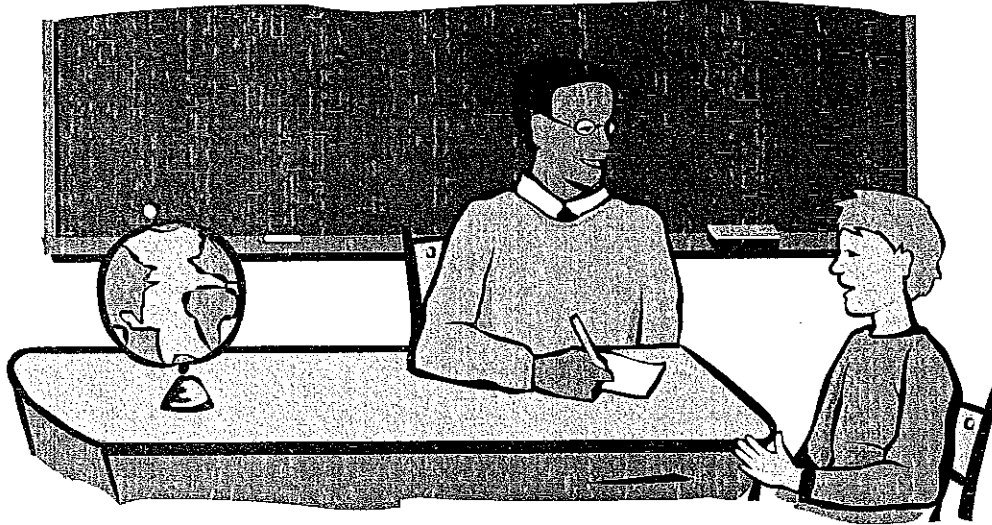


HELPING BULLIES



Bullies need help—the sooner the better. Bullying among primary school-age children is recognized as an antecedent to more violent behavior in later grades. If children don't learn to change their behaviors, bullying becomes a habit that carries forward into their teens and their lives as adults.

Although bullies may be popular in the early grades (because they're powerful, others look up to them), their popularity wanes during late adolescence; by the time they reach senior high, their peer group may be limited to other bullies or gangs. They may get in trouble with the law; studies show that one in four bullies will have a criminal record before age 30. They may bully their spouses, children, and coworkers and have difficulty forming and sustaining healthy, positive relationships.

The "Creating a Positive Classroom" section of this book includes many tips and strategies that can help all students—including bullies—learn better ways of relating to others. Some of the strategies in "Helping Victims" can be adapted for use with bullies and potential bullies. *Examples:*

- "Encourage a Positive Attitude" (page 93)
- "Build Students' Self-Esteem" (pages 95–97); although it's a myth that all bullies have low self-esteem, some do
- "Teach Positive Visualization" (page 97)
- "Give Them Opportunities to Shine" (page 108)

One of the strategies in "Helping Victims" is meant to be used with both victims and bullies:

- "Try the Method of Shared Concern" (pages 99 and 100–104)

Some of the strategies in "Helping Victims" will benefit all of your students. *Examples:*

- "Encourage Strong Family Relationships" (page 105)
- "Encourage Relationships with Other Adults" (pages 105–106)

"Helping Bullies" focuses mainly on suggestions for working with bullies or potential bullies. As you try these ideas in your classroom, here are some good things you can expect to happen:

Your students will learn how to:

- change their thinking
- know what to expect when they use inappropriate behavior
- accept responsibility for their behavior
- manage their anger
- explore positive ways to feel powerful
- understand why they bully others
- stop bullying.

You'll discover how to:

- identify bullies or potential bullies
- have clear consequences in place
- work to change bullies' behavior—without being a bully yourself
- communicate with parents
- teach students positive ways to feel powerful
- change bullies' thinking, not just their behavior.



Important: Most children can change their behavior with guidance and help from caring adults. Sometimes, however, you might encounter a student who resists your efforts and simply won't change. Find out ahead of time what your school and district are prepared to do in these extreme circumstances. When you truly run out of options—when strategies don't work, the parents can't or won't support your efforts, and the student's behavior gets progressively worse—you may have no choice but to take the problem to your principal or other administrators and leave it in their hands. The ideas in this book are not intended to help incorrigible bullies or children with severe behavioral and personality problems.

CATCH THEM IN THE ACT

The first and most important thing you can do to help bullies is notice their behavior and respond appropriately.

Obviously, you want to catch them “being bad”—teasing, using hurtful words, intimidating other students, hitting, shoving, kicking; and so on—and put a stop to that behavior as soon as you become aware of it. See “Act Immediately” (pages 85–86) for specific suggestions on intervening with bullying you witness personally or learn about in another way; see also “Have Clear Consequences in Place” (pages 126–128).



Go farther: Contact the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) and ask about their Nonviolent Crisis Intervention program, which teaches the safe management of disruptive or assaultive behavior. Many schools and districts have benefited from this training. Write or call: Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc., 3315-K North 124th Street, Brookfield, WI 53005; toll-free telephone 1-800-558-8976. On the Web, go to: www.crisisprevention.com

Not as obviously (and sometimes not as easily), you also want to *catch them being good*. No one can be a bully 24 hours a day; even the worst bully takes an occasional break. Bullies need “strokes” as much as other students—probably more.

- Recognize and reward positive and accepting behaviors whenever you observe them. This will increase the likelihood that such behaviors will be repeated.
- Go the extra distance and praise behaviors you might take for granted in other students—waiting one's turn, sharing, saying please or thank you.
- Create situations that give bullies the opportunity to shine. *Examples:* Ask a problem student to help you with an important project. Or send an older bully to a younger class to help a student practice spelling words or do math problems. Then recognize your student's positive behavior.

Of course, you'll want to notice and praise positive, prosocial behaviors in *all* of your students. You can do this verbally each day (“Thanks for

helping, Evan." "Nice job, class. You're making our new student feel welcome."). You might also award special certificates recognizing specific behaviors. Students will appreciate "You Were Caught Being Good!" certificates (page 118)—and parents will treasure them.

Tip: In one school, students who are seen or reported as displaying positive social interactions (sticking up for a friend, making a new friend, welcoming or accepting a new student, being a good role model, cooperating, showing empathy, etc.) are given a "Gotcha!" card to sign. The cards are entered in a prize drawing at the end of each week.



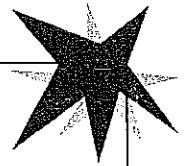
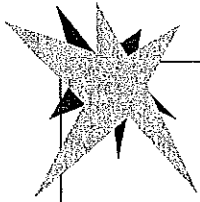
Go farther: Work with other teachers and administrators to arrange a special awards ceremony to be held once a month or several times a year. Try to schedule it for a time when parents and grandparents can attend. Instead of handing out the usual awards—for athletic or academic achievement—reserve this ceremony for students whose prosocial behaviors have made a positive difference in your classroom and school.

