

GREAT EXPECTATIONS - Eliminate Bullying

Systemic Change

Great Expectations can effect a systemic change in a classroom, in a school, in fact, in a whole school district. This change, which involves students, educators, administrators, school support staff, and parents, imparts importance to all aspects of school. As the Great Expectations philosophy is adopted and woven into every element of each school day, it has the deep benefit of eliminating the problem of bullying.

Culture of Respect

Basic Tenets

In addition to promoting ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, Great Expectations simultaneously focuses on developing a CULTURE OF RESPECT. This positive, safe, nurturing school environment is built, first of all, on one of the basic GE tenets: a **Climate of Mutual Respect**. As students see respect modeled by their teachers and engage in the lessons and discussions on how to treat others, they learn to value their classmate-comrades and do not use their status, physical strength, or force of personality as weapons of intimidation or hostility toward others. Students and educators share ownership in their school community and so experience shared control, shared responsibility, and a shared sense of worth.

"The best way to address bullying behavior is to first have a positive school climate." – Akron Public Schools, "The Educators Guide for School Climate and Bullying Behaviors"

An additional factor, contributing to a Culture where bullying is eliminated, is the basic GE tenet of **Building Self-Esteem**. Harris Clemes and Reynold Bean, two prominent researchers in the field, identified a sense of connectedness as vital in building students' self-esteem (Clemes and Bean, [*Self-Esteem: The Key to Your Child's Well-Being*](#), 1981). Students who struggle with feelings of insecurity and inferiority can be targets for bullies, but healthy self-esteem especially springing from a sense of connectedness can squelch the vulnerability of young people. If each student feels valued by his peers and in return confers a kinship on others in the class, there is a comfortable relief of belonging, and student energies can be focused on meeting educational goals and on positive social interactions rather than on jostling for superiority by bullying others. Additionally, confident students don't become targets for bullies.

"Building your kids' self-esteem is a core component of bullying prevention." – Sherri Gordon, "How Building Self-Esteem Can Prevent Bullying"

Great Expectations Practices

Great Expectations practitioners implement the GE methodology by incorporating [17 Classroom Practices](#) into all facets of their work at school. Many of these practices enhance the opportunities for each student to thrive in a positive, caring, nonthreatening environment carefully developed and maintained by the educators. Students learn that mistakes are okay and view them as opportunities to learn and grow, so it becomes unlikely that they themselves would chide classmates for their shortfalls. Educators provide positive feedback which is never in the vein of ridicule. They engage students personally and make it clear that they hold high expectations of every learner, but those students come to realize teachers are allies in their quest for academic accomplishment. Educators truly become the models of the desired

behaviors and attitudes which students need to adopt for their school careers as well as for their role as valued citizens in society. Educators always stop any behavior which approaches bullying and make it abundantly clear that it is never acceptable.

Great Expectations practices that affect learner conduct have the direct impact of diminishing situations where bullying might occur. First of all, students develop a creed which they recite or reflect upon daily. This ongoing engagement with the high ideals voiced in their creed can lead learners to function on a higher plateau of behavior and thought. Many student creeds include wording indicating only positive treatment of classmates, and as students internalize the intent of the creeds, they learn to live and work with fellow students in a proper manner. They develop a kinship and unity with one another and become sincere in celebrating the successes of classmates.

“We will always be people of integrity.” – Senior Class Creed, Great Expectations high school group

Eight Expectations for Living

In a Great Expectations classroom, the [Eight Expectations for Living](#) replace classroom rules. Learners memorize the expectations, and educators reference them consistently in each instructional exchange; in all routines; and in every activity, event, or recreation. Learners are lead to value one another, to use good manners, to cheer each other to success, and to help one another. They encourage each other to do their best, and they applaud not only successes of their classmates but even their efforts. Especially important to stifling the ugly harm of bullying is the expectation that educators and learners will not laugh at or make fun of a person’s mistakes, nor will they ever use sarcasm or putdowns. These Eight Expectations are truly applicable for living and would eliminate bullying in any realms where they are applied.

Life Principles

Typically, a GE educator will direct students in learning a [life principle](#) each week and in internalizing that characteristic in their personal habits of life. These traits of character, which include charity, common sense, compassion, courage, courtesy, empathy, and so on, build a core of integrity in the student body which suppresses negative behavior such as intimidation, hostility, degrading and humiliating others, violent or aggressive acts, and disregarding the needs and feelings of others. Especially applicable is the life principle of esprit de corps which has to do with a sense of commitment and devotion to a group among the members of that group. Conscious effort to build schools, classrooms, or teams with loyalty among the learners results in greater motivation, engagement, and learning among students in the group and has the effect of smothering bullying.

Enlightening all stake holders

In addition to the steps that educators take and the practices that become the mode of operation for students, Great Expectations also provides training sessions to enlighten administrators, all support staff members, and parents on the vital strategies to develop young people who are reaching their academic potential and additionally are growing as valuable citizens of society. In an atmosphere populated by students with personal virtues, bullies don’t have a place. That atmosphere needs to extend to the cafeteria, the bus, the playground, the athletic field, and the home.

GE Quotations

In order to help learners internalize life principles, high ideals, and the commitment to learning and hard work, Great Expectations educators use quotations. Students are asked to memorize pertinent quotations, they hear the same quotations in their instructors’ dialogue, and they certainly see reminders of such words of wisdom posted around the premises of the school. These succinct pieces of wisdom are

particularly valuable in keeping educators and students both working in an appropriate vein. Quotations on proper conduct – minus any hint of bullying – are powerful in guiding students to treat one another with appropriate respect.

“My pain can be the cause for someone’s laugh, but my laugh should never be the cause of someone’s pain.” – Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977), English comic actor

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or take advantage of the many Great Expectations professional development opportunities offered throughout the year including instructional support from Great Expectations coaches in your school and Leadership Academy for school and district administrators