

# *It Is Time...to Be Bully Free!*

## *Resources and Materials*

### Information Packet



**Dr. Richard A. Spurling**  
**2024-25**

For presentation information or to order  
*It Is Time...to Be Bully Free!*,

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## **ABOUT DR. SPURLING - Summary of Presentation - “It is Time to be Bully Free!”**

Dr. Rick Spurling, author of *It is Time To Be Bully Free!* (Dec, 2006), will provide information about one of the most important issues in the lives of school age children....bullying. Dr. Spurling is nationally known for his expertise and has presented his program to over 60,000 concerned principals, teachers, coaches, parents and students over the past 25 years about the impact of the Bully-Free philosophy. A focus of his study is unencumbered bullying that is allowed to exist in our schools. Dr. Spurling will emphasize the trauma students go through when bullied, or a witness to bullying, and will stress the responsibility and the influence that we all have in eliminating bullying behavior.

Dr. Spurling’s program has become a model statewide and his dissertation *The Bully Free School Zone Character Education Program: A Study of Impact on Five Western North Carolina Middle Schools* has served as a tremendous resource offering schools and systems direction in establishing this program. As a result of this training participants will have the tools to provide a comprehensive bully free program in your school.

- **What Can Schools Do?** To keep kids bully-free. Providing school-research based data with practitioner long term experience.
- **Roles of Teachers, Coaches and Principals** - Understanding the powerful influence educators are on students and the community. Importance of adult intervention and its positive impact in dealing with bullying behavior of any kind.
- **Bully Free Philosophy, Credo, Goals and Mission Statement** - Material included that can be utilized by K-12 educators.
- **Pledges** - To be signed and agreed on by parents, teachers, coaches, and students outlining the bully-free belief system and each individual's responsibility.
- **The New Wave of Bullying** - Technology, cyber-bullying, sexual harassment, premeditated exclusion, malicious gossip/rumors. New and innovative ways to bully changes daily.
- **Differences in Girl and Boy Bullying** - Definition of bullying and how it is redefined..
- **Tips to Improve Emergency Operation Plans** - Importance of all staff understanding the school’s Crisis Communication Plan of Action plan and are prepared to react properly. A review of the four phases of a Critical Incident Plan - Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.
- **Procedures in Establishment, Development, and Implementation** - In putting together an anti-bullying program custom designed for your classroom, school or LEA with an emphasis on elementary and middle school age children.

Dr. Spurling retired after 32 years with the Mitchell County Schools where he served as a teacher, coach, principal, associate superintendent while finishing his time there as superintendent of schools (2016). After retirement he spent one year as the headmaster for the upper school at private/Christian school Asheville Christian Academy. He worked for the next six years there in different roles while coaching the first ever school football team at ACA (2016-2022). Since 2003 Dr. Spurling has taught classes at East Tennessee State University as an adjunct instructor in the educational leadership department as a member of the graduate affiliate staff. Over the last six-years he has taught under-graduate classes at Montreat College to potential classroom teachers. Spurling now resides in Asheville with his wife Felicia of thirty-three years, who recently retired from the Buncombe County Schools. His daughter Madison (27), son-in-law Lance, and Max (23) both currently live in Charlotte, NC.

## Top 10 List: What Do You Know about Bullying?

Please answer True or False for each statement.

- |  |      |       |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Bullying is all about physical fighting.                                    | True | False |
| 2. It is OK to bully people who deserve it.                                    | True | False |
| 3. Victims of bullying eventually get over it.                                 | True | False |
| 4. The most effective way to deal with a bully is to fight back or get even.   | True | False |
| 5. Girls are not bullies.  | True | False |
| 6. Young people who tell an adult about someone being bullied is a tattletale. | True | False |
| 7. Bullies are really insecure people, which is why they like to bully others. | True | False |
| 8. Bullying is just “kids being kids” and is part of growing up.               | True | False |
| 9. If you ignore a bully they will leave you alone.                            | True | False |
| 10. Bystanders cannot help someone being bullied.                              | True | False |

# Bullying Student Survey: It Is Time to Be Bully Free!

## Instructions

This survey is intended to provide information that will help to make our school a safer place. Our school's number one priority is the safety of our students. We are committed to making our school a bully-free environment and want to know what you really think about the way things are at our school. Please, help make our school a better place to live, grow, and learn by answering some questions about the way we treat and act toward one another. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. Your answers will be kept confidential. No one will know your name, the name of your classmates, or of your teachers. You will also have an opportunity to write any additional information you would like to share. Read each question and answer it as honestly as possible. Thank you for your participation.

### A. Your Information

(Check One) Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### B. School Wide Bullying

1. Have you been bullied at this school? **Yes** or **No**  
If yes, what school year did this occur? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, what type of bullying did you experience? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
How long did this treatment take place? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you been bullied verbally? **Yes** or **No**
3. Have you been bullied emotionally? **Yes** or **No**
4. Have you been bullied physically? **Yes** or **No**
5. Have you ever been a bystander to someone being bullied? **Yes** or **No**  
If yes, what did you do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel about what you did? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**C. Where?**

**Check off areas in the school where people are most likely to be bullied.**

Playground \_\_\_\_\_  
Gym \_\_\_\_\_  
Getting to school \_\_\_\_\_  
Cafeteria \_\_\_\_\_  
School Bus \_\_\_\_\_  
Bathroom \_\_\_\_\_  
Classroom \_\_\_\_\_  
Hallways \_\_\_\_\_

Please add any other areas not listed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**D. When?**

**Check off the times when bullying tends to occur the most frequently.**

Before School \_\_\_\_\_  
AM Hours \_\_\_\_\_  
Lunch Time \_\_\_\_\_  
After School \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Thoughts**

**1. Most teasing at school is not intended to be hurtful.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**2. Most victims at our school deserve the treatment.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**3. Bullying is just kids being kids.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**4. Most bullies are considered popular in the school.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**5. My actions can make a positive difference in bullying at our school.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

## **Bullying Discussion Topics: Let's Talk about It**

1. How do you define bullying?
2. Have you ever been initiated into a club, sports team, etc.?
3. What do you think about teasing or trash talking?
4. Have you ever been or known someone who has been bullied?
5. What role does a bystander play in a bullying scenario?
6. Can you tell when someone does not like being teased?
7. What characteristics do most victims seem to have in common?
8. Do you think some victims of bullying deserve the treatment?
9. Are you afraid of getting bullied?
10. Is there someone or somebody who gives you a hard time?
11. Have you ever felt excluded?
12. When someone hurts you do you feel like you have to get them back?
13. Why do some people feel it is alright for them to be rude to others?
14. How do people like to show out in front of others?
15. What is the difference between harassment and teasing?
16. Why are some people bullies?
17. How could adults help someone from being bullied?
18. Have you ever been a bystander? What did you do?
19. How would you feel if you witnessed bullying and didn't help?
20. How can you act differently to help your school be bully free?

