullied.</p>	<p>State what you saw/heard; label it bullying.</p> <p>State that it is against the rules (e.g. "the words I heard you use are against our rules about bullying.")</p> <p>Use a matter of fact tone to let student(s) who bullied know exactly what behaviors are not okay and why.</p>	<p>Do not accuse - simply state the facts ("I saw..." or "I heard...").</p> <p>Don't engage students in a discussion or argument about the facts. Remind them to listen and not talk.</p>



INTERVENING DO'S AND DON'T'S

STEP	DO	DON'T
 <p>Step Four Empower the bystanders.</p>	<p>Praise bystanders with specific comments about things they did to help, even if they were not effective.</p> <p>If they took no helpful action, use a calm, supportive tone to let bystanders know that you noticed their inaction.</p> <p>If appropriate, suggest something they could do now to help the student who was bullied.</p>	<p>Don't scold bystanders for not getting involved.</p> <p>Don't ask bystanders to state what happened or explain their behavior at this point.</p>
 <p>Step Five Impose immediate and logical consequences.</p>	<p>A verbal reprimand is likely to be the first reaction. In addition, you may want to take away some social opportunities from the bullying students as your role and relationship with them permit.</p> <p>Let the students who bullied know you will be watching them closely to be sure there is no retaliation against the student who has been bullied.</p> <p>If these students are not members of your class, notify their primary teacher so they know what happened and what disciplinary action was taken.</p>	<p>Do not scold.</p> <p>Don't institute a reparation plan on the spot. Follow up later.</p>
 <p>Step Six Follow up after the bullying situation.</p>	<p>Plan a follow-up meeting with the student who was bullied and their parents (as appropriate).</p> <p>Keep an eye on the situation and make sure the student who was bullied knows they should report any future bullying.</p> <p>Try to involve the student with a positive peer group, so they aren't isolated or alone.</p>	

*Materials for this document based on information found at www.stopbullying.gov/respond/on-the-spot



USING VERBAL REPRIMANDS EFFECTIVELY



Intervene Early

Intervene with verbal reprimands as early as possible. It is more difficult to stop a behavior that has "gone too far."



Eye Contact

Look students in the eyes. Encourage those involved to look you in the eyes, as well.



Approach

Approach the students who will be rebuked. Staff members often reprimand students from too far away. If your personal safety is not in danger, then you should be one or two arm lengths away from the student.



Get to the Point

Be brief, clear, and behavior specific. Specific behavior commands makes it easier for the students to comply with your request. For example, "John, you are saying mean things to Emma again. Stop it right now!"



Keep Calm

Use a firm, steady voice to request a stop to the behavior. Make it known that this is a serious issue without getting overly upset or emotional. It is important not to lose control by shouting or making derogatory comments about the students.



Follow Through

Follow through on logical consequences. No "empty threats": do not tell the students they will have a consequence that you would not actually be willing to give. It is important that the students trust that you will do what you say you will do.



WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT...

IS BULLYING OTHERS

Make it clear you take bullying seriously.

Make sure the student knows that this behavior is not okay.

Make rules.

Praise students for following the rules and use nonphysical, logical consequences when rules are broken.

Pay attention.

Keep track of the student's activities and who their friends are. How do they spend their unstructured time?

Encourage positive behavior.

Build on the student's talents and encourage them to get more involved in positive activities.

Share your concerns.

If necessary, share your concerns with your supervisor or principal. Work together to send a clear message to the student that the bullying must stop.

IS BEING BULLIED

Support the student and find out more.

Listen carefully to any details of the bullying incident(s) that the student shares with you and take notes. Don't blame the student.

Help build their resiliency.

As Bruce Lee said, "be like water." Encourage the student's strengths and interests.

Create a safe space.

Make sure you offer the student a safe space to recover and share within the larger school community.

Encourage safety strategies.

There is safety in numbers! Let the student know how to seek out help from fellow friendly peers or teachers.

Share your concerns.