Finally: Monitor your own interactions with your students. Are they mostly negative, mostly positive, or a mixture of both? Make an effort to increase the number of positives—smiles, acknowledgments, words of praise and approval, thank-yous, nods. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) recommends that teachers give approximately *five positives* for each negative. Keep track of your behavior for a day or two. How close do you come to the five-to-one ratio? Is there room for improvement?

HAVE COMPASSION

Bullies can be distracting, disruptive, annoying, frustrating, and even scary at times. But they need as much help, understanding, and compassion as you can give them. Food for thought:

- Many bullies have family problems—parents, siblings, or other bigger, stronger people who bully them. They don't know other ways to behave. And even if they learn and observe other ways in your classroom, they experience a sort of "dissonance" when they return home. Like children of divorced parents who alternate between their parents' homes, they must fit into both environments, and it's not easy.
- Many bullies are angry all or most of the time. Being angry is no fun—especially if you're not really sure *why* you're angry, you don't have anyone to talk to about your anger (or think you don't, and even if you do, you might not know *how* to talk about it), and your peers avoid and fear you. For some bullies, being angry is a vicious circle, and they're caught in the middle with no way out.
- It's hard to be the meanest, toughest kid in the classroom or on the playground. You're always having to prove yourself and fend off other kids who want to take over as meanest and toughest.
- It's hard to feel that you always have to win and can't ever lose. No one likes to lose, but bullies can't afford to lose—it's too risky. So they cheat, play dirty, and intimidate anyone who stands in their way. And eventually no one wants to play with them or against them.
- Many bullies are jealous of other people's success. Jealousy is a nasty, uncomfortable feeling. It's so overpowering that it can prevent you from enjoying your own successes—or distract you so much that you don't achieve your true potential.
- Some bullies never wanted to hurt or harass anyone else. They were bullied by someone else into joining a bully gang and are going along just to stay on the bully's good side.



You Were Caught Being
GOOD!!!

Today's date: _____

Your name: _____

Teacher's comment:

Teacher's signature: _____



- Bullies lack social skills. When you don't know how to get along with others, and when you see groups of friends hanging out, laughing, telling jokes, and enjoying each other's company, you know you're missing out on something important . . . but you don't know how to get it for yourself. Which may be another reason why bullies are so angry.
- Bullies have hangers-on, "henchmen," or "lieutenants," but they seldom have real friends. Life without friends is lonely.

The bullies in your classroom may be some of the most unpleasant, least appealing kids you know. The good news is, they're still kids . . . for now. As kids, they have the potential to learn, grow, and change.

IDENTIFY BULLIES OR POTENTIAL BULLIES

You may know that some students in your classroom are bullies; either you've seen them in action yourself, or you've heard reports from other students and teachers. But what about the bullies whose actions aren't noticed by adults, whose victims are too intimidated or ashamed to come forward, and whose witnesses either don't want to get involved or fear reprisals if they do? And what about those students who haven't started bullying others but may be heading in that direction?

"Identify Victims or Potential Victims" (pages 78–81) explains how to look for warning signs and seek input from students' parents. You can use similar approaches to identify bullies or potential bullies.

LOOK FOR WARNING SIGNS

For any student you suspect might be a bully or potential bully, complete the "Warning Signs" checklist (pages 120–121).



Important: These forms should be kept confidential. You may want to share them

with other adults—teachers, your principal, the school counselor, the student's parents—but they should never be accessible to students.

GET PARENTS' INPUT

If a student shows some or many of the warning signs, contact the parents. Arrange a face-to-face meeting at school. You may want to include the school counselor or psychologist in the meeting.

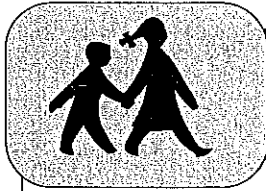
No parent wants to hear that his or her child might be a bully or potential bully, so you'll need to handle this *very* carefully. You might start by emphasizing your commitment to creating a positive classroom environment where every student is valued, accepted, safe, and free to learn. Share information about what's being done at your school to reduce and eliminate bullying.

Next, tell the parents about the *positive* behaviors you've observed in their child. (See "Catch Them in the Act," pages 116–117.) Parents love hearing good things about their children, and this sets the stage for a productive meeting.

Then tell the parents that you've noticed some behaviors at school which may indicate their child is bullying others or might be headed in that direction. Give examples. Explain that there are other behaviors that don't show up at school, and you need their help identifying those behaviors.

Ask if they have noticed any of the following in their child:

- having more money than he or she can explain
- buying things he or she normally can't afford
- having new possessions (games, clothing, CDs, etc.) and claiming that "my friends gave them to me"



WARNING SIGNS

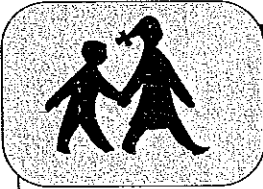
The following behaviors and traits may indicate that a student is bullying others or, if bullying isn't yet evident or hasn't been reported, has the potential to become a bully. For any student you're concerned about, check all that apply.

Today's date: _____

Student's name: _____

- ___ 1. Enjoys feeling powerful and in control.
- ___ 2. Seeks to dominate and/or manipulate peers.
- ___ 3. May be popular with other students, who envy his or her power.
- ___ 4. Is physically larger and stronger than his or her peers.
- ___ 5. Is impulsive.
- ___ 6. Loves to win at everything; hates to lose at anything. Is both a poor winner (boastful, arrogant) and a poor loser.
- ___ 7. Seems to derive satisfaction or pleasure from others' fear, discomfort, or pain.
- ___ 8. Seems overly concerned with others "disrespecting" him or her; equates "respect" with fear.
- ___ 9. Seems to have little or no empathy for others.
- ___ 10. Seems to have little or no compassion for others.
- ___ 11. Seems unable or unwilling to see things from another person's perspective or "walk in someone else's shoes."
- ___ 12. Seems willing to use and abuse other people to get what he or she wants.
- ___ 13. Defends his or her negative actions by insisting that others "deserved it," "asked for it," or "provoked" him or her; a conflict is always someone else's "fault."
- ___ 14. Is good at hiding negative behaviors or doing them where adults can't notice.
- ___ 15. Gets excited when conflicts arise between others.
- ___ 16. Stays cool during conflicts in which he or she is directly involved.