## What Can Schools Do to Keep Kids Bully Free

***“When Bullying is allowed to exist unencumbered in a school, learning will take a back seat to the fear that exists in the building.”***

### **Bullying Defined**

Bullying is an “Imbalance of Power” period. It is persistent, repeated, consistent, intentional, and always about hurt, embarrassment, humiliation, isolation, and causing pain. A victim could be anybody in the school. Bullying is a form of overt and aggressive behavior where bullied children are teased, harassed, and assaulted (verbally and/or physically) by one or more peers. Victims are made to be social outcasts, losers, and dwellers of the bottom of the hierarchical structure of the school community. This imbalance of power usually includes a group of bullies that run together creating fear and anxiety throughout the building for the majority of the student population. The bottom line is that bullying is always one-sided, unfair, and more vicious in nature physically, verbally, and psychologically.

### **Types of Bullying**

- **Physical** - Considered the “old school” form of bullying, “I am bigger and stronger, so I will take and do what I want to do to you,” mentality. This thought process is changing even though it is still prevalent in our schools. Kids are more reluctant to fight in school because of system wide Zero Tolerance Policies (when you fight, you go home). Most students don’t want to be sent home, but much of the set-up and bullying for a fight occurs at school. Common traits of physical types of bullying are hitting, slapping, pushing, shoving, stealing, damaging, etc. (mostly by boys, but girls are becoming more and more violent)
- **Verbal** – Verbal bullying starts it all and is the most popular form of bullying. Verbal bullying leads to aggressive and violent behavior. All physical fighting is a result of verbal bullying. Trash talking, name-calling, persistent teasing, insults, bad language, racist comments, and the most popular of all is sexual harassment. Let’s not forget a favorite of many of today’s bullies: spreading rumors about their victim’s sexual behavior. These bullies understand that this subject hurts the worst and can create the most damage to their victims.
- **Psychological** – Psychological bullying is rapidly becoming the most common form of bullying. This is a frequent bullying technique used by girls but boys have the ability as well. This includes premeditated exclusion or isolation that occurs many times between friends, creating hurt feelings and problems with families. Psychological bullying includes exclusion, starting rumors, making someone look foolish, humiliation, destroying reputations, and gossiping. Again, this type of bullying is many times administered by more popular students in the building.

### **And the Newest Form of Bullying**

- **Cyber-bullies** – My research has shown a tremendous increase (becoming popular with bullies) in the use of this type of bullying with the improvement and availability of technology. Text messaging, chat lines, web pages, etc., provide bullies the opportunity to spread malicious gossip quickly, to large audiences, and in many cases, the ability to get away with it. This usually is a bullying technique used by the upper class echelon student who is allowed the accessibility and freedom to use this technology at home unsupervised.

## What Can Students Do to Keep Their Schools Bully Free?

“Most of the trouble and friction among people, in or out of school, is caused by putting others down.”

### **Bully Free Philosophy**

We believe everyone has the right to come to school excited, enthused, and ready to learn. Bullies and bullying behavior will not be tolerated, and they have no place in our school. “We believe we should be bully free!”

A Bully-Free School Zone by no means guarantees that bullies do not exist at our school. It does, however, emphasize to students how to co-exist peacefully, appreciate differences, solve problems, control anger, and look out for each other. The program also encourages attendance, academic effort, and getting along with one another.

### **Credo**

“This is my school, this is my space. I want it to be a safe place. I know that violence prevention begins with me. So that’s why to this promise, I agree, and I will...Resolve conflicts peacefully, talk about problems openly, treat others with respect, walk away from fights, and take all threats and warning signs seriously. Talk to a parent, counselor, or teacher about my concerns.” (Allan Beane, 2003)

### **Tips to Remember for Students**

Understand what bullying behavior does to people and to our schools. Remember:

1. Bullying takes at least two people: the bully and the victim,
2. Bullies enjoy to feel strong and superior,
3. Bullies enjoy having power over others,
4. Bullies like to create chaos and confusion in the school,
5. Bullies show no respect for others, and
6. Bullies use their power to hurt other people.

Bullies are all about hurting, embarrassing, and humiliating others, and for some reason, they seem to enjoy this treatment.

### **Empathy**

Empathy is imperative to positive relationships with friends, peers, family members, and everyone else we encounter throughout our lives. Often, when children are not liked by others, it is because they lack empathy for others. It is easy to have empathy for someone you like or have a lot in common with, but they also need to empathize with people who are very different from them—in their needs, experiences, points of view, life circumstances, beliefs, ethnic and cultural background, talents, abilities, accomplishments, etc. You need to be able to think about how other people feel—and eventually, how other people might feel or would feel in response to specific events and circumstances.

***“We are 100% responsible for how we talk to and treat others...no excuses!”***



## **Rationale to Prevent Bullying in Our School**

Our school believes that bullying must not be tolerated and has to be stopped because:

1. Bullying behavior has been identified as a common link and characteristic to aggressive acts, violence, and school shootings.
2. Verbal harassment is the number one form of bullying leading to school violence.
3. Creates an environment where students are afraid, and instructional learning takes a back seat to the fear that exists in the school.
4. Creates loneliness and depression.
5. Increases suicide risk of victims and bystanders.
6. Bullies are at a greater risk to join hate gangs, cults, and experience with drugs and alcohol.
7. Posttraumatic stress is a result of a bullying and living in fear at school.
8. A result of bullying is physical, psychological, and emotional injury.
9. Is a major factor in the majority of discipline problems.
10. Creates loneliness with victims and bystanders.
11. Leads to a higher rate of student drop-out and school change.
12. Higher absence rate and truancy.
13. Disrupts and interferes with academics.
14. Creates lifelong trauma for the victim, bystander, and bully.

## **Bully Free School Zone Student Pledge**

**We the STUDENTS of ACA MIDDLE SCHOOL say.....**

**“AT THIS SCHOOL....WE BELIEVE...  
WE SHOULD BE...BULLY FREE!”**

Bullying is defined as when one individual (or group) seeks to dominate, control, and terrorize the life of another. We know bullying can be pushing, shoving, hitting, and spitting, as well as name calling, picking on, making fun of, laughing at, and excluding someone. Bullying causes pain and stress to victims and is never justified or excusable as “kids being kids,” “just teasing,” or any other rationalization. The victim is never responsible for being a target of bullying. Bullying behavior is not welcome at our school.

Everyone at ACA Middle School will work to provide a school environment that is safe, calm, orderly, procedural, and one in which people care for one another.

**By Signing This Pledge, We the Students of A.C.A. Middle School. Agree to:**

1. Value student differences and treat others with respect.
2. Not become involved in bullying incidents or be a bully.
3. Be aware of the school’s policies and support system with regard to bullying.
4. Report honestly and immediately all incidents of bullying to a faculty member, guidance counselor, or principal.
5. Be alert in places around the school where there is less supervision such as bathrooms, between buildings, buses, etc.
6. Support students who have been or are subjected to bullying.
7. Participate fully and contribute to homeroom class discussions in dealing with bullying.
8. Provide a good role model for younger students and support them if bullying occurs (Gouge Elementary students on buses).

**I acknowledge that whether I am being a bully or I see someone being bullied, if I don’t report or stop the bullying, I am just as guilty.**

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## What Are Some Tips for Students to Effectively Deal with Bullying Behavior?