Share your concerns with your supervisor or principal. If appropriate, assist student in finding a mental health professional.

WITNESSES BULLYING

Teach students to intervene.

Encourage students to intervene, not physically, but by using their words if it's safe to do so.

Discourage cheering on or watching.

Let it be known that this sort of behavior only encourages the student who is bullying others.

Encourage communication.

Tell students they should tell a trusted adult about any bullying - it's not tattling.

Reward acts of courage.

Praise bystanders who tried to do the right thing, even if they weren't successful.

Share specific ways students can help.

For example, role-play what students can say or do in bullying situations.

Inspire students to help.

Teach students to empathize with and include those who tend to be left out.



FOLLOW UP INTERVENTIONS: STUDENT WHO WAS BULLIED

CHECKLIST:

1. Choose a private setting.
2. Invite another staff person, if appropriate.
3. Be supportive!

OUTLINE:

Here is an outline of supportive phrases and sentence starters to guide your discussion with a student who was bullied. A more detailed script is provided below.

- "Thank you for being willing to talk with me."
- "I wanted you to know that I heard about the incident involving..." and "This is bullying. We take this seriously."
- "Can you please tell me what happened? Could you talk about what that was like for you?"
- "I'm sorry that this happened, and we want you to know that we will do everything possible to get the bullying stopped."
- "Here are our next steps regarding (the student who bullied you)..."
- "What we've talked about today is confidential, private. What that means for me is..."
- "Please agree to come to me if anything like this happens again."
- "What, if anything, might you need now to feel safe?"
- "Here are some things that will happen next... We'll be contacting your parents to let them know we've talked."
- "I'm going to check in with you in two to three days to see how things are going."
- "Thank you for talking with me."

Consider the student's potential need for counseling/additional referral. Meet with the student to follow up in two to three days.



FOLLOW UP INTERVENTIONS: STUDENT WHO WAS BULLIED

THE SETTING

Meet with the student who has been bullied as soon after the incident as possible. Meet with this student before meeting with the students who bullied. Choose a private, quiet room where other students cannot observe the meeting. Ask the student who was bullied if there is a particular adult that he or she would like to have at this meeting as well. Recognize that this meeting could be difficult for the student. Be supportive!

EXAMPLE DISCUSSION

Note: The following script is meant to serve only as a guide. The script should not be read word for word. Adapt the language to fit the specific situation you are dealing with.

Say: "I heard about (saw) what happened earlier today with your lunch in the lunchroom (cafeteria). I'm very concerned that some students aren't treating you with respect, and I want to find out more about what's been happening and who has been involved. This is bullying, and it's not acceptable. We take this very seriously here and will see to it that it comes to a stop. Could you please talk about what's been going on?"

Get the facts—the who, what, when, where, how often—but also ask open-ended questions that illicit feelings, such as, "What was that like for you?" and "What was your reaction when the other students made those comments to you?"

Say: "I'm so sorry you've had to go through this, and I really appreciate that you're talking to me about it now. We are going to do whatever is needed to put an end to this unacceptable behavior. It's not fair, and we're going to see that we provide whatever support and help is needed so you don't have to put up with it anymore. What we're going to do is talk with the other students who were involved. Please know that we're not going to say that you came to us and told us what happened. The situation has come



FOLLOW UP INTERVENTIONS: STUDENT WHO WAS BULLIED

to our attention by a number of people, and we don't want to make things uncomfortable for you by saying anything about our talk today. This meeting is private. Do you have any questions or concerns about that?"

Say: "There will be some type of consequence for the other student(s). We are going to keep a close watch on the situation so we're aware of these students' actions and so they realize we're very serious about it. We'll also be calling your parents to let them know what happened and that we've talked with you. Thank you, (student's name), for talking with me about this today. Some students don't want to discuss these things because they're afraid they're "tattling." This is not tattling—it's reporting, just as we've asked you to do, and we really appreciate learning more about this situation. Will you please be sure to let me know if there is any other incident that happens with these or other students? It's very important that we keep informed of students' behavior here at school, and we certainly don't want you to have any more bad experiences. So do please come to me or another staff member if anything else happens. Will you agree to do that? (See if student agrees.) Do you have any questions about that?"

