

Bullying Prevention Resource Manual



Learning Today...Leading Tomorrow

BULLYING PREVENTION RESOURCE MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

The Richmond County School System is dedicated to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all of its students. It is the shared responsibility of all who work with students to provide them with the tools and information necessary to make good decisions in order to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner. This handbook is designed for school counselors, school social workers and school psychologists as a valuable resource to assist students in the formation of habits, to develop the skills and tools that will lead to better decision-making and positive life choices when confronted with conflict. Please use the resources, information and strategies within this handbook as part of your program to provide students with the foundation to be successful students.

Richmond County Schools

Department of Student Services

State Policy on Bullying



Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
“Making Education Work for All Georgians”

Policy for Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation

Introduction

Bullying is sometimes regarded as a “rite of passage” and an unavoidable part of childhood and adolescence. For this reason, bullying behaviors may be ignored or go unnoticed by teachers, parents, and school administrators. The consequences for not recognizing certain behaviors as “bullying” and the failure to respond accordingly are serious. Research shows that chronic victims of bullying may experience loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, poor academic achievement, and truancy. Other victims may bring weapons to school or contemplate suicide.

Research also reveals that bullying is widespread. Almost 30 percent of youth in the United States (over 5.7 million) are estimated to be involved in bullying as either a bully, a target of bullying, or both. In a recent national survey of students in grades 6-10, 13 percent reported bullying others, 11 percent reported being the target of bullies, and another 6 percent said that they bullied others and were bullied themselves (Nansel, 2001). In the national publication, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2009 Report*, 25 percent of public schools across the United States reported that bullying occurred among students on a daily or weekly basis in the 2007-2008 school year. The Georgia Student Health Survey (GSHS) II is administered to Georgia students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. GSHS II results for the 2009-2010 school year indicate that 16 percent of students reported being bullied at school in the last 30 days; 33 percent of students reported being picked on or teased at school in the last 30 days; and 25 percent of students reported that they do not feel safe at school.

Although bullying and other issues related to school climate are often viewed independently from academic performance, student achievement will not reach the levels that truly reflect the potential of Georgia’s students unless more attention is given to the relationship between school climate and academic achievement. Students cannot be expected to reach their full academic potential in an environment of fear and intimidation. Therefore, it is critical for schools to provide a safe and positive school climate for their students. A positive school climate will yield an increase in academic achievement and high school graduation rates.

In 1999, the Georgia General Assembly enacted bullying legislation that: (1) defined bullying; (2) required each school district to adopt policies that prohibit bullying for grades six through 12; and (3) required such prohibition to be included in the student code of conduct. Policies were also required to assign students to an alternative school for committing the offense of bullying after the third offense in the same school year.

In 2010, the Georgia General Assembly modified the existing law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4) by expanding the definition of bullying and requiring local school districts to notify parents/guardians when their child has committed an offense of bullying or is a victim of bullying. In addition, the law was modified to require school districts to adopt policies that prohibit bullying for all schools, not just for grades six through 12 and to have age appropriate consequences and interventions available for all schools. The law requires that through appropriate due process, disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals assign students in grades six through 12 to alternative schools when such students have committed an offense of bullying for the third time in a school year. School districts must implement these new requirements by August 1, 2011. The law also requires the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to develop a model bullying policy and to make it available on the GaDOE website.

I. Statement Against Bullying

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) expressly prohibits the bullying of any person, by any means or method, at school, on school property, or at school-related functions.

II. Definition of Terms

A. **Bullying:**

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, bullying means an act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

- 1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
- 2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
- 3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
 - i. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1;
 - ii. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - iii. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening education environment; or
 - iv. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

B. **Harassment and Intimidation:**

Harassment and intimidation means any gesture or written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic including race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability or disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-related functions or activities or on a school bus and that:

- 1) A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming a student or school employee or damaging his or her property;
- 2) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, or school employee's work performance, or either's opportunities, or benefits;
- 3) Has the effect of having a substantial negative impact on a student's or a school employee's emotional or psychological well-being; or

- 4) Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or school employee in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, or the orderly operation of the school.

C. Visible Bodily Harm:

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1, *visible bodily harm* is defined as bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim and may include, but is not limited to, substantially blackened eyes, substantially swollen lips or other facial or body parts, or substantial bruises to body parts.

III. Prohibited Behaviors

Bullying, harassment and intimidation may include many different behaviors which ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate another student or school employee. Prohibited behaviors must occur on the property of the public school, at an event within the jurisdiction of a public school or at a school-sponsored event. Disciplinary action may also be necessary if off-campus behavior results in a disruption to the school environment. Examples of prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Unwanted teasing
- ❖ Threats, taunts and intimidation through words and/or gestures
- ❖ Physical violence and/or attacks
- ❖ Extortion
- ❖ Destruction of school or personal property
- ❖ Theft of money and/or personal possessions
- ❖ Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- ❖ Public humiliation
- ❖ Social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
- ❖ Rumors or spreading of falsehoods
- ❖ Stalking
- ❖ Cyberstalking or engaging in conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to the victim
- ❖ Cyberbullying or the willful, hostile and repeated harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to, email, blogs, social networking websites (e.g. MySpace, Facebook, etc.) chat rooms, texts, and instant messaging
- ❖ The use of cameras or camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students or school employees and posting them online
- ❖ Sending abusive or threatening text messages or instant messages
- ❖ Using websites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students

IV. Reporting Procedures

Bullying is an intentional physical and/or emotional intrusion on a person's well-being and should not be tolerated at any level. Immediate and reasonably appropriate actions should be taken upon receipt of any report of bullying, regardless of the source, identity of the alleged violator/victim, grade level, previous circumstances, and/or personal beliefs. Therefore, all reports of bullying must be taken seriously. School principals are strongly urged to discuss this issue with their entire staff and require that they refer to them any reports/suspicious of bullying. Local superintendents should ensure that the school district's anti-bullying policy is posted throughout all schools in the district, including but not limited to cafeterias, school bulletin boards, administration offices, the school district's website; and in all student and employee handbooks and student codes of conduct.

Once bullying has been reported, school officials should take the following actions:

1. **Investigate**

Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation should begin no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance if available. School police, school counselors, school social workers and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.

2. **Notify**

At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, parents/guardians of the accused and the victim must be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

3. **Discipline**

Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances.

