

# BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Parent Training

Ashe County Schools

# Workshop Objectives

Participants in the workshop will:

- Understand what bullying behavior is and is not
- Understand what bullying behavior may look like
- Explore ideas for responding to bullying behavior
- Become equipped with specific strategies for addressing and reporting bullying behavior when it occurs
- Understand your responsibilities as a parent in regards to bullying/harassment

# Legislation

In June 2009, the North Carolina General Assembly adopted the School Violence Prevention Act.

The act went into effect starting the 2009-2010 school year.

School Boards must have adopted a policy that complies with this act by 12/31/09.

# Quiz

<http://www.education.com/quiz/bullying-myths/>

# Bullying or Not?

Angie - usually a friendly, engaged student in your classroom has started sitting in the back of the room and no longer gets involved much in class discussions. One day you observe that, as she's leaving class, two other students walking out of class right behind Angie are whispering to each other and giggling.

*Answer: Not bullying but would raise concern*

*Rationale: There is no clear indication that the two students giggling were responding to Angie. The behavior patterns warrant close observation, and, as a teacher, you'd want to reach out to Angie to discuss the changes you've noted, but, unless patterns persist and are directed specifically at Angie, this situation does not appear to rise to the level of clear bullying behavior.*

Your class is brainstorming a list of topics for a writing project. As the students begin to talk about favorite hobbies as possible writing topics, Benny, a child with autism and ADHD blurts out loudly that he wants to write about his dance class. Some of the other boys laugh. The next day, Benny comes to school wearing jeans and a dance leotard. You overhear one of the boys say, “Those are girl clothes!”

*Answer: Not bullying or need more information.*

*Rationale: The comments made by the boy toward Benny clearly are potentially hurtful but seem more of an expression of immaturity than an intentional attempt to inflict harm. From the information provided, this is a single, isolated incident and does not yet rise to the level of bullying. The teacher(s) involved clearly will want to continue to monitor this situation to ensure that it is not repeated.*

During most of the semester, Steve was part of what had seemed to be a pretty tight group of students who often would sit together in class and volunteer to work as a team on class projects. For the last few weeks, when Steve would sit with the group, they would ignore him, acting as if he wasn't there. Steve has now started sitting on the other side of the room from the group. Steve's mom calls to express concern that her son is becoming increasingly withdrawn at home and talks about wanting to change schools. The previous evening, she walked into Steve's room and found horrible messages addressed to him on his Facebook page that he had left open. She has called you because the messages were from the same group of students with whom Steve had been friends, students in your class. When she confronted her son about the messages, he broke down and said that the messages have appeared every night for the past few weeks.

*Answer: Bullying behavior.*

*Rationale: The behavior of Steve's group of former friends is unwanted and socially aggressive and is occurring over time. Steve's efforts to remain connected with the group proved him to be powerless to combat the social isolation it imposed. Steve eventually expressed his isolation in physical form by sitting away from the group. The bullying then continued outside the classroom on the Internet.*

# What Is Bullying?

Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures of written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus

AND THAT:

Places a student or school employee in actual and/or reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property

OR:

Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits.

- **NC Board of Education approved definition**

# Core Elements of Bullying Behaviors

Bullying is a form of youth violence that includes:

- Unwanted, aggressive behavior
- A real or perceived imbalance of power between the student(s) doing the bullying and the student(s) being bullied
- Intentional actions or behaviors that are repeated, or have the potential to be repeated over time

# Examples of Imbalance of Power

- Physical characteristics (age, size, strength, gender)
- Popularity or association with popular peers
- Abilities and skills (academic, artistic, sports)
- Access to money, resources, information
- Being outnumbered
- Presence of weapons

# Types of Bullying

- Verbal bullying - name calling, threats, teasing, taunting, harassing, inappropriate sexual comments
- Social or relational bullying - Harming reputations and relationships of targeted student(s), rumors, spreading gossip, excluding from a group, embarrassing someone
- Physical bullying - hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, biting, gestures, spitting, hair pulling, tripping, breaking or taking someone's things, etc.
- Cyberbullying - using social media to target another person, mean or inappropriate messages or pictures, creating fake profiles