➔
CONTINUED



WARNING SIGNS (continued)

- ___ 17. Exhibits little or no emotion (flat affect) when talking about his or her part in a conflict.
- ___ 18. Blames other people for his or her problems.
- ___ 19. Refuses to accept responsibility for his or her negative behaviors.
- ___ 20. Shows little or no remorse for his or her negative behaviors.
- ___ 21. Lies in an attempt to stay out of trouble.
- ___ 22. Expects to be "misunderstood," "disrespected," and picked on; attacks before he or she can be attacked.
- ___ 23. Interprets ambiguous or innocent acts as purposeful and hostile; uses these as excuses to strike out at others verbally or physically.
- ___ 24. "Tests" your authority by committing minor infractions, then waits to see what you'll do about it.
- ___ 25. Disregards or breaks school and/or class rules.
- ___ 26. Is generally defiant or oppositional toward adults.
- ___ 27. Seeks/craves attention; seems just as satisfied with negative attention as positive attention.
- ___ 28. Attracts more than the usual amount of negative attention from others; is yelled at or disciplined more often than other students.
- ___ 29. Is street-smart.
- ___ 30. Has a strong sense of self-esteem. *Tip:* This is contrary to the prevailing myth that bullies have low self-esteem. In fact, there's little evidence to support the belief that bullies victimize others because they feel bad about themselves.
- ___ 31. Seems mainly concerned with his or her own pleasure and well-being.
- ___ 32. Seems antisocial or lacks social skills.
- ___ 33. Has difficulty fitting into groups.
- ___ 34. Has a close network of a few friends (actually "henchmen" or "lieutenants"), who follow along with whatever he or she wants to do.
- ___ 35. May have problems at school or at home; lacks coping skills.

- defying parental authority; ignoring or breaking rules; pushing parental boundaries harder than ever
- behaving aggressively toward siblings
- exhibiting a sense of superiority—of being “right” all the time
- being determined to win at everything; being a poor loser
- blaming others for his or her problems
- refusing to take responsibility for his or her negative behaviors

What else can the parents tell you? What else have they noticed that you should know—that might help you help their child?



Important: Studies show that bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is used, where children are taught to handle problems by striking back physically, and where parental involvement and warmth are minimal or lacking. But never *assume* that this is true for every child. In my experience, parents of bullies are deeply concerned about their children. They want their children to be accepted by others; they want them to develop social skills, friendships, and positive character traits including tolerance, compassion, and empathy. So instead of expecting the worst, hope for the best. Project a sense of optimism; communicate your belief that you and the parents can work together to turn the child around.

You’ll also want to talk with the parents about how bullying violates your school and classroom policies and rules. Mention the consequences of such behavior, but don’t dwell on these too long. Rather, the purpose of this meeting should be to identify warning signs and reach an agreement that everyone involved—you, the parents, and the counselor (if present)—will work together to help the student. Make it clear that you have high expectations that the problem can and will be

resolved successfully. You want the parents to leave your meeting with a desire to work with you on their child’s behalf, not the feeling that you and the school are united “against” them and their child.

Toward the end of the meeting, give parents a copy of “Bringing Out the Best in Kids: Tips for Parents” (pages 123–124). Explain that this is a list of suggestions they can try at home. Answer any questions they may have. *Tip:* You may want to find out ahead of time about parenting courses and resources available in your community, so you can give this information to parents who want it.

Thank the parents for coming in and talking with you. Tell them that you’ll communicate with them often about their child’s behavior and progress, and ask them to do the same for you. Then be sure to follow through.

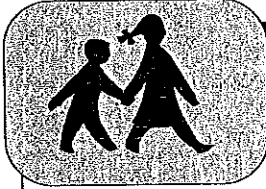
Make a written record of your meeting. Note any relevant information the parents shared with you, any conclusions you came to, and any agreements you reached.

NEVER BULLY THE BULLY

When faced with a bully and frustrated or angered by his or her behavior, it’s easy for adults to “lose their cool.” Shouting, spanking, and threats aren’t uncommon.

Severe punishment may suppress the current behavior, but it doesn’t teach alternate behaviors, including positive ways to act. Here are eight more reasons why “bullying the bully” is always a bad idea:

1. Adults who respond to bullies with violence, force, or intimidation are modeling and reinforcing the same behaviors they’re trying to change. Children imitate what they see adults do.
2. Severe punishment reinforces the power imbalance and shows kids that bullying is acceptable.



BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN KIDS

Tips for Parents

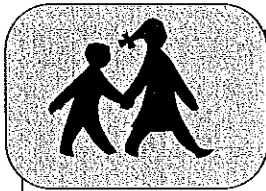
1. Have regular home meetings with your child. Show interest in what he or she is doing. Ask questions and be a good listener. Who are your child's friends? What are your child's likes and dislikes? How does your child spend his or her time at school, and away from school when he or she isn't with the family? *Tip:* Some of the best family discussions happen around the dinner table.
2. Make a real effort to spend more positive time with your child than you already do. Try to do things together that your child enjoys. Encourage your child to talk about his or her feelings. Ask how the day went. Praise your child as often as possible. Give your child opportunities to do well—by helping you with a chore, taking on new responsibilities, or showing off a talent or skill.
3. Monitor the television shows your child watches, and reduce the amount of TV violence he or she is exposed to. Experts have found that TV violence has a negative effect on children. Also limit the amount of violence your child encounters in video and computer games.
4. Supervise your child's whereabouts and activities even more closely than you already do. Set reasonable rules and limits for activities and curfews. Make it a point to always know where your child is and who he or she is with.
5. Consider enrolling your child in a class on conflict resolution, stress management, anger management, friendship skills, or self-defense. Check with your child's teacher or community resources—your local public library, YMCA or YWCA, community education, etc.



Important: Self-defense classes aren't about being aggressive. They're about avoiding conflict through self-discipline, self-control, and improved self-confidence. Most martial arts teach that the first line of defense is nonviolence.

6. If your child's teacher has told you that your child is bullying others, take it seriously. Kids who bully often have serious problems later in life.
 - Talk with your child. Be aware that your child might deny or minimize his or her behavior; this is normal. Don't blame; don't ask "why" something happened or "why" your child acted in a certain way, because this may lead to lies and excuses. Stay calm and make it clear that bullying is NOT okay with you.
 - Reassure your child that you still love him or her. It's the bullying *behavior* you don't like. Tell your child that you'll work together to help change the behavior—and you won't give up on him or her.