Students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school through appropriate due process by disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals

Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

4. Follow Up

Follow up is important to the accused and the victim. Implement a planned method to provide after-care and follow up. Reiterate to all the previously stated prohibition on retaliation.

Upon receiving a report of bullying, the following actions are the minimal requirements, pursuant to Georgia's bullying law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4). However, school principals are not limited in performing additional measures as they deem reasonably appropriate. It should be noted that bullying may be witnessed directly by staff or reported by a student, parent or stakeholder by name or anonymously through hotlines such as the Georgia Department of Education's **1-877-SAY STOP** (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline. School officials should develop and communicate methods for students and others to report incidents of bullying.

A new data element for "bullying" has been added to the *Incident Type* code on the Georgia Department of Education's Student Record Data Collection System. All school districts are required to report incidents of bullying through the Georgia Department of Education's Student Record Data Collection System at the end of each school year. Bullying incidents should be reported in the same manner as the other discipline incidents (alcohol, arson, battery, etc.). Bullying is defined in the Student Record Data Collection System as follows:

Bullying - A pattern of behavior, which may include written, verbal, or physical acts, that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education on, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm or visibly bodily harm.

V. Retaliation Prohibited

"Retaliation" is defined as bullying, harassment or intimidation toward a person in response to previously reported bullying, harassment or intimidation. Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry is prohibited. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of local board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. **Any student who knowingly files a false report of bullying, harassment or intimidation is guilty of such and should be punished under existing disciplinary provisions.**

VI. Immunity

Any person who reports in good faith an incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation to an appropriate school official, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in the school district's policy shall be immune from civil liability for any damages caused by such reporting or any failure to remedy the reported incident.

VII. Transportation

Local school districts may provide transportation to a student transferred to another school as a result of a bullying incident but are not required to do so.

VIII. Training and Professional Development

Local school districts shall provide professional development and training opportunities for school staff on how to respond appropriately to students who commit an offense of bullying, students who are victims of bullying and bystanders who report bullying. A bullying prevention training module and bullying prevention resources are available on the GaDOE website at http://www.gadoe.org/sia_titleiv.aspx?PageReq=SIABully

IX. School District Requirements

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, no later than August 1, 2011:

- (1) Each local board of education shall adopt a policy that prohibits bullying of a student by another student and shall require such prohibition to be included in the student code of conduct for schools in that school system;
- (2) Each local board policy shall require that, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal of school officials provided for in this subpart that a student in grades six through 12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to an alternative school;
- (3) Each local board of education shall establish and publish in its local board policy a method to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student upon a finding by a school administrator that such student has committed an offense of bullying or is a victim of bullying; and
- (4) Each local board of education shall ensure that students and parents of students are notified of the prohibition against bullying, and the penalties for violating the prohibition, by posting such information at each school and by including such information in student and parent handbooks.

Appendix A

Bullying Statute (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4)

(a) As used in this Code section, the term 'bullying' means an act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

(1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;

(2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or

(3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:

(A) Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;

(B) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;

(C) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or

(D) Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

(b) No later than August 1, 2011:

(1) Each local board of education shall adopt a policy that prohibits bullying of a student by another student and shall require such prohibition to be included in the student code of conduct for schools in that school system;

(2) Each local board policy shall require that, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal of school officials provided for in this subpart that a student in grades six through 12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to an alternative school;

(3) Each local board of education shall establish and publish in its local board policy a method to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student upon a finding by a school administrator that such student has committed an offense of bullying or is a victim of bullying; and

(4) Each local board of education shall ensure that students and parents of students are notified of the prohibition against bullying, and the penalties for violating the prohibition, by posting such information at each school and by including such information in student and parent handbooks.

(c) No later than January 1, 2011, the Department of Education shall develop a model policy regarding bullying, that may be revised from time to time, and shall post such policy on its website in order to assist local school systems. Such model policy shall include:

(1) A statement prohibiting bullying;

(2) A requirement that any teacher or other school employee who has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the school principal;

(3) A requirement that each school have a procedure for the school administration to

- promptly investigate in a timely manner and determine whether bullying has occurred;
- (4) An age-appropriate range of consequences for bullying which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances;
 - (5) A procedure for a teacher or other school employee, student, parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student, either anonymously or in such person's name, at such person's option, to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity;
 - (6) A statement prohibiting retaliation following a report of bullying; and
 - (7) Provisions consistent with the requirements of subsection (b) of this Code section.

(d) The Department of Education shall develop and post on its website a list of entities and their contact information which produce anti-bullying training programs and materials deemed appropriate by the department for use in local school systems.

(e) Any person who reports an incident of bullying in good faith shall be immune from civil liability for any damages caused by such reporting.

(f) Nothing in this Code section or in the model policy promulgated by the Department of Education shall be construed to require a local board of education to provide transportation to a student transferred to another school as a result of a bullying incident.

(g) Any school system which is not in compliance with the requirements of subsection (b) of this Code section shall be ineligible to receive state funding pursuant to Code Sections 20-2-161 and 20-2-260.

Appendix B

Model Bullying Policy for LEAs

The _____ School District believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All schools within the district have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. Behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully, harass, or intimidate another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling; the use of electronic methods to harass, threaten or humiliate, and social isolation and/or manipulation. The school district policy prohibiting bullying is included in the student code of conduct and includes but is not limited to the following:

Any student who engages in bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.

Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.

If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the school principal, the student or the parent of the student should contact the local superintendent or his or her designee.

The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

All students and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation to the school principal or designee. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school or a school-sponsored activity and during a school-sponsored activity.

Bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of bullying and upon a finding of guilt. Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include but is not limited to the following:

Loss of a privilege

Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria or school bus

Reassignment of classes

In-school suspension

Out-of-school suspension

Detention

Expulsion (through appropriate due process hearing)

Assignment to an alternative school (through appropriate due process hearing)

If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying and students who commit an offense of bullying.

Students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor or other staff member by using the school district's complaint procedures or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877 SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline. Please note: Any form of electronic bullying (cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, e-mail systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the student code of conduct.
- The school shall keep a report of bullying and the results of an investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident to the school principal designee.

The following actions will be taken when bullying is reported:

1. Investigate

Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation should begin no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance if available. School police, school counselors, school social workers and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.

2. Notify

At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, parents/guardians of the accused and the victim must be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

3. Discipline

Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances.

Students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school through appropriate due process by disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals.

Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

4. Follow Up

Follow up is important to the accused and the victim. Implement a planned method to provide after-care and follow up. Reiterate to all the previously stated prohibition on retaliation.

Appendix C

Bullying Prevention Resources

GaDOE Bullying Prevention

Toolkit http://www.gadoe.org/sia_titleiv.aspx?PageReq=SIABully

GaDOE School Safety

Hotline <http://www.gadoe.org/askdoe.aspx?PageReq=ASKSafety>

Bullying information from various government agencies <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>

Safe and Supportive

Schools <http://safesupportiveschools.ed.gov/index.php?id=01>

Stop Bullying Now!

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>

SAMHSA Bullying Prevention

Resources <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/15plus/educate/>

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Bullying Prevention

Resources <http://www.nasponline.org/families/index.aspx>

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource

Center <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/topics/bullying.asp>

Eyes on

Bullying <http://www.eyesonbullying.org/>

National Crime Prevention Council Bullying Prevention

Resources <http://www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying>

Bullying Issues and

Answers http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2010092.pdf

Stop
Cyberbullying <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html>

Cyberbullying Prevention
Package <http://cybersmartcurriculum.org/cyberbullying/NSBA/>

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Cyberbullying and

Sexting http://ms1.gpb.org/GPBMediaSite1/Viewer/Viewers/Viewer320TL.aspx?mode=Default&peid=7_dbd45fe-62e1-4178-b780-1abbee18df85&pid=ab7b4c27-8796-48ba-9c6d-1b439b86c12d&playerType=WM7

Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Bullying Prevention

Toolkit http://www.adl.org/civil_rights/Anti-Bullying%20Law%20Toolkit_2009.pdf

Tips to Prevent

Sexting http://ncmec.vo.llnwd.net/o15/downloads/special/Sexting_Prevention.pdf

CDC Youth Violence

Prevention http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/electronic_aggression.htm NetSafe Cybersafety Professional Learning Modules

<http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/cybersafety.aspx?PageReq=CSModules>

Cyberbullying – Real Life

Stories <http://www.netsmartz.org/resources/reallife.htm#reallife>

NetSmartz Workshop

Activities <http://origin.www.netsmartz.org/education/download/>

Dealing with Bullies: For

Kids http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/grow/school_stuff/bullies.html

Dealing with Bullies: For

Teens http://teenshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/bullies.html

<http://www.getnetwise.org>

<http://www.bullying.org>

<http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/>

<http://www.pta.org/bullying.asp?gclid=CO6d6eymmp4CFShtwod2iVnnA>

<http://www.netsmartz.org/educators.htm>

<http://www.apa.org/topics/topicbully.html>

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/28/resources-on-bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

[http://www.besafeonline.org/English/**bullying**_online.htm](http://www.besafeonline.org/English/bullying_online.htm)

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Additional Bullying Resources:

For Primary Students:

<http://www.oceps.co.uk/bullying.htm>

(Primary school curriculum subject resources; primary school interactive fun and games; and information for primary school parents and teachers)

GALILEO Sources: (Contact your school Library Media Specialist or public library for the password.)

1. Professional Development Collection:

The Professional Development Collection is a specialized collection of journal articles and pamphlets especially for professional educators that includes abstract and index coverage for 800 professional development titles and searchable full text for over 500 journals covering the most current topics in the field of education.

Type **bullying** in the search box and then hit “enter” for articles and information on this topic.

2. ERIC at EBSCOhost:

ERIC at EBSCOhost includes content on all aspects of education and educational research from eric.ed.gov in the EBSCOhost user interface. Much of the journal content in the EBSCO version is available through publisher contracts with EBSCO and not available through eric.ed.gov

Type **bullying** in the search box and then hit “enter” for articles and information on this topic.

Appendix D

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Schools

Local Policy

Richmond County School System



Learning Today...Leading Tomorrow

BULLYING

All reports of bullying are serious. Appropriate inquiry should be made upon receipt of any report of bullying, without considering the source, identity of the alleged violator and/or victim, grade level, previous circumstances, and/or personal philosophy. School principals should train and provide professional training opportunities for the school staff on how to respond appropriately to students who commit an offense of bullying, students who are victims of bullying and bystanders who report bullying. The principal is authorized to have each staff member sign a document confirming he or she has received such information and was given an opportunity to ask questions. The principal may require that staff members refer to the administration any reports or reasonable suspicions of bullying.

The school district's anti-bullying policy may be posted throughout all schools in the district, including but not limited to, cafeterias, school bulletin boards, administration offices, the school's website, and in all student codes of conduct.

Procedures for addressing bullying behavior may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of the policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the Student Code of Conduct.
- All reports of bullying and the results of subsequent investigations are confidential.
- School Staff are expected to promptly respond upon personally witnessing a bullying incident or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- Non-School Personnel witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident to the school administration.

Response to Reports of Bullying

I. Investigate

Upon receipt of any report of bullying, a prompt inquiry or investigation, as circumstances dictate, involving appropriate personnel, will be undertaken. The investigation may include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and the review of video surveillance, if available. School Safety and Security Officers and other support staff may be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances.

2. Notify

As appropriate, during or after the inquiry or investigation, notification by school personnel will be made to parents or guardians of the accused and the victim. If

¹Note: Any headings used within this procedure are provided for convenience only and are not intended to serve as legal definitions or impart any legal standard or duties not otherwise properly provided by law.

medical attention is necessary, emergency management should be contacted and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

3. Discipline

Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged under the Student Code of Conduct with bullying or such other applicable provision, and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances.

Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria, or school bus
- Detention
- Reassignment of classes
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion (through appropriate due process hearing)
- Assignment to an alternative school (through appropriate due process hearing)

Students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school setting through appropriate due process by the Tribunal Panel. The school principal, or designee, may recommend stronger discipline prior to the third offense of bullying if circumstances warrant. Moreover, the Tribunal Panel officer may assign alternative school discipline prior to the third offense if the evidence and circumstances warrant.

Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

4. Follow-Up

Activities subsequent to the incident and the issuance of discipline are important to the accused and the victim. Each school should plan and implement such follow up activities, commensurate with the circumstances, including a reminder to all persons involved, the prohibition of retaliation and the importance of respecting each other.

School principals, or designees, are not limited from performing additional measures as, in the exercise of professional judgment and discretion, are considered reasonable. A bullying prevention training module and other resources are available on the Georgia Department of Education website.