Don't be a victim!

### Project Confidence

- **Don't act scared.** Believe in yourself. Be confident.
- **Talk to the bully.** Believe it or not, some kids may not know that they're behavior is bullying in nature.
- **Think of things to say ahead of time.** Keep them short and don't say anything mean (don't bully back the bully). Be prepared for ugly encounters from school bullies.
- **Don't get mad....get funny.** It shows you're not scared. Don't make fun of the bully. Try not to make a bigger deal of what is happening between you two. Try and diffuse the situation.
- **Don't fight back or get mad.** It'll make the bullying worse. Bullies try to make kids mad so don't let them. Stay calm and under control. Try not to show any dramatic emotion.
- **Check out the way you act.** Head down, slouching, looking at the ground or your feet, and fidgeting shows that you're not sure of yourself. Hold your head up and stand up straight. Look confident. Bullies pick on you if they think you are afraid of them.

***"Attitude is contagious. Is yours worth catching?"***

### How to Keep from Being Bullied

- **Hang out with friends.** Bullies pick on kids who are alone.
- **Join groups** and find friends who like the same things you do. Get involved with the school (clubs, sports, drama, church, etc.).
- **Look around school.** You're not the only kid being bullied in your school. Other people are going through some of the same struggles you are. Make friends with other kids who are alone. Maybe you can help other kids. Maybe you can help each other. Maybe you can make a great new friend.

***"To have a friend, you must first learn how to be a friend."***

- **Walk to school with someone** – brothers, sisters, neighbors, or friends. Hang out with people that care about you. If you don't have many friends, then it is time to start making some.

***"To the world you are one person, but to one person, you may be the world."***

- **Avoid bullies.** If you know a kid who doesn't like you, then stay away from them. Don't provoke people who don't like you.
- **Avoid places where bullies are.** Stay away from aggressive classmates when possible. Take different paths to school to keep away from the bully. Don't be alone in the hallways, restrooms, empty classrooms, or playgrounds. Don't put yourself in a bad position or situation.
- **Stay within sight of teachers and grownups** when you are at school. If they can see you, they can help you. Reach out to adults you can trust and let them know of bullying behavior.
- **Sit near the bus driver** on the school bus.

- **Don't bring expensive stuff (technology) or lots of money** to school. Bullies pick on kids who bring things they can take. It's not worth getting hurt. Things can be replaced, but you can't!
- **Check out the way you act.** Watch how you treat and talk to others. Try not to be rude or insensitive to others. Be a good friend and classmate.

***"We are 100% responsible for how we talk to and treat others...No Excuses!"***

- **Don't act scared** – hold your head up, stand up straight, and don't look at the ground or your feet. Bullies don't pick on kids who are confident.

### **How Can You Help Someone Who's Being Bullied?**

- **Don't join in.** Don't call kids names or pick on them. Bullies try to get other kids to join in. Don't empower the bully.
- **Be a friend** to the kid being bullied. Ask them to tell a grown-up. Go with them if they're scared.
- **Believe the kid being bullied** and what they say.
- **Find help** from teachers, parents, friends, or other grown-ups.
- **Tell someone** if you see a kid being bullied. Telling is not tattling! If you're scared of the bully, don't let them know you told.
- **Don't fight the bully.** It's not safe. Go tell a grown-up.

***"Whether we are a preschooler or a young teen, a graduating college senior or a retired person, we human beings want to know that we are all acceptable, that our being alive somehow makes a difference in the lives of others." --Mr. Fred Rogers***

## Tips for Students in Dealing with Bullying Behavior

Our school believes that students have the right to attend school excited, enthused, and looking forward to learning and improving themselves. We also feel that student rights are hindered by bullying behavior in the school building. Here is a list of tips offered to students of our school in dealing with bullies. This list was composed through teacher and student input during classroom discussion in December of 2003. Here is what can be done to prevent bullying in our school, in their words:

1. Talk honestly to teachers and parents about bullying behavior directed at you or someone you know who is being mistreated.
2. Always remember that no one ever deserves to be bullied.
3. Stay away from bullies whenever possible and do not interact if it is not necessary. Give them space when at all possible.
4. Understand the characteristics of victims and do not allow yourself to be placed in that category.
5. Do not let bullies change your day for the worst. Do not allow them to make you feel bad by their words. Understand that they are trying to get a reaction out of you.
6. Be assertive when confronted by a bully. Tell the bully how you feel with confidence and determination and then walk away. Do not stand there and continue the negative interaction. If the behavior continues, an adult in the building needs to be approached.
7. Do not fight back. Let the bully know that you are not an easy target.
8. Follow your classroom and school procedures concerning bullying behavior.
9. Repeat yourself over and over again when confronted with bullies. Have a certain phrase that is repeated over and over again to help diffuse the situation.
10. Remember, bullies want to hurt your feelings. Do not allow them to alter your mood for the day. That is their objective.
11. Disarm the bully with humor. Sometimes agreeing with the bully about what they are saying about you can stop the ugly talk.
12. If possible, stay with your friends. Never be alone, especially in situations and areas where bullies exist. If you do find yourself alone in a hostile situation, join in the conversation with others or adults.
13. If you find yourself in a serious situation where you could be hurt physically, get out of that climate as quickly as possible.
14. Expect to be mistreated sometimes. People say and do mean things to others for whatever reason. Understand that you cannot control what others do, but you can control your actions. Be pleasant, say nice things, and be friendly to others and you will probably be treated better as well.

15. Try to make friends. Remember this quote, "It takes many years to make a good friend, but it can take one ugly word to destroy it."
16. Make friends inside and outside the school. Be kind to everyone involved with your school: Principal, teachers, bus drivers, custodians, maintenance crew, cafeteria personnel, special needs students, and visitors.
17. Understand that how you treat others will dictate in a large degree how they treat you.
18. Be good to your parents and family members. You need their support.
19. Be nice to bullies. This may surprise them and possibly change their behavior. Sometimes bullies need a little love.
20. Be careful on the Internet. Chat lines and virtual talk can be fun but also dangerous and is being used more and more by bullies. Take threats on the Internet seriously and report them accordingly. Do not allow yourself to fall in the trap of bullies who attempt to trap you into a nasty dialogue.
21. Keep emotion out of it. Bullies like to upset you, so do not let them. Sometimes being emotionless in reaction to bullies can be a major deterrent to further bad behavior.
22. Take your role in reporting bullying behavior at you or others very seriously. These are serious accusations and need to be carefully examined before approaching an adult.
23. Be Positive! Always strive to have a Bully Free School Zone environment.