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CONTINUED



BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN KIDS

Tips for Parents (continued)

- Talk with your child's teacher(s) and other adults at the school—in private, when no other students are around. Get the facts on your child's behavior. Ask them to keep you informed.
 - Work with the school to modify your child's behavior. Stay in touch with teachers, administrators, and playground supervisors so you know how your child is progressing. Let them know about your efforts at home.
 - Apply reasonable, age appropriate, developmentally appropriate consequences (withdrawing privileges, giving time-outs, assigning extra chores around the house) for bullying behavior. Avoid corporal punishment, which sends your child the message that "might is right."
 - Talk with your child about how bullying affects the victim. If you remember times from your own childhood when you were bullied, you know how much it hurts.
 - Help your child learn and practice positive ways to handle anger, frustration, and disappointment. (How do you handle those feelings at home? Remember: you're an important role model for your child.) Try role-playing new behaviors with your child.
 - Praise your child's efforts to change. Praise your child for following home and school rules. The more positives you can give your child, the better. *Tip:* Try giving your child five positive comments for every negative comment.
7. If you think you might need a refresher course on parenting skills, you're not alone. Many parents today seek advice and insights from other parents and trained professionals. Check your local bookstore or library for parenting books. See if your child's school sponsors parenting discussions, programs, or workshops; find out what's available in your community. The more you learn, the more you know!
 8. If you think you might need more help than you can get from a book, program, or workshop on parenting, and especially if you feel that your child is developing problem behaviors, get professional help. Ask the school counselor, psychologist, or social worker for recommendations. Check with the children's mental health center in your community. There's no shame in this; it takes wisdom and courage to acknowledge that you can't do it all.

3. Severe punishment may stop one behavior temporarily but stimulate other aggressive behaviors.
4. The child may stop the punished behavior only when adults are around and increase it in other settings.
5. The child may strike back at the adult who's doing the punishing, or strike out at someone else because of displaced anger.
6. Angry children who don't fear authority may become even angrier and focus on getting revenge.
7. Frequent punishment may cause some children to withdraw, regress, and give up. Others may feel a strong sense of shame and low self-esteem.
8. Severe punishment is a short-term "solution" that may cause more problems down the road. ("If adults can hit, why can't I? Maybe I just have to wait until I'm bigger.")

If you feel that you sometimes overreact and would like to learn ways to control your emotions, check with your school psychologist or counselor. Or visit your local library or bookstore and look for books on managing stress and handling challenging kids. Ask other teachers what they do when they feel like they're about to blow up. Meanwhile:

- Remember that you're the adult, then behave like one.
- Tell yourself that you'll stay calm no matter what.
- Learn and practice simple relaxation techniques you can use when students push you to the edge of your patience.
- Make an agreement with another teacher whose classroom is near yours. Whenever one of you reaches the end of your rope, you can ask the other to take over your class for a few minutes while you go to a quiet place and regain control of your emotions. Or you can send a student

who's driving you crazy to the other teacher's room for a short period of time.

- Never spank a child—even if your school permits corporal punishment. Why model a behavior you're trying to teach your students never to use? When you swat or paddle a student, you're saying, "It's okay for bigger, stronger people to hit smaller, weaker people."



Go farther: Many states still permit corporal punishment in schools. Corporal punishment of children is unsupported by educational research, sometimes leads to serious injury, and contributes to a pro-violence attitude. If your state still permits corporal punishment in schools and you'd like to do something to change that, the Center for Effective Discipline (CED) can help. This national organization provides educational information to the public on the effects of corporal punishment and alternatives to its use. It is headquarters for and coordinates two other organizations: the National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools (NCACPS) and End Physical Punishment of Children (EPOCH-USA). Write or call: The Center for Effective Discipline, 155 W. Main Street, Suite 1603, Columbus, OH 43215; (614) 221-8829. On the Web, go to: www.stophitting.com

What if a bully threatens you? Try not to look angry, upset, or afraid. Don't grab the student. Don't raise your voice. Don't set up a power struggle by challenging him or her. Don't cross your arms and shout across the room. Don't verbally attack the student and back him or her into a corner by demanding immediate compliance.

Instead, remain calm, confident, assertive, and under control. Keep your body language and facial expression neutral. Speak clearly in your normal tone of voice as you move closer to the student (no closer than arm's length), state your expectations, and give the student a choice: stop the behavior and accept the consequences, or continue the behavior and bring on

worse consequences. If the student wants to argue, simply restate the choice.

Tip: If you feel that you might be in real danger, get reinforcements—another teacher, an administrator, the school security officer, or local law enforcement.*

HAVE CLEAR CONSEQUENCES IN PLACE

If your school or district already has consequences in place for bullying behaviors, familiarize yourself with them. Communicate them to students and parents so everyone knows what they are.

- You might summarize the consequences simply and clearly on a poster for your classroom.
- Create a handout for students; send copies home or give them to parents during conferences, open houses, or Parents' Night.
- If your school publishes a student or parent handbook, the consequences should be included there.

Consequences are essential because they tell you exactly how to follow through when a student behaves inappropriately. You know which behaviors are grounds for a reprimand, time-out, in-school detention, dismissal, suspension, and (a last resort) expulsion. You don't have to decide what to do each time a bullying situation arises; uncertainty is replaced by consistency, and there are no surprises for anyone.

What if your school or district hasn't spelled out specific consequences for bullying behaviors? Form a team of other teachers and administrators and work together to determine consequences that are:

- *practical* (doable where you are and with the resources available to you)
- *logical* (they make sense and are related to specific bullying behaviors)
- *reasonable and fair* (excessively punitive consequences "bully the bully")
- *inevitable* (if a student does A, then B happens—no exceptions)
- *predictable* (everyone in the school community knows that A leads to B)
- *immediate* (consequences are applied at the earliest possible opportunity)
- *escalating* (continuing the behavior leads to more serious consequences)
- *consistently enforced* (if two students do A, then B happens for both)
- *developmentally appropriate and age appropriate* (the consequences for name-calling in first grade will be different from the consequences for name-calling in sixth grade)

Tip: Consider including students on your team. Since bullying affects them directly, they'll have a personal interest and commitment to the process, and they'll bring their unique perspective to the table.

At your team's first meeting, you might want to share the following advice from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).* Use it as a starting point for determining consequences for bullying behaviors:

* SOURCE: "Bullying Fact Sheet" by George Batsche and Benjamin Moore, in *Helping Children Grow Up in the '90s: A Resource Book for Parents and Teachers* (Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists, 1992).

* See also "Protect Yourself" (pages 112-113).

Discipline practices should emphasize restitution and positive practice rather than expulsion, paddlings, and humiliation. That is, when students are caught bullying they should apologize, demonstrate the correct behavior, and then have to spend a specified period of time helping (public service) younger, less able children. . . . Although it is very difficult to justify, bullies should not be removed from the school setting unless absolutely necessary.

ONE SCHOOL'S STORY

The staff at one Maine elementary school perceived that informal student interactions on the playground and the bus included too much teasing and too many put-downs. After lengthy discussions about the negative effects of hurtful comments, they developed a Zero Tolerance standard to eliminate name-calling and insults.