# Roles Students Play in Bullying

## NEGATIVE

- Initiate the bullying
- Join in the bullying
- Support/encourage the bullying
- Observe the bullying, but disregard or do not intervene

## POSITIVE

- Report to an adult
- Try to intervene
- Support the victim
- Set a good example; treat everyone with respect

# Students At Risk Of Being Bullied

Research shows that students are at risk of being bullied because of perceived differences, such as:

- Appearance (body size, clothing, tattoos, piercings, hair coloring)
- Degree of masculinity or femininity
- Performance in school
- Race/ethnicity/national origin and/or religion
- Household income
- Youth with disabilities and other special health needs
- New to the school
- Low self-esteem
- Do not get along with others, seen as annoying, provoking or antagonizing.

# Indicators of Students Who May Bully

- Larger or stronger than classmates
- Enjoy controlling
- Lack of empathy or compassion
- Feel more powerful
- Lack of emotion or remorse when discussing negative behaviors
- Enjoy conflicts and refuse to accept responsibility for negative behaviors
- Often have problems at school
- Less parental involvement, home issues
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Have friends who bully
- Have been bullied in the past
- Feel a sense of entitlement

# Common Myths About Students Who Bully

- Students who bully are loners
- Students who bully have low self-esteem and are insecure
- Students bully others because they want attention
- Bullying behavior is a normal part of children being children
- Only boys bully others

# Signs of a Student Being Bullied

- Unexplained injuries – cuts, bruises, scratches
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, or other property
- Socially isolated by peers or self - kids that are picked last, sit or play by themselves
- Faking illness or complaining with frequent head/stomach aches
- Attendance issues – truant, tardy
- Academic failure or declining performance
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Difficulty sleeping – sleep in class
- Self destructive behaviors – cutting, running away, suicide

# Why Students Do Not Tell Adults

- ⦿ Perception of tattling and snitching
- ⦿ Concern about retaliation
- ⦿ Gender stereotypes - I am a boy, I should be tough
- ⦿ Lack of confidence that adults can do something about it
- ⦿ Many children and youth do not report bullying

# What Parents Can Do to Prevent Bullying

- ⦿ Teach your child to treat others the way they want to be treated
- ⦿ Do not tolerate mistreatment of others
- ⦿ Help your child understand that mistreatment and kindness are powerful
- ⦿ Teach your child to control his/her anger
- ⦿ Teach your child how to apologize, recognize when they have made a mistake, and change their behavior
- ⦿ Consistently apply consequences for misbehavior

# What Parents Can Do to Prevent Bullying

- Monitor your child's viewing of violence on television and on video games
- Limit your child's access to social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)
- Monitor ALL social media activity and be able to access your child's accounts
- Watch for signs of anger, anxiety, and depression and seek early intervention
- Develop self-confidence and self-esteem in your child

# Plan of Action if You Suspect Bullying

- Calmly discuss the events with your child to obtain details
- Stay calm and do not be too quick to blame anyone
- Encourage the child to find an adult at school to confide in
- Contact school personnel about your concerns (teacher, bus driver, school counselor, administrator, etc.)

# The Role of Ashe County Schools

- Create a sense of belonging in the classroom
- Create a climate in the school/classroom where bullying is not acceptable
- Create an environment where there is mutual respect and fair treatment
- Actively supervise in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, playgrounds and unstructured areas
- Document and report any complaint/concern of bullying
- School initiatives to promote positive behavior and good character

# Videos

[Cyberbullying](#)

[PSA](#)

[Teach Your Students](#)

[Words Hurt](#)

[Take A Stand](#)

[Dangers of Sexting](#)

[Kids Talk About Bullying](#)

[Break The Chain](#)