In determining when and how to implement these procedures, educators exercise their professional judgment and discretion. Therefore, these procedures are not to be construed as imposing ministerial duties on individual employees. Further, the procedures are not intended to interfere with the duties of law enforcement, including the Department of School Safety and Security.

ADOPTED:

BULLYING

FILE: JCDAG

The County Board of Education of Richmond County believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline for all schools within the school system.

Bullying is defined as follows:

An act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at authorized school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
3. Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:
 - a. Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of Code Section 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as such term is defined in Code Section 16-5-23.1;
 - b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
 - d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Reporting

Students, parents, guardians, or other persons who have control or charge of a student, either anonymously or in person, are encouraged to report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity to the school principal or designee

Any teacher or other school employee who, in the exercise of his or her personal judgment and discretion, believes he or she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that someone is a target of bullying should immediately report it to the school principal.

Any report of bullying will be appropriately investigated by the administration in a timely manner based on the nature of the complaint to determine the following:

- a. whether bullying has occurred;
- b. whether there are other procedures related to illegal harassment or discrimination that should be implemented; and
- c. what other steps should be taken.

Discipline

Acts of bullying shall be punished by a range of consequences through the progressive discipline process, as stated in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. Such consequences shall include, at a minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling, as appropriate under the circumstances. However, upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer or tribunal that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to an alternative school. Nothing herein shall prohibit the tribunal panel from assigning the student to Tubman Education Center Alternative Program before a third offense of bullying should the circumstances warrant.

Notification of Bullying Offense

Upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the student by telephone call or through written notice, which may be done electronically.

General Notification of Bullying Prohibition

Students and parents will be notified of the prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by posting such information at school and by way of the inclusion of such information in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Retaliation Prohibited

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry is prohibited. Any report of retaliation for reporting bullying will be investigated and addressed as called for in this policy and in accordance with school system procedures.

False Reporting

Any student who knowingly files a false report of bullying, harassment or intimidation shall be punished under existing disciplinary provisions.

Immunity

Any person who reports in good faith an incident of bullying, shall be immune from civil liability for any damages caused by such reporting.

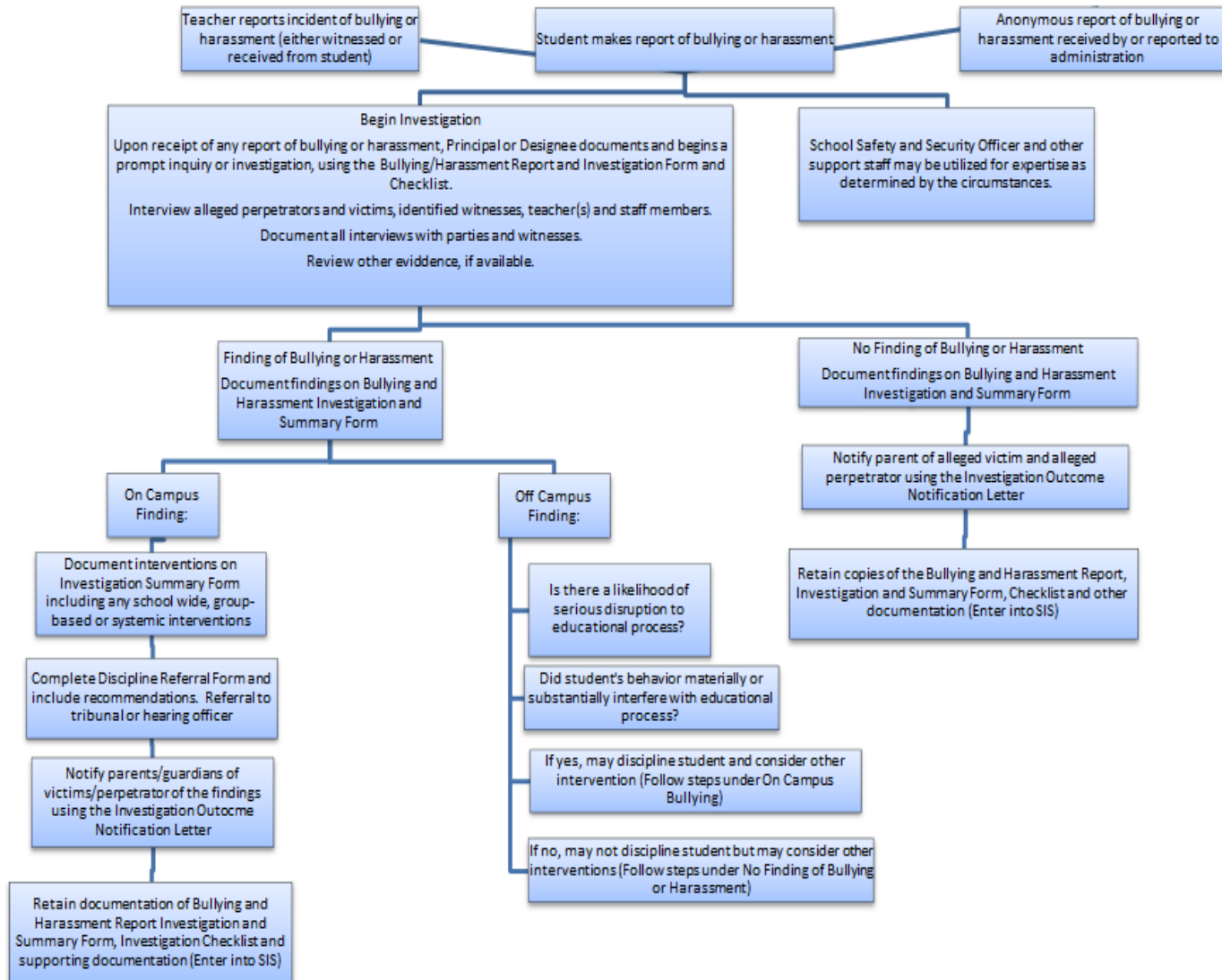
In determining when and how to implement this policy and any procedures related to it, educators exercise their professional judgment and discretion. Therefore, the policy is not to be construed as imposing ministerial duties on individual employees. Further, it is not intended to interfere with the duties of law enforcement.

Legal Reference: O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, § 16-5-23.1

Adopted:

Local Policy Protocol for Reporting

BULLYING OR HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION AND INTERVENTION PROCEDURES



BULLYING OR HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

Form A

Note: This checklist is intended as a guideline only and in no way replaces or diminishes the professional judgment and discretion of the administrator or employee(s) participating in any investigation regarding bullying/harassment. This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.

