

BULLYING PREVENTION TIP SHEET

SPECIAL EDUCATION - GUIDANCE BRIEF



Bullying is different than typical disagreement or conflict that occurs between friends or classmates. A basic definition is “When someone tries to make you feel less about who you are as a person, and you aren’t able to make it stop, it’s bullying.”

“Bullying” is defined in the Oklahoma School Safety and Bullying Prevention Act as:

Any pattern of harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, physical acts, verbal or electronic communication directed toward a student or group of students that results in or is reasonably perceived as being done with the intent to cause negative educational or physical results for the targeted individual or group and is communicated in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school’s educational mission or the education of any student. 70 O.S. § 70-24-100.3

A student is being bullied when he/she is repeatedly exposed to negative actions by another student that results in an imbalance of power. Bullying can take many forms, all of which are unwanted and can have harmful effects. Bullying behaviors (direct or indirect) can be physical, verbal, written, emotional, and/or cyber.

- ▶ **Physical** – hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, stealing and/or damaging personal belongings, sexual acts, and invasion of one’s personal space in an aggressive manner.
- ▶ **Verbal/Written** – taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, making threats (including phone and internet), and sexual remarks.
- ▶ **Emotional** – spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships or environments, engaging in

social exclusion, extortion, ridiculing, and intimidating.

- ▶ **Cyber** – intentional electronic act or series of acts that are 1) directed at another student(s); 2) occur in the school setting; 3) are severe, persistent, and pervasive; AND have the effect of doing at least one of the following: substantially interfering with a student’s education, creating a threatening environment, or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is a sensitive and complex area. There are many ways of approaching the subject – and not everyone will agree on the best method. A resource may be effective with one group of children and young people but less effective with another. Bullying is not just something that children and teenagers go through. Research shows clearly that bullying causes long-term damage to both the bully and the person bullied. Schools must look at what they are doing to prevent bullying from occurring in the school. Comprehensive bullying prevention requires a foundation of social-emotional learning. Students should learn skills that can help protect them from being bullied.



BULLYING PREVENTION TIP SHEET

SPECIAL EDUCATION - GUIDANCE BRIEF



Make sure your Anti-Bullying Policy is up to date, freely accessible, and regularly promoted – and that it makes clear how you will respond to bullying as a school community.

Students should be taught the importance of:

- › Self-regulation
- › Social-emotional
- › Self-protection

In addition to academics, teachers can teach character-building skills and support student success, both socially and academically, by providing emotional support. One way to emphasize social-emotional learning is through lesson plans about listening, identifying and managing feelings, calming strategies, and making and keeping friends.

1. Listening
 - Focusing attention
 - Using self-talk
 - Being assertive
 - Showing empathy
2. Identifying one's own and others' feelings
 - Considering others' perspectives
3. Showing care and concern for others
4. Emotion management
5. De-escalation
6. Problem-Solving
7. Fostering and sustaining friendships
 - Calming down and using problem-solving steps

Warning Signs of Bullying

There are many warning signs that could indicate that a student is involved in bullying, either by bullying others or by being bullied. However, these warning signs may indicate other issues or problems, as well.

Below is a list of common signs:

Being Bullied:

- › Reluctant to go to school or certain places.
- › Silent about what is happening at school.
- › Frequent lost or damaged possessions.
- › Academic problems.
- › Difficulty concentrating.
- › Low self-esteem.
- › Social isolation.
- › Quiet, depressed, irritable, or anxious.

Bullying Others:

- › Has a history of adverse experiences at home.
- › Gets into physical or verbal fights with others.
- › Enjoys putting others down.
- › Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained.
- › Disrespects authority and disregards rules.
- › Has an attitude of superiority.
- › Quick to blame others.
- › Needs to have power or control over others.
- › Enjoys violence.

Tips for Teachers

To prevent the occurrence of bullying and improve your ability to respond to instances of bullying behavior:

- › Use a trauma-informed approach when responding bullying behavior.
- › Cultivate a safe and supportive classroom environment.
- › Teach (and reteach as needed) foundational social-emotional skills.
- › Provide explicit instruction on self-management skills, including how to monitor and manage emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.
- › Model empathy.

BULLYING PREVENTION TIP SHEET

SPECIAL EDUCATION - GUIDANCE BRIEF



- › Teach, model, and provide opportunities for students to problem-solve disagreements.
- › Actively supervise your classroom at all times, particularly during unstructured or group activities.
- › Allow students to help in planning how to address bullying in the classroom.

When students approach you with a problem involving intimidating/bullying behavior, take the following steps to help the student feel safe:

1. Say “Thanks for telling me.”
2. Listen empathetically. Get the who, what, when, and where. Ask if this is the first time the problem occurred.
3. Ask the student if the person who didn’t stop is likely to react if confronted by an adult about their behavior.
4. Help the student select a course of action.

If a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is bullying others:

- › Determine the facts.
- › Encourage empathy with the victim.
- › Have the student identify their feelings and the feelings of others.
- › Ensure the student acknowledges how their behavior affected others and create a plan for restitution.
- › Try to determine the root cause of the student’s behavior so that you can alter or teach appropriate replacement behaviors.
- › Empower the student to resolve conflicts and handle difficult situations without violence or intimidation.

Tips for Students

What ways can you be there for someone experiencing bullying? Ideas include:

- › When you see something, do something!
- › Don’t focus on fixing the problem; focus on how you can be supportive.
- › Know that talking with someone will help them.
- › Show that you’re listening by allowing them to do most of the talking.
- › Be confident and genuine with your suggestions and words.
- › Let them know they can talk with you anytime.
- › Never judge or blame them!

Resources

[Character Education Lesson Plans for Teachers](http://character.org) - <http://character.org>

[Bullying Prevention Manual and Tools for Whole-School](https://www.pbis.org/school/bully-prevention) - <https://www.pbis.org/school/bully-prevention>

[Student Perception Survey](http://www.pbis.org/common/pbisresources/presentations/Student_Perception_Survey.doc) - http://www.pbis.org/common/pbisresources/presentations/Student_Perception_Survey.doc

[National Bullying Prevention Center](http://www.pacer.org/bullying) - <http://www.pacer.org/bullying>

[Toolkits and Training Materials from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](https://www.stopbullying.gov) - <https://www.stopbullying.gov>

The contents of this handout were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

Oklahoma State Department of Education
Special Education Services
(405) 521-3351
sde.ok.gov/special-education