## Tips for Being a Good Friend!

1. **Follow the Golden Rule, “Treat others as you want to be treated.”** Sounds simple, but is it? It can be done by being honest, kind, sincere, and concerned for others. Treating everyone with dignity and respect is the key to a long term friendship.
2. **Be involved in your school and focus on the right things, which starts with Academics!** Join clubs that you are interested in... athletics, student organizations, band, drama, community, church, etc. Surround yourself with people who are interested in the same things you are.
3. **Show an interest in those around you.** Pay attention and be a good listener. Don't let conversations be all about you. Look people in the eye and focus on what is being said.
4. **Control your tongue!** “Friendships are built over many years but can be ruined by one word.” You are the only person who can control what you say to others. Saying cruel and hurtful things is hard for many people to forget and forgive.
5. **Be yourself.** Don't try and be someone you are not. Don't be a show-off. You should not have to act different than you are to impress a true friend.
6. **Choose your friends wisely.** An old Western saying is so true, “You hang with who you ride with.” Am I a better person for hanging out with this person, or does my behavior change for the worse?
7. **Be a team player.** Do your share of the work load. Lasting friendships require effort on both sides. Put in the time and effort.
8. **Be accepting of others.** Acknowledge and appreciate differences in others. Not all of your friends have to act, look, and think like you do. Our differences make the world an interesting and fun place.

## **Some Good Advice about “Teasing”**

### **Try These Tips:**

1. Be able to be teased yourself.
2. Think about your words carefully.
3. Be careful of others’ feelings.
4. Use humor carefully.
5. Be honest and tell others when a certain subject is not funny to you.
6. Know the difference in friendly teasing and hurtful words aimed at embarrassing another person.
7. Always observe how the person reacts.
8. Help a weaker classmate when they are being ridiculed.

### **Not a Good Idea:**

1. Tease someone you don’t know.
2. Make jokes about race, sex, religion, or other sensitive and personal subjects.
3. Tease someone about something they don’t want you to talk about.
4. Make fun of someone’s looks.
5. Talk about and make fun of someone’s family members.
6. Tease someone who is not in a good mood.
7. Get mad at others when they tease you. (also called being “thin-skinned”)
8. Don’t tell people when certain topics bother you.



## Drama Free Days: It Is Time to Stop Hurting Each Other

Many students are labeled a Drama King or Queen because of their tendency to make everything a big deal. They tend to exaggerate and spread rumors, which many times lead to hurt feelings. It is normal to want to hurt someone back after they have hurt you. Making every attempt to “Rise above it” is a good philosophy to follow when you have been mistreated. We have the ability not to retaliate but to choose other options in dealing with those who have hurt or embarrassed us.

1. **Look within.** What was your role in this situation? Did you do or say something to bring on this type of behavior? Think about your actions.
2. **Stay Calm.** Nobody makes good decisions when they are angry. Words can be powerful weapons when aimed from an angry mouth, so it is important to choose them wisely.
3. **Know it is alright to be mad.** You will be angry for a period of time when someone has been rude to you. How you deal with it is what is important. You can't control what others do...only your reaction.
4. **Don't react too quickly.** Many times when someone is trying to hurt you, they want a quick response. They want you to show emotion, and that is why they are giving you a hard time.
5. **Find stress relievers.** Take a walk, listen to music, work out, play ball, study, read, do something nice for someone, or spend time with your family and friends. Find ways to help yourself let go of the anger.
6. **Don't dwell on it.** Let it go. Anger is an emotion that will literally eat you inside out. Forgive and forget. Move on.
7. **Be truthful.** Be honest and tell people when they hurt your feelings or made you angry.
8. **Talk to an adult.** Tell them what happened and how it made you feel.
9. **Be nice and cordial.** This is not an easy thing to do but many times very effective. Try it and you may like it. Be the bigger person.
10. **You can do the right thing.** You can choose to respond in a mature way to being mistreated.

## Trying to Get a Handle on Girl Bullying

### Nice girl or mean girl?

**Girl bullying** is often hidden and indirect and has often been referred to as, “What girls do.”

### **Sweet Girl Syndrome**

“The sugar and spice image is powerful and girls know it. They use it to fog the radar of otherwise vigilant teachers and parents.”

Girls are doing what we have expected from them. We want them to be nice girls and they will give the impression they are, but many are constantly stirring problems when not seen. They are rewarded for not being disruptive, and so they bully behind the scenes.

Aggression is not normally a physical or even verbal situation in girl bullying. Girl aggression is not marked by direct physical and verbal behavior that is the primary rule of boys; however, girls are becoming more threatening, aggressive, and violent in their behavior. There is a hidden culture of girl’s aggression in which bullying is epidemic, distinctive, and destructive.

Common traits of girl bullying are:

- Girls have a hard time forgetting and forgiving. They tend to hold grudges.
- Girls use backbiting, exclusion, rumors, name-calling, slander, and manipulation to inflict psychological pain on targeted victims.
- Girls fight with body language and relationships instead of fists and knives.
- Girls attempt to hurt others through damage to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion.
- Indirect aggression allows the bully to avoid confronting her target by using others as a mode of damaging a person, such as rumor spreading.
- Social aggression is intended to damage self-esteem and social status within a group. It includes indirect aggression, like rumor spreading or social exclusion.
- Covert aggression is to not get caught being a bully, and most girls want to look like they would never mistreat someone in the first place.
- Why do girls bully? For their ego, popularity, power, boy relationships, jealousy, and control.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers need to look and listen for signs of girl bullying problems and confront them. Adult intervention is the key to changing this behavior.

# What We All Need to Know about Sexting

Dangers, common traits, and what we can do

## Sexting Definition

Sexting is a dangerous and growing trend among teenagers. It is the practice by which teens forward sexually explicit images of themselves or their peers via text messaging or the Internet.

## Problems Associated with Texting and Sexting

1. **It ruins reputations.** Because photos can be distributed widely, sexting can ruin reputations and limit one's ability to get into college, join the military, or get a desired job. It changes the way people perceive us.
2. **It creates long lasting hurt.** It can result in anxiety, depression, and in some cases leads to suicide. It can destroy friendships and create enemies.
3. **It is against the law.** Federal law makes it illegal to possess, distribute, or take sexually explicit images of anyone under age 18. State laws vary, but laws may lead to teens being labeled as sex offenders or charged for sex crimes.
4. **It never goes away.** Information sent via cell phone or the Internet will be available for 30-50 years. It has the potential to haunt us forever.
5. **It begins as a private exchange that quickly becomes public.** While sexting often originates as a private exchange between a teen and his/her love interest, relationships can quickly deteriorate. Before long, the seemingly private images can be distributed throughout the school.

## Some Sexting Stats

According to a survey from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy,

- 1 in 5 teens have sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos of themselves online or via text messages,
- 22% of teens have received a nude or semi-nude photo of someone else,
- Most exchanges start between boyfriend and girlfriend, but
- 15% of teens have forwarded images to someone they know only online.

## Sexting Has Been Discovered...Now What?

When sexting arises in a school setting, it can have broad practical and legal implications. When school administrators discover sexting, they should do the following:

1. Tell the parents of all students involved.
2. Report sexting to the police.
3. Report sexting as suspected abuse or neglect.
4. Be clear on who and how students will be disciplined.
5. Prevent harassment of students involved in sexting.