Victim(s) Names	School	Date
Investigative Steps		Date
		Initials
1. Complete and/or receive one of the <i>Bullying or Harassment Report Forms (B)</i> (or <i>Discipline Referral Form</i>) and determine if incident is within the scope of jurisdiction. Use Investigation Form and Summary Report (C and D) for Remaining Items:		
2. Interview complainant , separately, regarding the facts, involved parties' relationships, perception of imbalance of power, impact on school performance and context of the bullying/harassment incident.		
3. Interview and take statement from alleged victim , separately, regarding the facts, involved parties' relationships, perception of imbalance of power, impact on school performance and context of the bullying/harassment incident. Have alleged victim complete a written statement, if he/she is not the complainant. Notify parent/legal guardian, if needed.		
4. Interview and take statement from alleged perpetrator , separately, regarding the facts, involved parties' relationships, perception of imbalance of power, impact on school performance and context of the bullying/harassment incident. Have alleged perpetrator complete a written statement, if he/she is not the complainant. Notify parent/legal guardian, if needed.		
5. Interview and take statement from any person that witnessed the bullying/harassment incident, has knowledge of the incident, or may have related information. Have each person complete and sign a <i>Bullying or Harassment Report Form</i> .		
6. Review any other pertinent information such as grades, attendance, prior discipline, medical information or video surveillance.		
7. Complete Bullying and Harassment Investigation and Summary Form (C) . Make sure to document interventions (D) including referrals to counseling (<i>i.e.</i> , guidance, RTI, schedule/location change) for the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.		
8. Substantiated bullying or harassment violations: For students, use Code of Conduct to determine the appropriate violation and disciplinary action. Document findings on <i>Discipline Referral Form</i> . For non-students, take appropriate remedial action (<i>i.e.</i> , referral to HR, SRO). Enter appropriate codes into _____ within ten days.		
9. Unsubstantiated bullying or harassment violations: For students, use the Code of Conduct to determine the appropriate violation and disciplinary action, if any, and enter appropriate codes into _____ within ten days. For non-students, take appropriate remedial action (<i>i.e.</i> , referral to HR, SRO).		
10. Retain Bullying or Harassment Investigation Checklist, Bullying or Harassment Investigation and Summary Form and documentation . If referring student to an alternative education center, for long-term suspension or expulsion, submit the <i>Bullying or Harassment Investigation Checklist</i> packet and documentation, with the referral packet to the Hearing Officer/Tribunal.		
11. Notify parent/legal guardian of alleged victim and the parent/legal guardian of the alleged perpetrator in writing of the outcome and actions taken as a result of the investigation using the <i>Outcome Notification Letter (E)</i> . Follow-up as needed with referral sources for the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.		
12. Document interventions utilized to address any systemic problems and to create a wholesome educational environment if investigation revealed evidence of a pattern of group harassment or certain targeted groups.		
13. Attach all documentation and forms to <i>Bullying or Harassment Investigation Checklist (A)</i> and maintain file of incident.		
Print Name	Title	Signature
		School/Dept.
		Date

BULLYING OR HARASSMENT REPORT FORM

This report **MUST** be completed to file a complaint relating to an incident of alleged bullying or harassment and turned into the school principal/designee of the victim's school. While reports by an identified individual are preferred, anonymous reports may be made by students or parents/guardians. Staff members may not report anonymously, but may utilize this **Report Form** or a **Disciplinary Referral Form** for the purposes of reporting alleged incidents of bullying or harassment. If bullying is reported by a Discipline Referral, attach here.

Today's date ____/____/____ School _____

Person Reporting Incident Name _____
 Telephone _____ - _____ - _____ Email _____

Place an ⊗ in the appropriate box:
 Student Student (witness/friend) Parent/guardian Close adult relative School staff member Other

1. Name of student victim (s) _____ ID# _____ Age _____
 2. Name of student victim (s) _____ ID# _____ Age _____

Name(s) of alleged perpetrator (s) if known	Age	School (if known)	Is he/she a student?
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Where did the incident occur? Be specific (i.e., classroom, hallway, cafeteria, playground, bus).

- On school property
- At a school related function or activity
- On a school vehicle
- At an authorized bus stop
- Use of data or software accessed through School System's computer or network
- Other _____

When did the incident occur? Date: _____ Time: _____ AM/PM

What happened? Describe in detail: _____

Were there any witnesses? Yes or No Provide name(s) and contact information.

List and attach any evidence of bullying or harassment. (i.e., letters, texts, photos, etc.)

Have you been bullied or harassed before by this person? Yes or No If so, how many times? _____

Have you been bullied or harassed or witnessed bullying or harassment by this person before? Yes or No If so, how many times? _____

Was a report filed for the previous time(s)? Yes or No When? _____

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

 Signature of Complainant/Witness

 Title

 Date

For Office Use Only

Investigator's Printed Name

Signature

School/Dept.

Date

Date Investigation Initiated _____

Forms to Utilize: Bullying or Harassment Investigation Checklist Bullying or Harassment Investigation and Summary Form

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION AND SUMMARY FORM

Alleged Perpetrator #1 Interview Date: _____ Relationship between the students: _____

Description of Incident: _____

Explanation of Incident: _____

Alleged Perpetrator #2 Interview Date: _____ Relationship between the students: _____

Description of Incident: _____

Explanation of Incident: _____

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION AND SUMMARY FORM

Witness/Victim #1 Interview Date: _____

Description of Incident: _____

How frequently did incidents occur? (date, time and place): _____

Did this student play an active role in the incident? Yes or No (circle one)

Witness/Victim #2 Interview Date: _____

Description of Incident: _____

How frequently did incidents occur? (date, time and place): _____

Did this student play an active role in the incident? Yes or No (circle one)

Witness/Victim #3 Interview Date: _____

Description of Incident: _____

How frequently did incidents occur? (date, time and place): _____

Did this student play an active role in the incident? Yes or No (circle one)

**Bullying/Harassment Investigation Outcome
Sample Parent/Legal Guardian Notification Letter**

Form E

(School Letterhead)

Parent of: _____ Student ID# _____ Date: _____

This is to notify you that Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §20-2-751.4) and the _____ County Board of Education’s Anti-Bullying Policy JCDAG (a copy of which is enclosed) prohibit bullying or harassment on school property, on school vehicles, at school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of the school system.