Students who called others "dork," "moron," or other names were sent to the school office to call home and tell their parents what they had done. Consequences were spelled out for infractions that continued or escalated. Teachers volunteered extra-duty periods to implement the new standard and establish the expectation: no name-calling.

Some people thought the standard seemed extreme. During the first month or so, the office saw a virtual parade of students for noon-time detention. But it didn't take long for students to adjust, and today the change in school climate is noteworthy; only a few students each week get into trouble. When students were surveyed about the program, one wrote, "I don't have to worry about Zero Tolerance because I don't use those words."*

APOLOGIES AND AMENDS

Although opinions differ on whether bullies should apologize to their victims, saying "I'm sorry" is the first step toward recognizing that a behavior is inappropriate and taking respon-

* SOURCE: "Respect among peers is a goal of Wayne policy" by Janet Adelberg, *The Chalkboard*, December 1998.

sibility for that behavior. Many bullies blame the victim ("he/she made me do it," "he/she deserved it") and see no need to apologize. Don't listen to excuses; simply insist that the bully apologize—verbally or in writing. If he or she refuses, apply appropriate consequences for his or her lack of cooperation.

Beyond apologizing to the victim, the student should also make amends for his or her behavior. *Examples:*

- For every "put-down" comment the student makes about another, he or she should make one or more "build-up" comment.
- If the student extorted money, he or she should pay it back as soon as possible. Also consider having the student do work around the school (in the media center, office, etc.) for a half hour every day for one week.
- If the student damaged or destroyed something belonging to another, he or she should repair or replace it as soon as possible.

TIME-OUTS

The time-out is a time-honored way to modify students' behavior—or at least put a stop to inappropriate behavior and give tempers a chance to cool.

Tell students when time-outs will be used, and describe the specific behaviors that will lead to a time-out. Establish a time-out place in your classroom—a special area away from the group where students can be seen and supervised. In contrast to the rest of your classroom, try to keep the time-out place relatively dull and boring—no fun posters, no books or toys.

As you use time-outs with your students, keep these general guidelines in mind:

- A time-out is not a detention. Rather, it's time spent away from the group and its activities, social feedback, and rewards.

- A time-out is not a punishment. It's an opportunity for a student to calm down and ponder his or her behavior.
- A time-out is brief. A few minutes is usually sufficient—longer for more serious or disruptive behaviors, but no more than 10–15 minutes.
- A time-out is not to be used for classwork or homework. (Nor should it be used by the student as an opportunity to get out of an assignment or classwork he or she doesn't want to do.)
- A time-out is not a battleground. Don't argue with the student. Don't engage in any kind of conversation with the student. Simply say, "You (broke a particular class rule, or violated a guideline), and that's a time-out. Please go to the time-out place right now."
- What if a student refuses to go to the time-out place? Try adding one or two minutes to the time-out for each minute the student delays going. Or you might say, "For every minute you put off going to time-out, that's five minutes you'll have to stay in from recess."
- When a time-out is over, it's over. The student returns to the group without criticism, comments, or conditions.

Tip: Consider giving students the option to put *themselves* on a time-out when they feel they are about to behave inappropriately. This empowers students to make good choices on their own behalf and teaches them to remove themselves from a potentially volatile situation.

CHANGE THEIR THINKING

As you work to help bullies, it's as important to change their *thinking* as it is to change their behavior. Bullies often deny that they've done anything wrong and refuse to take responsibility for their behavior. They believe that their

actions are someone else's "fault." Or they dismiss them as "no big deal" or insist that they were "misinterpreted."* You'll need to challenge their thinking without preaching.

1. Ask them to consider this question and respond verbally or in writing:

If you think you're not bullying another person, but that person thinks you are, who's right?

Lead students to understand that bullying is in the "eye of the beholder"—that the other person's feelings and fears are real to him or her.

2. Suggest that there are three ways to look at any situation involving two people:
 - my interpretation—what I think happened and why
 - your interpretation—what you think happened and why
 - the facts—what really happened

Sometimes it helps if there's a third person present (a bystander or witness) who's objective and can give his or her view of the facts.

3. Have students keep a daily journal of events that upset, frustrate, or anger them.** For each event, they should write a brief, factual description, followed by their own interpretation of what happened.

Review and discuss their journal entries one-on-one or in small group discussions. Encourage students to look for possible errors in their interpretations. *Example:* Maybe what happened was an accident. Maybe they misinterpreted something that wasn't meant to upset them. Maybe *they* caused the problem.

4. When dealing with specific bullying situations, use the Method of Shared Concern (pages 99 and 100–104) or the No Blame

* See "Warning Signs" (pages 120–121).

** See also "Weekly Journaling" (pages 38–39).

Approach (page 104), both of which encourage children to take responsibility for their actions.



Go farther: For a list of thinking errors and the correct social thinking, see *Bully-Proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools* by Carla Garrity, Kathryn Jens, William Porter, Nancy Sager, and Cam Short-Camilli (Longmont, CO: Sopris West, 1996).

5. Help students self-identify. The "Are You a Bully?" handout (page 130) will start them thinking about their own behavior. You might give these only to students you know or suspect are bullying others. Or make this a whole-class exercise, followed by discussion. Even students who don't bully can benefit from examining some of their own attitudes and behaviors.



Important: Collect the completed handouts and keep them confidential.

COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS

Once you've informed a student's parents that their child is or may be bullying others, it's essential to follow through with regular communication and updates on their child's progress. It's normal for parents to be defensive at first, perhaps even angry that their child has been identified as a "problem" student. You can help to allay their fears, calm their worries, lower their defenses, build trust, and increase their willingness to cooperate by promising to stay in touch and keeping your promise.

You probably already communicate with your students' parents—in conferences, at open houses and parents' nights, with notes home, and in other ways. Here are a few more ideas to consider:

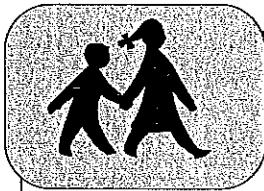
- Pick up the phone and call parents, or let them know the best times to call you.

Offer alternatives—before school, after school, during lunch or break times.

- Each day, write comments on a note card about the child's behavior in school and send it home with the child. (For privacy, put the card in a sealed envelope.) Make sure to write at least as many positive comments as negative comments (if possible, write *more* positives than negatives). You might put a star by each positive comment. Suggest to parents that when a child has earned a certain number of stars for the week, they might offer the child a reward—doing something special with mom or dad, choosing a video to watch, having a friend spend the night. *Tip:* For the first few days, you might follow through with a phone call to make sure your notes are getting into parents' hands and not being "lost" on the way home from school.
- If both you and the parents have access to email, this is a fast and easy way to stay in touch.