## Tips for Parents and Guardians

1. **Set clearly defined rules.** Have high expectations for technology use. Set rules and consequences for breaking them. Be in control of technology in the house. Dictate where technology is located, how it can be utilized, and time spent on a task. Discipline appropriately. Don't hesitate to take technology privileges away.
2. **Be a positive role model.** Show how technology can be used in a positive manner. Do not demonstrate bad behaviors on the computer that your child might emulate.
3. **Foster open lines of communication.** Talk to your child about the dangers of sexting and texting. Let them show you what they are doing on the computer and phone. Take an interest in their technology.
4. **Heightened awareness.** Be aware of what your teen is posting publicly. Know who your child is communicating with. Check their phone.
5. **Stay updated.** Learn how to use your teen's cell phone. Be aware of sexting shortcuts and acronyms (see list below).

## Popular Sexting Shortcuts

P911	Parent alert
PAL	Parents are listening
PAW	Parents are watching
PIR	Parents in room
KPC	Keeping parents clueless
99	Parent is no longer watching
CD9	Code 9 (parents are around)
8	Oral sex
143	I love you
182	I hate you
ADR	Address
ASL	Age, Sex, Location
GNOC	Get naked on cam
KFY/K4Y	Kiss for you
LMIRL	Let's meet in real life
MOOS	Members of the opposite sex
MorF	Male or female
MOS	Mom over shoulder
MOSS	Members of the same sex
NALOPKT	Not a lot of people know that
NIFOC	Nude in front of the computer
NMU	Not much, you?
RUH	Are you horny?
TDTM	Talk dirty to me
WYCM	Will you call me?

## Dealing with Cyberbullying

**Cyber Bullying** and the use of technology in spreading lies, gossip, and malicious rumors has become a favorite and effective tool for the young and old bully alike. According to recent studies with the Cobb County Schools in Georgia, about 22% of young people have experienced or been involved in cyberbullying. Across the state, 7 of 10 high school age students reported they have heard or seen harmful and untrue things said about themselves or their classmates through technology. Since this type of bullying is indirect, it is no surprise that 25% of cyber bullies and victims are girls.

Cyber bullying can be done via the internet or through text messaging, instant messaging, chat rooms, social networking sites, or e-mail communication. As traditional bullying seems to be the norm in the elementary school years, cyber bullying begins to happen in middle school then peaks during high school.

There is no face-to-face confrontation with cyber bullying, so many people become bullies who usually would not with the use of technology. Many times these bullies are able to stay anonymous and don't have to directly see their victim suffer. It makes the action seem less serious to the cyber bully and many times they will continue the abuse. Listed below are some red flags to observe when a child is a victim of cyberbullying. Also, included are tips to follow if you are a victim of cyberbullying.

### Warning Signs

1. Child is upset, anxious, or overly excited after spending time on the computer.
2. Your child immediately changes the screen when you check the computer.
3. Child spends an inordinate amount of time and appears obsessed with the computer.
4. Child does not have and makes no attempt to have friends.
5. Child does not want to go to school (many times they do not want to go anywhere).

### What You Can Do

1. Know your child's schools policy on anti-discrimination, anti-bullying, anti-harassment, and cyber bullying.
2. Instruct your child not to open and read messages coming from the bully or unknown sources.
3. Use computer and online tools to block the bully on e-mail, chat lines, and instant messaging. If possible, find out who they are and contact their parents.
4. Report bullying to the Internet service provider or to the web site administrator if it involves specific web sites or chat rooms.
5. If the content of messages is threatening, report the incident to local law enforcement.
6. Make sure to save the evidence with hard copies and electronic versions.

## **Buses and Bullying**

“The school bus is no safe haven for those who are victims of bullies, so the responsibility falls on a school-wide system to offer protection.”

### **Bullying on the Bus**

Millions of students ride school buses every day in our country. School staff must be responsible in making sure anti-bullying policies don't end at the edge of the parking lot.

### **Why the Bus?**

For bullies who are looking for an easy and trapped victim, the bus is a perfect place. Supervision is usually not up to standards as students board the bus and while they are on the bus. The only adult on the bus is usually the driver who cannot react quickly as they operate the vehicle. The bus is a small, close space that provides no place to retreat for the victim. Most students have no other choice than to ride a bus, making them a regular daily target for the bully. All these factors make bus bullying a dangerous situation.

**Principals, teachers, drivers, parents, and other students need to be aware of these problems and how to prevent them for the safety of everyone on the bus.**

### **The Dangers of Bus Bullying**

Bullying is dangerous to everyone on the bus. Slight to severe bullying can distract the bus driver, increasing the risk of vehicular accidents that can severely injure students, other motorists, and pedestrians.

- 144 Bus accidents occur every day in the U.S.
- 26,000 Bus accidents occur per year
- 10,000 Students injured

### **Signs of School Bus Bullying**

As in every bullying case, students can be reluctant to approach adults for help because they are concerned with being labeled a tattletale. Adults should recognize signs of bus bullying as:

- Fear of going to school or riding the bus,
- Habitually delaying or otherwise deliberately trying to miss the bus,
- Continually asking for rides to school or finding excuses to ride with friends instead of on the bus,
- Ripped clothes, missing possessions, or signs of physical abuse, or
- Upset before and after school.

*“Over the years, much school research through the use of surveys indicates that the bus ranks as the number two place for bullying, second only to the playground. The bus is noted by nearly 25% as the place for serious incidents of bullying while also increasing the possibility of an accident.”*

## **How to React to Bullying on the Bus**

“Riding the Bus is a privilege, not a right...a privilege that is earned through good behavior.”

It is estimated that nearly one in five students experiences school bus bullying. This is disturbing to educators and parents who many times do not have answers in how to help their child. There are steps that students and parents can take to prevent or put a stop to bus bullying.

### **Students Can:**

- Sit as close to the driver as possible, trying to stay on the right-hand side of the bus so they are within eyesight of the driver,
- Stay close to a friend and away from potential bullies,
- Be polite to someone who attempts to bully rather than reacting with anger or tears,
- Don't fight back (it will only escalate a bad situation),
- Don't let your reaction make the situation worse than it is,
- Tell adults when bullying happens (parents, teachers, principals and the bus driver),
- Give specifics about the bullying (when, where, what type, etc.), and
- Stand up for other students who are being bullied and report the behavior.

### **Parents Can:**

- Know the school's anti-bullying prevention policies and report incidents to the proper officials,
- Take the emotion out of reporting to school officials but have specific details of the bullying acts,
- Be a good listener and encourage the child to tell adults if an incident occurs, making every attempt to stay calm while gathering the facts,
- Teach responsible bus riding behavior,
- Be a good role model by avoiding road rage and other driving related intimidation tactics, and
- Avoid blaming the child for being bullied.

### **Schools Can:**

- Start an anti-bullying campaign that may include school-wide activities, student pledges, and other events to show that bus bullying is unacceptable,
- Institute bus behavior contracts for all students that clearly delineate consequences for bullying, including suspension of bus riding privileges and consequences for students who are bystanders who do not report,
- Set up parent supervision at the school bus zones and neighborhood bus stops and consider adding other adults to the bus as monitors,
- Have assigned seats,
- Ensure the Anti-bullying Student Pledge applies to the school grounds and buses, and
- Use the Bus Incident Report Form (on the next page).