“Bullying” is defined as:

1. Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
2. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm;
3. Any intentional written, verbal or physical act which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that:
 - a. Causes another person substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm;
 - b. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education;
 - c. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
 - d. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

This law and the policy require schools to investigate reports of bullying, and upon a finding by a school administrator that a student has committed an act of bullying or is a victim of bullying, the administrator or his/her designee is required to notify the parent or legal guardian of the student.

Accordingly, this letter is to inform you that your child has been involved in a report of a bullying or harassment incident, as follows:

_____ A report has been made that alleged your child as a perpetrator of bullying or harassment.

_____ A report has been made that alleged your child as a victim of bullying or harassment.

An investigation into the reported act of bullying was conducted, and the following summarizes the outcome and any actions taken pertaining to your child.

_____ Report was unsubstantiated. **OR** _____ Report was substantiated.

Actions taken pertaining to your child:

Please discuss this with your child and call the school if you need further assistance or information. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Principal

Enclosed Board Policy JCDAG

Resource Materials, Information and Lessons

Bullying Prevention and Defusing Student Anger

Introduction

Bullying can be either covert or overt behavior. An open attack on a victim is an example of direct bullying, while covert or indirect bullying may take the form of exclusion and social isolation. (Hoover & Oliver, 1996). Bullying tends to be more prevalent during the late elementary and middle school years. It peaks in middle school and tapers off in high school.

Usually bullies are turned into bullies by bigger bullies. When you meet a bully, somewhere in the past there is likely to be a story of how a bully pushed him or her around. When students call other students names, gossip or put them down, usually it is because they feel insecure and inferior.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, programs cracking down on individual bullies rarely work, but when there is a school wide commitment to end bullying, it can be reduced up to 50 percent. The Office of Civil Rights is now investigating complaints of bullying and harassment because it is a violation of a student's right to an education.

On December 16, 2010, Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, sent a memo of technical assistance to all chief state school officers and governors highlighting best practices of comprehensive state bullying laws. Among them are:

- ✓ A clear and comprehensive definition of bullying including enumeration of categories of students who are often targeted.
- ✓ Detailed reporting, investigating and responding procedures.
- ✓ Graduated consequences for those engaged in the behavior.
- ✓ Referrals to mental and physical health resources (ASCA, July/August 2011).

The “New” Bullying: Cyber Bullying

- ✦ Through email, instant messaging and text messaging on cell phones or pagers.
- ✦ Since contact and emotions are masked, verbal assaults are harsher (i.e., assault or death threats) and messages are likely to have sexual overtones.

Often, students don't fully understand why they are victims of reoccurring bullying from their peers or how to stop it. By the same token, the bully himself may not know the real impact his/her behavior has on their victims. It is important that students understand, identify, manage or quit bullying behaviors. Bullying must be taken seriously and cannot be placed on the same level as the “rough and tumble” of normal childhood development, because it can lead to more dangerous and violent crimes and create extreme misery for the victims (Hoover & Oliver 1996). Stopping bullies takes a whole-school effort by implementing an anti-bullying philosophy.

The keys to bullying prevention are:

1. *Knowing how to recognize bullying behaviors and how to communicate with the bully.*
2. *Knowing the factors that place students at risk of being bullied.*
3. *Teaching the victims of bullies how to stand up for themselves.*
4. *Knowing how to diffuse student anger.*
5. *Implementing a school-wide anti-bullying philosophy*

What factors place a student at risk of being bullied?

Students are bullies for numerous of different reasons. The following is a chart of the reasons why students thought they were bullied. They are ranked by grade level and sex.

A. EIGHT THROUGH TWELVE GRADES

<u>RANK</u>	<u>MALES</u>	<u>FEMALES</u>
1	Didn't fit in	Didn't fit in
2	Physical weakness	Facial appearance
3	Short temper	Cried/Emotional
4	Who friends are	Overweight
5	Clothing	Good grades

B. FOURTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADES

<u>RANK</u>	<u>MALES</u>	<u>FEMALES</u>
1	Didn't fit in	Didn't fit in
2	Who friends were	Who friends were
3	Physical weakness	Clothes worn
4	Short temper	Facial appearance
5	Clothing	Overweight

Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler (1992)
Hoover, Oliver, Thompson (1993)

What should be done?

- **Develop a needs assessment to see how prevalent bullying is in your school, getting information on the following:**
 - a. General information (age, sex, grade, but keep the needs assessment anonymous.
 - b. Questions to find the frequency of bullying
 - c. Questions to assess your students' attitude toward bullying.
- **Learn how to talk to bullies to get them to change their behavior by using the following:**
 - a. Behavior contracts
 - b. Problem solving techniques
 - c. Self monitoring techniques
- **Teach the victims of bullying how to protect their rights using the following:**
 - a. Assertiveness training – “Say what you mean and mean what you say”
 - b. Social Skill Training – Model appropriate behavior for the Student
 - c. Teach victims to change irrational thoughts.
 - d. Teach coping skills
 - e. Have the victim externalize the problem
 - f. Compliment the bully
 - g. Develop a counseling library of resources for the victims
- **Learn how to diffuse student anger by doing the following:**
 - a. Acting immediately
 - b. Not showing anger
 - c. Showing acknowledgement for what the student has said
 - d. Getting the student seated
 - e. Allowing the student to vent
 - f. Making suggestions
 - g. Following up with the student

- **Implement a school-wide bullying prevention philosophy by doing the following:**
 - a. Implementing the bullying needs assessment.
 - b. Helping to create an empathetic school adopting an “I am my brother’s keeper” philosophy.
 - c. Implementing a referral method to counselors and community agencies.
 - d. Generating and post throughout the school and community literature which supports anti-bullying.
 - e. Doing classroom guidance on bullying prevention using scenarios.
 - f. Developing an anti-bullying committee consisting of parents, students, counselors, teachers and administrators.

Remember that it does not matter if a student is a bully, victim or is simply angry, we should provide all of them the best support and guidance they deserve when they come into our schools. A student may be a bully today and a victim tomorrow because they change roles so frequently.

