

# **Health, Wellness & Safety Committee**

## **BULLYING**

Parents and caring adults can play pivotal roles in creating a healthy school and community climate that is free of bullying. By working together, educators, parents, concerned citizens, business leaders, advocates, and community members can support the implementation of bullying prevention programs, reinforce bullying prevention messages, and advocate for bullying policies to be incorporated. This collaboration is critical as bullying happens everywhere that young people gather, including online, via text, and in social networks. PTA leaders and parents play an important role in convening community conversations to build awareness of this as an important issue and to take action to stop bullying in your communities.

### **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

The definition of bullying is:

- Targeting a child for repetitive negative actions
- Imbalance of power to victim who can't defend him/herself
- Unequal level of effect

The serious nature of bullying:

- Children being bullied need and deserve adult intervention and help
- Problem is too serious for them to solve alone
- Without intervention, the problem will not go away
- Bullies will keep bullying unless adults do something about it

### **WHAT ARE THE TOP 10 THINGS CHILDREN ARE BULLIED ABOUT?**

1. Appearance
2. Abilities – Physical or cognitive
3. Identity – Gender, race, religion, culture
4. Behavior
5. Possessions
6. Names
7. Feelings
8. Opinions
9. Friends
10. Family circumstances

Bullying can be verbal, physical, social, and intimidation; however, bullying has now extended to the new technologies that are available. There is an increase in cyberbullying; which extends bullying to technologies such as the internet and electronic devices.

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING?

- Lower academic achievement and aspirations
- Increased anxiety
- Loss of self-esteem and confidence
- Depression and post-traumatic stress
- General deterioration in physical health
- Self-harm and suicide
- Feelings of alienation in the school environment, such as fear of other children
- Absenteeism from school

*U. S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights*

Stated in a recent letter (Harassment and Bullying Background, Summary, and Fast Facts) from the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights:

- There is a relationship between bullying and discriminatory harassment under the civil rights laws enforced by the Department of Education's (ED) Office for Civil Rights (OCR).
- Explains how student misconduct that falls under an anti-bullying policy also may trigger responsibilities under one or more of the anti-discrimination statutes enforced by OCR.
- Reminds schools that failure to recognize discriminatory harassment when addressing student misconduct may lead to inadequate or inappropriate responses that fail to remedy violations of students' civil rights. Colleges and universities have the same obligations under the anti-discrimination statutes as elementary and secondary schools.
- Discusses racial and national origin harassment, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and disability harassment and illustrates how a school should respond in each case.

## WHAT DOES THIS TELL US?

Bullying can happen anywhere and to any child. This is what makes bullying such an important issue. However, there are measures that schools, teachers, parents, and children can take to prevent or stop bullying and the first step is to become informed on bullying and its effects.

## RESOURCES TO CONTACT and/or ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- National Suicide Prevention Line (800-2738255)
- United States Government, Department of Health and Human Services (stopbullying.gov)
- National Crime Prevention Council (202-466-6272) (www.ncpc.org/abojut/contact-us)
- Safe2Tell (to make an anonymous report 877-542-SAFE) (www.safe2tell.org)
- Colorado School Safety Resource Center (for workshops and trainings)
- Local Law Enforcement Agency