

HOW TO INTERVENE TO STOP BULLYING

Adults play a critical role in helping students who are bullied and in creating a healthy, safe climate in the school and community.



TIPS FOR ON-THE-SPOT INTERVENTION

1. WHEN YOU SEE OR HEAR BULLYING HAPPEN:

- Immediately stop the bullying.
- Refer to the bullying behavior and to the relevant school rules against bullying.
- Support the bullied child in a way that allows him/her to regain self-control, to "save face," and to feel supported and safe from retaliation.
- Include the bystanders in the conversation and give them guidance about how they might appropriately intervene or get help next time.
- If appropriate, impose immediate consequences for students who bully others.
- Do not require the students to meet and "work things out."

2. INDIVIDUAL FOLLOW-UP AND SUPPORT

- Provide follow-up interventions.
- Notify parents of children who are involved, as appropriate.
- Bullied students need to process the circumstances of the bullying, vent their feelings about it, and get support.
- Students who bully may need help taking responsibility for their behavior, developing empathy and perspective-taking abilities, and finding ways to make amends.
- When there are suspicions of bullying, gather more information by talking with bystanders privately.

HOW YOU CAN HELP CHILDREN WHO ARE BULLIED

- Don't do further damage by lending too much support in public.
- Spend time with the student.
- Praise students for their courage to discuss the bullying with you.
- Ask students what they need to feel safe.
- Communicate with colleagues about the bullying incident.
- Don't force meetings between students who are bullied and those who bullied them.
- Provide as much information as you can about your "next steps."
- Encourage and support students in making friends.
- Explore how students' parents may be of support to them.
- Make a referral, if needed.
- Make sure you follow-up with students who have been bullied.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED?

This does not necessarily mean that he or she is being bullied. What should you do? Talk with your child and talk with staff at school to learn.

1. *Talk with your child.*

- I'm worried about you. Are there any kids at school who may be picking on you or bullying?"
- "Are there any kids at school who leave you out of things on purpose?"
- "Do you have any special friends at school this year? Who are they? Who do you hang out with?"
- "Who do you sit with at lunch/on the bus?"
- "Are there any kids at school who you really don't like? Why don't you like them? Do they ever pick on you?"

2. *Talk with staff at your child's school.*

Share your concerns, ask the teacher

- "How does my child get along with other students in his/her class?"
- "With whom does he/she spend free time?"
- "Have you noticed or have you ever suspected that my child is bullied by other students?"

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CERTAIN YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

1. *Focus on your child. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying.*

- Never tell your child to ignore the bullying.
- Don't blame the child who is being bullied.
- Listen carefully to what your child tells you about the bullying. Ask him/her to describe who was involved and how each bullying episode played out.
- Learn as much as you can about the bullying tactics being used, and when and where the bullying happened.
- Sympathize with your child.
- If you disagree with how your child handled the bullying situation, don't criticize him/her.
- Do not encourage physical retaliation as a solution.

- Check your emotions. A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Although it is difficult, a parent is wise to step back and consider the next steps carefully.
2. *Contact your child's teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal, and/or principal.*
- Parents are often reluctant to report bullying to school officials, but bullying probably won't stop without the help of adults at your child's school.
 - Keep your emotions in check. Give factual information about your child's experience of being bullied—who, what, when, where, and how.
 - Emphasize that you want to work with the staff at school to find a solution to stop the bullying, for the sake of your child as well as others.
 - Do not contact the parents of the student(s) who bullied your child.
 - Expect the bullying to stop.
3. *Help your child to become more resilient to bullying from others.*
- Help to develop your child's talents and positive attributes.
 - Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in class. Your child's teacher may be able to suggest students with whom your child can make friends, spend time, or collaborate on work.
 - Help your child meet new friends outside of the school environment.
 - Teach your child safety strategies: seek help from an adult, rehearse what to say.
 - Ask yourself: Is my child being bullied because of a learning difficulty or a lack of social skills?
 - Home is where the heart is. Make sure your child has a safe and loving home environment.

KEEP THE COMMUNICATION LINES OPEN!

For more information visit

<http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/home.html>