How to Defuse Student Anger

Suggested steps to diffusing student anger

1. ***Act immediately:*** If we hear profanity, name calling and threats, we need to step in and find out what is the problem. No longer can we ignore anger and make simplistic statements like “boys will be boys” and “she will get over it”. Something triggered the anger. What was it?
2. ***Don’t show anger:*** When approaching an angry student do not reveal your own anger as this could backfire and an eruption could result. It is dangerous to use an authoritative or hostile approach and make statements like “You are not going to act like this in my office.” A calm and inquisitive tone should be used and be polite as possible. No matter how upset you are, never show anger!
3. ***Show acknowledgement:*** Let the student know what you have seen and heard but not necessarily in words. You can use several nonverbal cues to let the child know you are aware of what is going on. Your facial expression, a nod and a “lets hear about it” stance can speak wonders. When you do say

something, let it be neutral words like “it seems like you and John are not very happy with each other.” You should never put your hands on a student unless it is absolutely necessary.

4. **Get the student seated:** Find a place to sit down with the student and offer statements like “Let’s sit down so we can talk “ By getting the student to sit down, you can reduce the risk of the student flaring up again.
5. **Allow the student to vent :** Let the angry student talk and vent in the manner he or she chooses without reprisal and get to the heart of the issue as quickly as possible. Avoid making statement that will further enrage the student. It is important to remember that an angry student is likely not to be rational and may say and do things they may not normally do. The best way of dealing with this is to listen and make a statement like “what can I do to help”?
6. **Make suggestions:** Now is the time to offer your input. If you have information or suggestions to diffuse the student, do it now. You may make statements like “This is how I see the situation” or “May I tell you something I see in this situation?” If you can find some common ground with the angry student, you will have more success in relating to him or her.
7. **Follow Up:** It is important to follow up with the student when the incident seems over. The situation may not really be over. By not following up, the student may feel manipulated and get angry again, even at you. Simply ask the student at the follow up meeting if the problem is resolved. If so, discuss management techniques for controlling anger and what was learned from the situation. If the problem is not resolved, continue to seek solutions and provide support for the student. (Obryun, 2001)

Bullying Prevention

Every day children attending Georgia schools, participating in after school, or other school or community based activities experience the ugliness of bullying. Studies have shown that 30% of youth in the United States are either bullies or victims of bullies, or both.

Unfortunately, bullying behavior as a social norm has become far too accepting by both youth and adults. Research has shown that bullying on the part of the perpetrator and the victim leads to more bullying, retaliation, violence and serves as a precursor to the onset of mental disorders and substance use. The earlier the bullying behavior or victimization, the earlier the onset of disorders and attempts to medicate the anxieties and trauma caused by bullying.

Bullying Defined

Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus, creator of an evidence-based bullying prevention program know as Olweus Bullying Prevention, defines bullying as “when a person is exposed, repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons.” He further defines “negative action” as “when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways.”

Bullying may take many forms including physical, verbal, emotional or sexual behaviors. Bullying can be considered as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behaviors such as name calling, threatening and even shunning or demeaning that is committed by one or more children or persons against another. It is important to note that bullying is not provoked by the behavior of the victim as bullying connotes an imbalance or perceived imbalance of power between the bully and the victim.

Forms of Bullying

Physical Bullying: punching, hitting, poking, beating, kicking, pinching, shoving, choking, strangling, pulling or mangling of the hair, biting, tying up and excessive tickling. Physical bullying also includes making someone swallow, inhale or otherwise ingest a substance, item or food; taking money, clothing or other personal items; being made to carry heavy loads or standing in awkward positions for long periods of time upon threat of beating or some other form of humiliation.

Verbal Bullying: name calling, teasing, gossiping, taunting, verbal threats, public chastising and cajoling; spreading rumors and sending threatening and intimidating messages via email or text messaging.

Emotional Bullying: extortion/blackmailing, defaming, manipulation, isolation and rejection; hazing; terrorizing with threats or the threat of terrorizing; and rating or ranking of personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, disability, perceived or actual sexual orientation, and overall peer pressure to engage in activities with which the victim is unknowledgeable or uncomfortable.

Sexual Bullying: sexual positioning and harassment and abuse that include actual physical contact and sexual

assault; voyeurism; and exhibitionism in combination with many of the emotional, verbal, and physical behaviors listed above.

Cyber Bullying: kids are using the Internet and mobile phones to extend the reach of bullying behavior. According to a recent study, one in ten kids is affected by cyber bullying. Girls are more likely to be victims of cyber bullies and boys are more likely to be cyber bullies. Parents should be aware of what their children are doing when they are online and using their mobile phones.

It is essential to note that bullying also occurs under the guise of other terms and behaviors accompanying some social activities such as sports and recreation. These are more subtle and characterized as team building and “toughening up.” Included here are initiation rites, hazing, and some rites of gang passage.

Why Bullying?

At the core of bullying behaviors is some need, issue or anxiety or anger that fuels bad, disrespectful, hurtful or violent treatment of others. This is not limited to the way children sometimes treat each other but is pervasive throughout our society. From school yards and hallways to corporate corridors and board rooms to team rooms in government agencies, bullying takes place. Those who are bullied as kids bully as adults and it takes the same forms; e.g. Ridicule, public demeaning, name smearing or blacklisting, ostracizing, exclusion and dismissal, humiliation, passing over for promotion based on personal and subjective rather than objective performance criteria.

There is also the issue of the perception of mistreatment; being treated unfairly, being left out or excluded. One of the primary catalysts for gang involvement and gang violence is the perception of being disrespected...or “dissed.” In retaliation, violence takes the form of beatings, drive bys, property damage, encroaching on one’s “opponents” territory and other forms of retaliation. In the workplace, the perception of being “dissed” results in such “coping” behaviors as sabotage, work slow downs or stoppages; challenging of authority, spying, leaking of confidential information to competitors, the press or the public in an attempt to muster support for one’s contentions or beliefs.

Consequences of Bullying

At one level bullying interferes with learning and productivity. This is true not only for children but for adults as well. Since bullying behavior by definition is not done under the eyes of higher authorities such as teachers, administrators, other adults of senior hierarchy (as in corporate and government environments), a climate of fear and intimidation pervades the school, work, or other social environment.