# School Bus Safety Report

## ASHEVILLE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY School Bus Safety Report

Please list the student or driver you are concerned about.

---

### Incident Details (Date and Time)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (Circle One) AM / PM

### Description of Incident (What Happened?)

---

---

---

---

### What led to this incident?

---

---

### Describe the behavior you have demonstrated.

---

---

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Room Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Please name two other people who witnessed the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**THIS INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL.**



## Bully Free School Zone Teacher Pledge

We the TEACHERS of ASHEVILLE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL say.....

**“AT THIS SCHOOL...WE BELIEVE...  
WE SHOULD BE...BULLY FREE!”**

Bullying is defined as when one individual (or group) seeks to dominate, control, and terrorize the life of another. We know bullying can be pushing, shoving, hitting, and spitting, as well as name calling, picking on, making fun of, laughing at, and excluding someone. Bullying causes pain and stress to victims and is never justified or excusable as, “kids being kids,” “just teasing,” or any other rationalization. The victim is never responsible for being a target of bullying. Bullying behavior is not welcome at our school.

Everyone at ACA MIDDLE SCHOOL will work to provide a school environment that is safe, calm, orderly, procedural, and one in which people care for one another.

### **By Signing This Pledge, We the Faculty of ACA Middle School. Agree to:**

- Develop a clear classroom policy on bullying and display it prominently.
- Train faculty in appropriate handling of incidents.
- Develop or adopt a curriculum that educates students about bullying.
- Teach students about less obvious forms of bullying like gossiping and exclusion.
- Discuss pro-active, anti-bullying measures (such as having lunch with a student who has been excluded in the past).
- Establish support systems for pupils involved in incidents such as peer counseling and mediation.
- Establish a system to support and inform parents when incidents of bullying occur.
- Offer counseling to students who bully.
- Ensure an atmosphere where students feel safe reporting incidents of bullying and confident they will be dealt with and not ignored.
- Follow the credo at BMS to be **active, alert, and involved** in each student’s life.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## What Can Teachers Do about Classroom Bullying?

*"Be a positive difference maker in the classroom."*

*-From the 2006 National School Safety Center*

Preventing and responding to classroom bullying should not create an additional burden for the dedicated teacher. The same atmosphere that promotes effective teaching and successful student learning can help address the challenge of student bullying. Veteran teachers already plan, modify, evaluate, and debrief lessons and activities. They do this in a manner that reflects a knowledge and understanding of the students they teach. Many new and enthusiastic teachers are armed with the latest content, theories, and intent to impact their students' lives in positive ways. Both kinds of teachers can develop and apply a repertoire of strategies that will help prevent, deter, and respond to classroom bullying while promoting their academic mission.

Strategies may include:

- Modeling desired attitudes and behaviors;
- Fostering student-shared responsibility for the classroom's social and physical environment;
- Establishing and communicating rules and sanctions regarding bullying;
- Applying classroom rules fairly and consistently;
- Identifying and intervening upon undesirable attitudes and behaviors that could be "gateway behaviors" to bullying and harassment;
- Teaching students how to ask for help and how to report cruelty, bullying, and harassment;
- Responding to requests of help;
- Referring critical bullying cases to appropriate sources of support;
- Aligning instructional topics of courage, reasoning, fairness, justice, responsibility, citizenship, and collaboration with appropriate academic, elective content, or extracurricular activities;
- Promoting personal and social skills development; and
- Recognizing culture diversity as an influence on relationships, identity, and social issues.

***"A teacher takes a hand, opens the mind...and touches the heart."***

*-2006 National School Safety Center*

## Monthly System Wide Character Education Themes

*"A teacher takes a hand, opens the mind,  
and touches the heart."*

### August and September – "School Handbook/Bus Safety"

#### Respect

Teach students to show a high regard for authority, other people, property, self, and country. Treat others with fairness and recognize that people of all cultures have value as human beings.

#### Quotes

"Respect yourself if you would have others respect you."

"If we all respected the rights of others, we would live in a more peaceful world."

*\*Throughout August and September, a focus should be placed on the student handbook and bus safety.\**

### October – "Bully Free School Zone"

#### Responsibility

Teach students to be dependable and cooperative in carrying out obligations and duties. Show them reliability in words and deeds. Be accountable for your own actions and work together for mutual benefit.

#### Quotes

"It is important to finish what you start."

"It is your responsibility to do what you say you will do."

"Being responsible means people can count on you."

"Standing up for what's right is not always easy, but it is the responsible thing to do."

"Responsible persons are mature people who have taken charge of themselves and their conduct, who own up to their actions – and who answer for themselves."

### November

#### Good Citizenship

Teach students to obey school rules and the laws of the state and nation. Students understand a citizen's rights and responsibilities.

#### Quotes

"What you do tells more about you than what you say."

"Don't believe everything you hear, think about who you heard it from."

"Integrity is doing what you know is right, even when no one else is."

"Honest people don't worry about what they've said or done."

*\*Teachers can utilize Bully Free Classroom (Allan Beane, 2001) text/materials provided at each school.\**

## **A Bully Free School System**

“As a school staff we must do all we can to build a community from within where teachers, school leaders, and parents all play key roles in providing a positive model for the bully free belief system through our system-wide credo as educators—to be Active, Alert, and Involved in the lives of all our students on a daily and consistent basis. We have a school wide belief that every child should have the opportunity to come to school daily excited, enthused, and ready to learn and enjoy their day. School is a place where we all feel respected and work together in effectively dealing with bullying, accept and appreciate differences, and care and look out for one another. School safety must be everyone’s top priority.”

## **December**

### **Service to Others and Kindness**

Students learn to provide meaningful assistance to those in the school and community through individual actions or cooperative efforts. Be considerate, courteous, helpful, and understanding of others. Show compassion, caring, and generosity.

### **Quotes**

“We all have to live here together, so let’s care about each other.”

“To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.”

## **January**

### **Self-Discipline**

Teach students to demonstrate hard work and commitment to purpose; restrain from inappropriate behaviors; and control words, actions, impulses, and desires.

### **Quotes**

“Work as hard as you play.”

“If you’re going to do something, have the self-discipline to do it right.”

## **February**

### **Courage**

Teach students to do the right thing even when others do not, follow conscience rather than the crowd. Attempt difficult things that are worthwhile.

### **Quotes**

“Courage is doing the right thing when no one else will.”

“A courageous friend will stand beside you when no one else will.”

## **March**

### **Honesty and Integrity**

Be truthful and trustworthy in all things. Act justly and honorably.

### **Quotes**

“You can always be a better person today than you were yesterday.”

“The true character of a person is shown when no one is watching. “

## **April**

### **Good Judgment**

Teach students to choose worthy goals and set proper priorities. Make wise decisions after thinking through the consequences of actions.

### **Quotes**

“It is never too late to set a goal for yourself.”

“Part of good judgment is asking yourself if you will be sorry tomorrow for what you do today.”

“It takes many years to build a strong friendship, but it can take one word to ruin it.”