Depending on the situation, you can also have the student communicate directly with his or her own parents. *Example:* If Kevin calls Marcus a name, have Kevin write a note describing what he said and what happened afterward. Kevin might write, "I called Marcus a bad name in school. First Ms. Sellick said to apologize to Marcus. I said I was sorry. Then she put me on a time-out. I thought about how Marcus felt when I called him the bad name. I won't do it again." Read the note before it goes home; check to make sure that the student has taken responsibility for his or her behavior (as opposed to "Marcus is a !@#\$\$%" or "I got in trouble because Stefan ratted on me"). Follow through with a phone call to make sure parents receive the note.

As the student progresses, daily communication can eventually become weekly communication, then twice monthly, and so on until the problem behaviors have greatly improved or stopped altogether.



ARE YOU A BULLY?

Have you ever wondered if you're a bully? Here's a quick way to tell if you are or might be. Read each question and circle "Y" (for yes) or "N" (for no).

When you're through, give this handout to the teacher.

Be honest! Your answers will be kept private.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you pick on people who are smaller than you, or on animals? | Y | N |
| 2. Do you like to tease and taunt other people? | Y | N |
| 3. If you tease people, do you like to see them get upset? | Y | N |
| 4. Do you think it's funny when other people make mistakes? | Y | N |
| 5. Do you like to take or destroy other people's belongings? | Y | N |
| 6. Do you want other students to think you're the toughest kid in school? | Y | N |
| 7. Do you get angry a lot and stay angry for a long time? | Y | N |
| 8. Do you blame other people for things that go wrong in your life? | Y | N |
| 9. Do you like to get revenge on people who hurt you? | Y | N |
| 10. When you play a game or sport, do you always have to be the winner? | Y | N |
| 11. If you lose at something, do you worry about what other people will think of you? | Y | N |
| 12. Do you get angry or jealous when someone else succeeds? | Y | N |


Read this AFTER you answer all of the questions!

If you answered "Yes" to one or two of these questions, you may be on your way to becoming a bully. If you answered "Yes" to three or more, you probably are a bully, and you need to find ways to change your behavior. Good news: Bullies can get help dealing with their feelings, get along with other people, and making friends. Parents, teachers, school counselors, and other adults can all give this kind of help. JUST ASK!!!

GET PARENTS TOGETHER

When you first inform parents that their children are bullying others or being bullied, you'll want to meet *separately* with each set of parents (or guardians). It's hard enough for parents to hear this kind of news without having to face the parents of the child who is hurting their son or daughter (or being hurt by him or her). It's tempting to go on the offensive or become defensive, and suddenly you have another set of problems on your hands.

In time, however, and especially if you're making progress helping both students, you might want to consider getting the parents together for a face-to-face meeting. You might want to include the school counselor or psychologist.

 **Important:** Use your judgment, follow your instincts, and ask the parents (separately) how they feel about this. Are they ready to sit down and talk to each other? Can they set aside their negative feelings—anger, disappointment, fear, hostility—and keep an open mind? Can they agree to hear both sides? Can they present a united front of caring adults who all want the best for their children?

When parents are willing to communicate and work together, this brings a special energy to the situation. Students who are having difficulty getting along see a good example: adults on opposite sides of a problem who are willing to talk and work together. This gives both sets of parents the opportunity to serve as positive role models.

KEEP THE FOCUS ON BEHAVIOR

In your interactions with a student who bullies others, be sure to emphasize that the problem is the *behavior*, not the student himself or herself.

Never label the student a "bully." Instead of saying, "I've noticed that you're a bully," or "People tell me you're a bully," or "You must stop being a bully," say something like "Hitting (or kicking, teasing, excluding, name-calling, etc.) are bullying behaviors, and they are not allowed in our classroom." Or "There are lots of good things I like about you—your smile, your talent for drawing, and your sense of humor. But I don't like it when you tease other students, and we need to work on that behavior." For every negative statement you make to point out an undesirable behavior, try to include one or more positives.

When you need to remove a student from a situation, be specific about your reasons for doing so. *Example:* "Jon, I'm putting you on time-out because you shoved Tracy, and shoving isn't allowed." Make sure the student knows why he or she is being removed. Ask, "Why am I putting you on time-out?" If the student offers excuses ("Tracy shoved me first" or "I didn't mean to shove her" or "It was an accident"), calmly restate your reason ("I'm putting you on time-out because you shoved Tracy, and shoving isn't allowed"). Ask the student to reflect on his or her reasons for being removed. You might even use an old-fashioned technique and have the student write the reason on paper—25 times? 50 times? ("I'm on time-out because I shoved Tracy, and shoving isn't allowed.")

Take every opportunity to show your approval and acceptance of the student as a *person*. Separate the student from the behavior. *Example:* "Shawna, you know I like you a lot. But I don't like it when you pick on kids who are smaller than you. Let's talk about ways you can change that behavior."

TEACH STUDENTS TO MONITOR THEIR OWN BEHAVIOR

Have students who bully others monitor their own behavior. Work with each student to

identify and list inappropriate behaviors he or she needs to change. The student then keeps a tally of how often he or she engages in each behavior. Or, to cast this in a more positive light, the student can record the amount of time (in 15-minute intervals or number of class periods) during which he or she *doesn't* engage in the behavior. Either way, this deliberate, conscientious record-keeping usually leads to greater control over one's behavior. *Tip:* The student must *want* to change the behaviors, or self-monitoring won't work.

For more on self-monitoring, see:

- *Teaching Self-Management Strategies to Adolescents* by K. Richard Young, Richard P. West, Deborah J. Smith, and Daniel P. Morgan (Longmont, CO: Sopris West, 1991). This program for students in grades 6–12 helps children develop new, productive habits to help them succeed in school and in life.
- *It's Up to Me: A Self-Monitoring Behavior Program* developed by Janie Haugen (San Antonio, TX: PCI, 1995). Choose behavioral objectives from 150 reproducible Monthly Charting Sheets. Students carry their own notebooks and chart their own behavior. Write or call: PCI, PO Box 34270, San Antonio, TX 78265-4270; toll-free telephone 1-800-594-4263.

PROVIDE COUNSELING

Students who bully others need help learning how to relate to their peers in more positive, productive ways. If at all possible, they should have access to some type of counseling—by a school psychologist, guidance counselor, or another trained adult. In some cases, peer counseling can also be useful. Some experts feel that counseling or discussion with students involved in bullying should occur *before* consequences are applied.