Victims of bullying often suffer any number of effects including:

For children:

- a) Poor grades and academic achievement
- b) Increased absenteeism, truancy and ultimately dropping out of school
- c) Loss of a sense of self, ability to perform or accomplish tasks, goals
- d) Engaging in violent behaviors such as weapon-carrying
- e) Experience feeling of isolation
- f) Become withdrawn and display symptoms of depression with long term emotional and/or behavioral problems including anxiety
- g) Suicide ideation and attempts and other forms of self-harm such as cutting, eating disorders, etc.

h) Initiation of substance use and abuse

For adults:

- a) Development in later life of social anxiety disorders, insecurities and display symptoms of depression
- b) Engaging in violent behaviors such as weapon-carrying, domestic violence, and homicide
- c) Suicide ideation and attempts
- d) Initiation of substance use and abuse

Recommendations

Curbing and eliminating bullying is everyone's responsibility.

Preventing bullying involves changing norms. Much of our understanding of normative changes is derived from substance use and abuse prevention. Normative change includes education, activities and reinforcement of positive behaviors designed to reveal to youth as well as adults that bullying like substance use is not the typical behavior of most children, youth or adults and that most children, youth or adults do not participate in such behaviors nor condone them.

Some Guiding Principles:

1. Kids know who is bullying and who is being bullied. Listen to them.
2. Parents need to become aware and involved.
3. Teachers, Principals, Counselors, other school staff including maintenance workers, school safety officers, and clerical support staff need to be trained to recognize and intervene in bullying situations.
4. School systems need to be held accountable and measured by adherence to laws and polices regarding bullying as they are for educational achievement, preparation and graduation rates.
5. Children and youth need to be afforded the opportunity to learn alternative ways of managing frustration, anger resentments and victimization other than resorting to bullying; retaliation or violence.
6. Children and youth need to be afforded the opportunity to access "safe zones or harbors" without feeling ostracized.
7. Bullies need to be held accountable for their behaviors and the consequences of their behavior. Since in most instances, bullies are 'acting out' on some unaddressed mental health issue, bullies need to be afforded the opportunity to access mental health services that promote resilience skill building activities and services that help to reduce risk factors.

What You Can Do!

A. What Schools Can Do. Teachers, Administrators and Students:

- Bullying awareness should be an integral part of a schools overall school safety program. Schools typically focus on preventing violence that is obvious such as fights, weaponry, gang wars, etc. Yet, schools can play a significant role in preventing bullying as a form of violence.
- Create a safe zone and policy in every school building that destigmatizes victims who report bullying.

B. What Parents Need to Know and Do:

Kids are good at hiding feelings and problems, but not to an astute parent or caregiver.

Is your child being bullied?

If you're not sure, consider talking with your kids about school and other social activities such as youth groups, after school and other recreational experiences.

Some questions to guide you:

For children ages 5-10

- What did you do at school today?
- What did you like most about what you did at school today?
- What didn't you like about what you did at school today?
- What kinds of games did you play? Did you like it/them? Was it fun?
- Who did you play with? Who else would you like to play with?
- What did you eat for lunch today? Who did you eat lunch with today? Who would you like to eat lunch with? Why?
- Are you looking forward to going to school tomorrow? Why?...or Why Not?

For children ages 11- 15

- Same as above
- Is there any friend they'd like to invite to come home with them after school or on the weekend?
- Is there anyone at school, they do not particularly like to be around? Why not?
- Do you feel safe at school; at school events such as games; at other recreational or social events in the community?
- Do you know what to do when you do not feel safe?

For children ages 16-18

- Variations on same as above
- Who's the most likeable guy /girl in the class/grade/school? Why?
- Who are you most/least comfortable studying with; hanging out with; sharing a room on school trips with?
- What is the best description of the atmosphere at your school?
- How would you describe the relationship among your football, basketball, hockey, soccer, track, baseball, volleyball team members? Who stands out on the team? Why, what makes them stand out?
- Do you feel safe at school; at school events such as games; at other recreational or social events in the community?
- What do you do when and if you don't feel safe?

C. What Youth Serving Organizations Can Do:

Bullying Prevention Programming In Georgia

A number of Office of Prevention Services Programs provide bullying prevention education.

Olweus Bullying Prevention

“The Olweus [pronounced Ol-VEY-us] Bullying Prevention Program is a comprehensive, school-wide program designed for use in elementary, middle, or junior high schools. Its goals are to reduce and prevent

bullying problems among school children and to improve peer relations at school. The program has been found to reduce bullying among children, improve the social climate of classrooms, and reduce related antisocial behaviors, such as vandalism and truancy. The Olweus Program has been implemented in more than one dozen countries around the world.”

Program Providers:

Evidence-Based program serves children between the ages of 5 and 14.
Forsyth County Board of Education
Housing Authority, City of Newnan
Cobb County School District

Too Good For Violence

“*Too Good for Violence*[™] K-8 is a school-based prevention program that uses the same research, theories, strategies and format that propelled Too Good for Drugs to national prominence, including Model Program designation from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). *Too Good for Violence*[™] K-8 addresses the most significant risk and protective factors at each developmental level to help students learn the skills and attitudes they need to get along peacefully with others.”

Program Providers:

City of Lakeland
Emanuel County Board of Education
Georgia Pines Community Service Board
GRN Community Service Board
Quality of Life Association
Satilla Community Service Board
Turner County Health Coalition

Second Step Program

“The award-winning SECOND STEP violence prevention program integrates social and emotional learning with academics. Kids from preschool through Grade 8 learn and practice vital social skills, such as empathy, emotion management, problem solving, and cooperation. These essential life skills help students in the classroom, on the playground, and at home.”

Program Providers:

Brantley County Board of Commissioners
Bulloch County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council
Charlton County Board of Commissioners
Emanuel County Board of Education
Girls Inc., of Columbus and Phenix City-Russell County, Alabama
Hazlehurst Housing Authority
Mary Hayes Center or Social Change
Pierce County Board of Commissioners
Pineland Community Service Board
Sam’s memorial Community Economic Development

Sumter County Board of Education
Tattnall County Board of Commissioners
Toombs County Board of Commissioners

Helpful Links

The Department of Health and Human Services: *Stop Bullying Now!* Campaign

- For kids:
<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>
- For adults:
<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults>

Comprehensive Information from The National Institutes of Health:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/bullying.html>

PBS Kids Special Feature on Bullying:

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/friends/bullies/index.html>

National Crime Prevention Council Power Point

Eyes on Bullying Toolkit

Bullying Tip Sheet for Students with Disabilities

Acceptable Social Networking

Cyberbullying for Elementary, Middle and High School

Prevention Resource Chart for Parents

Worksheets