Say: "I'm wondering if there is anything we can do to help make things more comfortable for you right now. What do you think is needed in order to address this situation?"

Talk about specific measures that may be needed to ensure the student's safety. Is a "Safety Plan" needed? For example, does he or she need a buddy to walk with him or her to a particular class, to sit with at lunch, or to be with during recess/breaks? Do staff members need to assist the student during recess/break times? From observing the student's demeanor, does it seem like the student could benefit from seeing your school's guidance counselor or social worker? Has the student indicated fear about encountering the bullying students? Has the student indicated that he or she would like an apology?



FOLLOW UP INTERVENTIONS: STUDENT WHO WAS BULLIED

Say: "I'm going to check back with you in two or three days to see how things are going. Is it okay if we meet here again?" (Provide location; approximate day and time; it can help if you give the student who has been bullied some choices.) "In the meantime, please remember to let me know if this happens again. Take care, and I'll talk with you soon."

Discuss the situation with your colleagues. Call the student's parents. Be certain to mark on your calendar to check in with this student in two to three days.



FOLLOW UP INTERVENTIONS: STUDENT WHO HAS BULLIED OTHERS

CHECKLIST:

1. Choose a private setting.
2. Invite another staff person, if appropriate.

THE SETTING

Be sure to talk with the student who has been bullied first. You may want to ask another adult (such as another teacher, guidance counselor, or assistant principal) to be present for the meeting with the student(s) who bullied. Start by talking with the student who took a leadership role in the bullying and arrange for subsequent meetings with the other students who participated in the bullying (the "henchmen"), if there are some, right after. Choose a private, quiet room where other students cannot observe the meeting.

EXAMPLE DISCUSSION

Say: "We know from a number of sources that there are some students who have participated in excluding (name of student who was bullied) from sitting at the lunch table where you were sitting earlier today, and we also know that you knocked her lunch off the table. This is a form of bullying and we do not accept bullying at our school. Is there anything you want to say at this point?"

The bullying student is likely to deny or minimize the situation. Be prepared with facts about this incident and about previous bullying behaviors, and be prepared to discuss these with the student.

If he or she tries to blame this on someone else, you might...



FOLLOW UP INTERVENTIONS: STUDENT WHO HAS BULLIED OTHERS

Say: "Now we're meeting to talk about your behavior."

If the bullying student attempts to justify his or her actions by presenting the behavior of the student who was bullied as irritating or saying he or she "asked for it," you might...

Say: "Bullying is not accepted under any circumstances. If (bullied student's name) needs to change his or her own behavior, we will help with that. If you think that (bullied student's name)'s behavior is unacceptable, come and tell me or another adult. But we are talking about your behavior now, and you must stop bullying (bullied student's name). As a result of this, (name a particular consequence) is going to happen. We will also be calling your parents to let them know what happened and to tell them we met with you. We will be closely watching your behavior and we fully expect you to do better. What do you think is needed in order to address what happened? What can you do to improve the situation?"

Ask the student to talk about changes he or she can make or behaviors that he or she can do to "make amends."

Say: "We're counting on you to make better decisions. If you don't, then there will be more serious consequences. (You might talk about the specific consequences the student will receive if he or she continues this bullying.) Do you have any questions? We're going to check in with you in two or three days to see how things are going."

Quickly arrange meetings with the other students involved in bullying (the "henchmen"). Then talk about the situation with colleagues. Call the students' parents. Be certain to mark your calendar to check in with these students in two to three days.

INTERVENING WHEN YOU SEE BULLYING



1

Stop the bullying situation.

4

Empower the bystanders with appreciation and information.

2

Support the student who has been bullied.

5

Impose immediate and logical consequences.

3

Address the student who bullied: name the bullying behavior

6

Follow up: take steps to make sure student who was bullied will be protected.



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