Counseling groups have a big advantage over punishment or other disciplinary tactics, although they shouldn't take the place of reasonable and consistent consequences for specific behaviors. Rather than driving the problem underground, groups bring it out in the open where students can discuss it and adults can offer their input and advice. Rather than making bullies feel even more excluded and socially inept, groups offer opportunities for students to talk about what's bothering them, explore reasons for their behavior, and learn alternatives to bullying others.

In general, bullies don't "outgrow" their problem without some type of professional help. Often, it's not enough to counsel only the bully—especially if his or her inappropriate behaviors were learned at home. During your discussions with the student's parents, you might suggest they consider family counseling. Have a list of local and community resources available for parents who seem willing to give it a try.

GET OTHER STUDENTS INVOLVED

Never underestimate the power of peer pressure! As you're helping bullies change their behavior, get the whole class involved.*

In some schools, students have formed "good gangs" to defend victims of bullies. When they see someone being mistreated (perhaps when the teacher's back is turned), they shout in unison at the student who's doing the bullying: "Leave (victim's name) alone!" You might role-play this with your class to see how it works.

Have students practice things they might say to friends who bully others. *Examples:* "If you want me to keep being your friend, you have to stop teasing Paul." "I don't like it when my friends hurt other people." "When you hit Raisa, that makes *me* feel bad and I don't want to be around you."

* See also "Mobilize Witnesses" (pages 89 and 93).

When you notice bullying behavior, call students' attention to it. You might say, "Look at what Ben just did to Alex. He threw his notebook on the floor. That's not fair, is it? What can we do to help?" Then encourage students to act on a valid suggestion (helping Alex pick up his notebook; telling Ben to cut it out).

Give students permission to point out when someone is breaking a class rule (see "Set Rules," pages 31–32). *Example:* A student might say, "Class Rule Number Two! We don't tease people."



Go farther: Have students brainstorm ways to express their intolerance for bullying behavior. Write their ideas on the chalkboard and invite class discussion. They might vote for their top 5 ideas, then create a poster titled "Ways to Be a Bully Buster."

SET UP A BULLY COURT

Some schools have set up "bully courts"—forums in which bullies are tried and sentenced by their peers. Half of the court's members are elected by the bully's classmates, and half are appointed by the teacher. The teacher serves as chairperson to ensure fair play. "Sentences" have included banning bullies from school trips and playgrounds, and having bullies perform service-related tasks such as tidying classrooms.

Bully courts might be more appropriate for older students than younger students. But if you want to explore the possibility for your classroom, check out these resources on teen, youth, and student courts:

American Bar Association
Division for Public Education
541 North Fairbanks Court
Chicago, IL 60611-3314
(312) 988-5735
www.abanet.org

Request a free packet of information about teen/youth/student courts.

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
1-800-851-3420
www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org

Request a copy of "Peer Justice and Youth Empowerment: An Implementation Guide for Teen Court Program."

HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY AND PURSUE THEIR INTERESTS

It's often true that students who bully others don't have special interests or hobbies. They spend much of their time picking on others, planning ways to pick on others, or responding to imagined slights or offenses. Because they tend to be very competitive and are poor losers, they may choose not to get involved in activities where there's a chance they won't excel or win.

Identify students who are bullies or potential bullies (see pages 119–122), then make time to talk with them one-on-one. Explain that you'd like to get to know them better. Ask them what they like to do in their free time; don't be surprised if they can't (or won't) answer right away. They may be suspicious or defensive. Be patient, friendly, welcoming, and warm; back off if you sense that a student feels uncomfortable.

You might guide them with questions like the following.* *Tip:* Along the way, share information about your own interests and hobbies, as appropriate. The discussion shouldn't be about *you*, but if you're willing to reveal a little about your life, students might follow your example and let you in on theirs.

1. Do you like to read books or magazines? What are your favorites? Do you have a favorite time to read? A special place where you like to curl up or sprawl out and read?

* See also "Learn More About Your Students" (pages 38–39).

2. What do you like to watch on TV?
3. Have you seen any good movies lately? What are your favorite movies or videos? What do you like about them?
4. What's your favorite kind of music? Who are your favorite groups or bands?
5. What's your favorite way to let off steam? Do you run? Bike? Skate? Shoot hoops?
6. When you have free time at home, what do you like to do best? Do you have a hobby? Tell me about it.
7. How much time do you spend on your hobby? What do you like most about it?
8. Imagine that you have all the money and all the freedom in the world. What's *one* thing you'd really like to do?
9. What do you think you might want to be when you grow up?
10. Imagine that you could go anywhere in the world. Where would you like to go? Why? What would you do there?
11. Imagine that you could be anyone in the world—past, present, or future. Who would you be? Why would you want to be that person? What would you do if you were that person?
12. Is there something you've always wanted to try? What about (acting in a play, starting a collection, singing in a band, playing on a team, joining a club, playing a musical instrument, dancing, working with animals, etc.)?

If you learn that the student has a hobby, encourage him or her to tell you more about it. If it's a collection, maybe the student can bring all or part of it to school and share it with the class.

If you learn that the student has a special interest (or the potential to develop a special interest), offer to help him or her pursue it. Put the stu-

dent in touch with people or organizations in your school and community.* Offer encouragement and follow through by asking questions about his or her progress and experiences as the year goes on.

TEACH LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Bullies are skilled at getting and using power over others. They do it for the wrong reasons (to intimidate and control), in the wrong ways (with physical force, verbal abuse, or emotional manipulation), and to the wrong ends (victimizing others and making them miserable), but clearly they possess real ability. Why not channel all that talent into something worthwhile?

Consider offering leadership training especially for students who have been identified as bullies or potential bullies. Check to see what's available in your community through Family and Children's Services and other organizations that serve children and youth.**

Good leadership training promotes and strengthens many positive character traits and skills. *Examples:*

- activism
- admitting mistakes
- assertiveness
- being a good sport
- caring
- citizenship
- coaching
- communication
- compromise
- concern
- confidence
- conflict resolution
- cooperation
- courage
- creativity
- credibility
- decision-making
- dedication
- delegating
- dependability
- endurance
- enthusiasm
- fairness
- follow-through
- goal-setting
- honesty
- imagination

* See also "Encourage Relationships with Other Adults" (pages 105-106).

** See "Clubs, Groups, Troops, and Teams" (pages 105-106).

- independence
- influencing others
- ingenuity
- initiative
- inspiring others
- integrity
- judgment
- justice
- learning
- listening
- loyalty
- motivating others
- patience
- perseverance
- planning
- positive attitudes
- positive risk-taking
- pride
- purpose
- resiliency
- resourcefulness
- respect for others
- responsibility
- self-awareness
- self-esteem
- self-improvement
- self-respect
- service to others
- setting a good example
- tact
- team-building
- thoughtfulness
- trustworthiness
- unselfishness

Imagine what might happen if we could turn bullies into leaders! It's worth a try . . . and it could turn troublemaking students into contributing assets to our schools and communities.