## **May**

### **Perseverance**

Students should learn to be persistent in the pursuit of worthy objectives despite difficulty and opposition. Be patient and willing to try again when confronted with delays, mistakes, or failures.

### **Quotes**

“Nobody knows what they can do until they try.”

“Believe in yourself and then be tough enough to make it happen.”

***“A teacher affects eternity. They never know where their influence ends.”***

# Complaint Form for Student Use

## Complaint Form

Name of Student Reporting Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Who are the individuals involved in the complaint? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the complaint? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What happened before the complaint? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What happened after the event that caused the complaint? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What could have prevented the complaint? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What would be a positive outcome of this complaint? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Anger and Aggression Log for Student Use

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

What happened? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Intensity of Anger: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My feelings: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My primary underlying feelings: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My behaviors: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How others probably saw my expression of feelings: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Consequences: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What I could have done that would have been better: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **K-2 Needs Assessment: Tell Me How You Feel**

**This is a happy face**

**This is a sad face**

- 1. This is how I feel about me:**
- 2. This is how I feel about school:**
- 3. This is how I feel about my school work:**
- 4. This is how my teacher feels about me:**
- 5. This is how I feel about friends:**
- 6. This is how other children feel about me:**
- 7. This is how I feel at home:**



## K-2 Needs Assessment: Tell Me How You Feel

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle Yes or No for each sentence.

- |  |     |    |    |
|--|-----|----|----|
| 1. I feel good about myself.               | Yes | or | No |
| 2. I believe school is important.          | Yes | or | No |
| 3. I am happy with my school work.         | Yes | or | No |
| 4. I enjoy being around people.            | Yes | or | No |
| 5. I make friends easily.                  | Yes | or | No |
| 6. I finish what I start.                  | Yes | or | No |
| 7. I am proud of myself.                   | Yes | or | No |
| 8. I have a happy home life.               | Yes | or | No |
| 9. I get angry easily and can't calm down. | Yes | or | No |
| 10. I worry a lot, especially about tests. | Yes | or | No |

## Action Research Data

### Bowman Middle School 2001-2004

#### Attendance Is Up after 175 Days:

2001-02	90.8%
2002-03	97.8%
2003-04	95.7%

#### EOG Test Scores:

2001-02	74.3%
2002-03	84.3%
2003-04	87.6%

#### Student Surveys

##### Students who feel bullies exist at BMS:

2001-02	74.6%
2002-03	38.9%
2003-04	49.7%

##### Student who have been bullied:

2001-02	44.8%
2002-03	20.2%
2003-04	24.6%

#### Students Who Believe They Have:

##### Avenues to report bullying:

2001-02	24.6%
2002-03	78.6%
2003-04	86.7%

##### Number of aggressive occurrences:

2001-02	36
2002-03	7
2003-04	5

## **Bully Free Readings**

*The Generosity Factor*, Kenneth Blanchard (2002)

*Murder Is No Accident: Understanding and Preventing Youth Violence*, Deborah Prothrow-Stith & Howard R. Spivak (2004)

*The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, Barbara Coloroso (2002)

*Bringing Up Boys*, Dr. James Dobson (2001)

*Odd Girl Out*, Rachel Simmons (2002)

*The Bully Free Classroom*, Dr. Allan Beane (2000)

*No One Left to Hate: Teaching Compassion after Columbine*, Elliot Aronson (2001)

*Stop Laughing at Me*, Jose Blasé (2001)

*Weakfish*, Michael Dorn, (2004)

*It Is Time to Be Bully Free!* (2018), Dr. Richard A. Spurling

## **Bully Free School Zone Parent Pledge**

**We the PARENTS of ASHEVILLE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL say.....**

**“AT THIS SCHOOL...WE BELIEVE...  
WE SHOULD BE...BULLY FREE!”**

Bullying is defined as when one individual (or group) seeks to dominate, control, and terrorize the life of another. We know bullying can be pushing, shoving, hitting, and spitting, as well as name calling, picking on, making fun of, laughing at, and excluding someone. Bullying causes pain and stress to victims and is never justified or excusable as, “kids being kids,” “just teasing,” or any other rationalization. The victim is never responsible for being a target of bullying. Bullying behavior is not welcome at our school.

Everyone at ACA MIDDLE SCHOOL will work to provide a school environment that is safe, calm, orderly, procedural, and one in which people care for one another.

### **By Signing This Pledge, We the Parents of B.M.S. Agree to:**

1. Keep themselves and their children informed and aware of school bullying policies.
2. Work in partnership with the school to encourage positive behavior, valuing differences, and promoting sensitivity to others.
3. Discuss regularly with their children their feelings about school work, friendships, and relationships.
4. Inform faculty of changes in their children’s behavior or circumstances at home that may change a child’s behavior at school.
5. Alert faculty or administration if any bullying has occurred.
6. Provide a good role model for your children and be involved in their school lives.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***“When schools work together with families to support learning, children  
tend to succeed not just in school but throughout life.”***

## What Can Parents Do to Keep Kids Bully Free?

*“When schools work together with parents to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school but throughout life.”*

### Parent’s Roles

These responsibilities mirror the roles of the school.

1. Be actively involved and have quality time for your child,
2. Develop a personal relationship,
3. Have high expectations for academic growth,
4. Be an active participant at your child’s school,
5. Develop an open line of communication,
6. Be supportive of your child’s school, and remember,
7. **You are their Role Model.**

*“We must all have a heightened awareness in the lives of our children”*

### Tips for Parents

If you feel your child is being bullied, keep in mind – most victims of bullying do not talk about it. They are ashamed, embarrassed, and scared it will intensify.

1. Try approaching the topic indirectly and ask your child, “Who’s the bully in your classroom? How do they treat you? What do you think about their actions toward others? Who does the bully pick on the most?”
2. Believe your child if they tell you they are being bullied. Ask for specifics and write them down.
3. Contact the teacher or principal as soon as possible. Request a meeting to discuss your concerns. Ask for the teacher’s perspective. He or she probably knows things about the bullying that you don’t.
4. Please be calm and be respectful; your child’s teacher wants to help.
5. Become aware of your child’s Bully Free program.

### At Home Tips

1. Encourage your child to talk about their feelings.
2. Praise your child as often as possible.
3. Give your child responsibilities at home.
4. Help your child develop bully resistance skills (let your child develop these with you).
5. If your child seems to lack friends, arrange for him or her to join social groups, clubs, or organizations that meet their interests.
6. Help to develop self-confidence and social skills – confident children with social skills are much less likely to be bullied.
7. Consider whether or not your child might be doing something that encourages bullies to pick on them. Is there a behavior that your child needs to change? Of course, no one should be bullied, but sometimes kids don’t help themselves.

**Remember**

You are your child's most important teacher. Discipline at home should be fair, consistent, age-appropriate, and respectful. Parents who can't control their temper are teaching their children that it's okay to yell, scream, and use physical violence to get their way.

Tip: Many children who bully others come from homes where their parents bully them, and the same is true with a victim of bullying.

# Parents Preventing Bullying

## Top 10 List and Quick Tips for Parents

1. **Encourage your child to report bullying incidents to you.**

- Validate your child's feelings by letting him/her know that it is normal to feel hurt, sad, scared, angry, etc. Don't ignore their report.
- Let your child know that he/she has made the right choice by reporting the incident(s), and they did nothing wrong.
- Help the child to be specific in describing bullying incident(s): who, what, where, when, why, how (look for patterns of repeated bullying).

2. **Play the "What if" game with your child.**

- What would you do if: You saw someone getting picked on? You saw someone was spreading mean rumors about a classmate?
- What could he/she have done differently for a better outcome?

3. **Look for signs of bullying.**

Your child may be bullied if he or she:

- Doesn't want to go to school;
- Has cuts, bruises, or damaged clothes or belongings;
- Is acting unhappy or depressed;
- Spends a lot of time alone; or
- Complains of headaches or stomachaches.

Your child might be bullying other children if he or she:

- Enjoys teasing other kids,
- Has a hard time controlling anger, or
- It is very rough or aggressive.

4. **Don't Overreact.**

- Don't immediately become emotional (angry, mad, sad, vindictive, etc.) and try to solve the problem. Be open-minded that your child may be a part of the problem as well.
- Get the facts before you react. Keep emotion out of your reaction.

5. **Keep a precise, specific log.**

- Be aware of whether or not your child has a group of friends at school. Ask who they eat lunch with, hang out with, play with at recess, etc. Know what your child is into at school.
- Record the date, time, circumstances, and all relevant information regarding each separate bullying event.
- Have documentation of various episodes to describe to school officials when reporting.
- Walk your child through the whole story so that you get a detailed run-down of what happened.

- Be prepared for the possibility that your child may be less than completely innocent.
6. **For elementary and middle school bullying, consider contacting the parents first. For high school bullying, contact the school.**
    - In many cases, it's very effective to have everyone meet and talk about why the behavior is unacceptable, why it will not be tolerated, and how it will be dealt with in the future.
  7. **Encourage your child to seek help and to report bullying incidents to someone he/she feels safe with at school.**
    - Find someone your child trusts and feels comfortable with.
    - Talk to an adult who is in charge of a specific activity or area.
  8. **Treat the school as your ally. Understand your school's anti-bullying prevention procedures.**
    - Volunteer time to help supervise on field trips, on the playground, or in the lunchroom. Let your school know you want to help.
    - Share your child's concerns and specific information about bullying incidents with appropriate school personnel.
    - Work with the school staff to protect your child from possible retaliation.
    - Establish a plan with the school if it happens in the future.
  9. **Learn more about bullying.**
    - Understand and participate with your child's school anti-bullying prevention plan.
  10. **Coach your child in possible alternatives in avoiding bullying.**
    - Teach your child to avoid dangerous situations by playing in a different place, playing a different game, or staying near a supervised area where adults are located.
    - Support your child by encouraging him/her to extend invitations for friends to play at your home or to attend activities.
    - Look for ways to find and keep new friends.
    - Involve your child in social activities outside of the school setting.

**If nothing appears to be helping, write a letter to the principal.**

A letter puts the principal on notice that you are serious and that you expect the school to create a safe climate for your child to learn. In the letter, be specific about the instances of bullying and the harm it has caused. Ask the principal to put in writing the steps the school will take to keep your child safe from bullying behavior. Meet periodically to see what progress has been made since the plan was put in motion.

**Five Ways to Handle a Bully**

1. Stay calm and alert. Consider the options and do nothing to escalate the situation.
2. Walk away. Fighting isn't worth it. You do not have to prove yourself by fighting.
3. Take a non-violent stand. Speak respectfully. Tell the bully that you don't want to fight.
4. Report it to the authorities and discuss with them how you will be protected from retaliation in the future.
5. Get away. Find safety and call for help.





## **Research Findings, Emergent Themes, and the Bully Free Belief System**

### **“The Bully Free School Zone Character Education Program: A Study of Impact on Five Western North Carolina Middle Schools”**

**–Dissertation by Rick Spurling (2004)**

1. Improves dynamics of interpersonal relationships that exist in the school community, including student to student, student to teacher, teacher to teacher, teacher to parent, and most importantly school to community relationships.
2. The Bully Free Belief System has shown that it is a deterrent to aggressive and violent behavior as all incidences have decreased significantly since the initiation of the anti-bullying program.
3. Attendance and state test scores have improved in all five schools of study.
4. Developing an anti-bullying committee of administrators, teachers, parents, and students to create school-wide policies and procedures, whole school interventions, classroom interventions, and infraction interventions, have helped create a trust in each other and in the new anti-bullying philosophy. Better relations exist between schools and parents.
5. An open line of communication was practiced with all involved.
6. The program changed and improved relationships and how people interact with one another. For example, teachers now spend time interacting with students during non-class time instead of in a supervision role.
7. Adults involved with the school have a heightened awareness of the importance of appropriate adult modeling for our children. Everyone is more conscious of how they treat and react to each other during the school day.
8. Our school’s teachers have incorporated a theme for adult presence in the school building: “Be Active, Alert, and Involved” in the lives of each and every student. Based on everyone’s attempt to “Build a Community from Within,” personal relationships are developed through a collegial environment of trust and mutual respect.
9. Students have an improved understanding of their role in preventing and dealing with bullying behavior, and they now have avenues to report bullying.
10. Teachers, administrators, and counselors feel more comfortable and confident that they are dealing with bullying behavior more effectively.
11. Rules and procedures in place were created by students providing direction on how to deal with bullying behavior of any kind for victims, bystanders, teachers, and parents.
12. Because of the new curriculum, teachers now feel more equipped and comfortable in their role in dealing with bullying behavior.
13. Boy bullying (physical fighting) decreases dramatically.
14. Girls are becoming more dominant in school bullying with an emphasis on spreading malicious gossip and rumors and in isolating other students through humiliation tactics.

15. Many of the girls and boys involved with psychological bullying tend to come from prominent families that provide the opportunity and means to use technology unsupervised.
16. Most verbal and emotional bullying tends to be related to sexual slander aimed at victims.
17. As educators become more comfortable with bully-free concepts, they are now beginning to understand methods in dealing with victims of bullying – either a true victim or a provocative victim.
18. The program has changed how discipline practices are administered in the school.
19. Overall perception of school safety (higher sense of security) has improved.
20. Teachers have begun to incorporate bully-free concepts into their subject area curriculum and student organization activities.
21. Instructional activity is at a higher level with more accomplished in shorter periods.
22. Students are more involved and attending after-school events to support and show pride for their school.
23. Vandalism has decreased dramatically at all five schools.
24. Throughout the study, the research clarified that high expectations for learning and appropriate behavior are the responsibility of administrators, teachers, and parents.
25. Since the initiation of the program, both systems have included a “Hazing, Harassment, or Bullying” policy to their system-wide Code of Conduct. An effort is being made to ensure that this anti-bullying approach is, “not just words on paper but action in our school.” This has also become state legislation through the recent general assembly in North Carolina (2004-2009) and Tennessee (2005).
26. Adult intervention is the key to prevent bullying in our schools

***“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”***

***-Eleanor Roosevelt***