HELP STUDENTS FIND MENTORS

Students who bully others are students at risk for serious problems now and in the future. It's a proven fact that students at risk can be helped to improve their behavior and stay out of trouble by being matched with mentors—adults or teens who care about them and spend time with them.

In 1992 and 1993, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), a national research organization based in Philadelphia, studied the effects of mentoring during an 18-month experiment involving nearly 1,000 boys and girls ages 10–16 in eight

states.* Half of the children were matched with mentors through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) agencies; half were assigned to a waiting list, or control group. The children in the first group met with their Big Brothers/Sisters about three times a month for at least a year.

At the end of the study, P/PV found that the mentored students were:

- 46% less likely than the students in the control groups to start using illegal drugs
- 27% less likely to start using alcohol
- 53% less likely to skip school
- 37% less likely to skip a class
- almost 33% less likely to hit someone
- getting along better with their peers
- getting along better with their parents

You can make a big difference in the life of any student by matching him or her with a mentor. For more information about BBBSA, contact your local office or visit the Web site (www.bbbsa.org). Ask about the "High School Bigs" program, which pairs younger kids with local high school students.

You can also ask other teachers in your school if they would be willing to mentor students in your classroom who need more positive interaction with adults. (At the same time, *you* might offer to mentor a student in another teacher's classroom.)

For more about mentoring, see page 106.

* SOURCE: "Mentoring—A Proven Delinquency Prevention Strategy" by Jean Baldwin Grossman and Eileen M. Garry (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention), April 1997.

LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR STUDENTS

Learn as much as you can about the bullies or potential bullies in your classroom.* Show interest in them as individuals—as people worth knowing. Make it clear that even though you don't like some of their behaviors,** you still value them as human beings. You want them to succeed, and you care about their future.

LEARN ABOUT THEM

- Meet with them individually or in small groups as often as you can. You might start by meeting weekly, then twice a month, then monthly.
- Show interest in their lives and be a good listener (see pages 86–88).
- Communicate your high expectations for them—and your confidence that they can meet your expectations.
- Point out and praise the positive behaviors you've noticed, and encourage them to keep up the good work. Let them know that you're keeping an eye on them—and you want to “catch them being good.”***
- You might also mention the negative behaviors you've noticed and remind them of why these behaviors are not acceptable, but don't dwell on these. This isn't the time. “Learn More” meetings should focus on positive qualities, characteristics, and behaviors as much as possible.

LEARN ABOUT THEIR FAMILIES

- Ask students about their families. You might have them write essays, poems, stories, songs, or skits about their families. If your students are keeping journals (see pages 38–39), you might ask them to write about their families in their journals.

* See also “Learn More About Your Students” (pages 38–39) and “Help Students Identify and Pursue Their Interests” (pages 133–134).

** See also “Keep the Focus on Behavior” (page 131).

*** See also “Catch Them in the Act” (pages 116–117).

- Hold regular conferences with their parents; you might include the students, too. Observe the interactions between parents and children. If you sense that the parents don't like you or trust you—perhaps because they see you as part of the problem—try to find out if there's another teacher or administrator they do like and trust. Ask if they're willing to meet with that person instead.
- Ask the parents if it's okay to visit them at home. This will give you a better understanding of how the students' family experiences might be affecting their behavior at school.

CAMPAIN AGAINST BULLYING

One way to help bullies change their behavior is to make it clear that bullying won't be tolerated in your classroom. When you and the majority of your students present a united front against bullying, bullies find it harder to behave in ways that are obviously unwanted, undesirable, and unpopular.

The “Creating a Positive Classroom” section of this book includes many tips and strategies that can discourage bullies from bullying—and encourage them to explore more positive ways of relating to others. You might also conduct an all-out campaign against bullying. Have your students work together (as a class or in small groups) to create posters, banners, jingles, skits, raps, songs, etc. around one or more anti-bullying themes. *Examples:*

- **Bullying isn't cool.**
- **Kindness is cool.**
- **Acceptance is cool.**
- **Tolerance is cool.**
- **We stand up for ourselves and each other.**

- In our classroom, no one is an outsider.
- In our classroom, everyone is welcome.
- We treat others the way we want to be treated.
- Spreading rumors isn't cool.
- Gossip isn't cool.
- Name-calling isn't cool.
- New students are welcome here.
- No one ever deserves to be bullied.
- Everyone is unique.
- Hurray for differences!
- No teasing allowed.
- If we see someone being bullied, we're telling!
- Telling isn't tattling.
- Reporting isn't ratting.
- Bullying? No way! There's always a better way.

Or have students brainstorm anti-bullying themes, then choose one they'd like to work on.



Go farther: Have groups of students research successful advertising campaigns, then try to determine what made them successful. Did the campaigns have catchy slogans? Appealing graphics? Popular spokespersons? Songs or jingles that were easy to remember? Ask students to create anti-bullying campaigns based on what they learned from their research. You might even have a schoolwide competition, with the winning campaign adopted by the whole school. Keep your local media (newspapers, magazines, radio stations, TV stations) informed about the competition and the winner.

HELP STUDENTS MANAGE THEIR ANGER

Students who bully others have a hard time managing their anger. That's one reason they bully. They need help learning how to control their temper, curb violent or aggressive impulses, and resist taking out their anger on others.

Have one-on-one conversations with students who bully others—or who might not be bullies but seem to have difficulty managing their anger. Or you might have a class discussion on this topic.

Ask questions like the following. If you prefer, you might adapt these questions for a worksheet. Have students complete it in class or as a homework assignment. Then review their responses and meet individually or in small groups with students who seem to need help.

1. How can you tell when you're angry? What do you do?
2. How do you feel when you're angry? Hurt? Misunderstood? Frustrated? Sad? Hot all over? Like you're about to explode? Like you want to strike out at someone else?
3. Describe a time when you were very angry. How did you feel? What did you do? What happened next? How did you feel afterward?
4. How do you feel when someone gets angry at you? Are you scared? Upset? Do you wish you could just disappear?
5. Do you think it's fair when someone else takes out his or her anger on you?
6. How does your anger affect the people around you? What about your family? Friends? The person or people you're angry at? How do you think they feel when you take out your anger on them?

7. Is there anything you'd like to change about the way you feel and act when you get angry?
8. Would you like to learn different ways to act when you get angry?

With your students, brainstorm ideas for managing anger. Write their ideas on the chalkboard. Afterward, have students choose one idea to work on for the next few days, then report back to you on whether it works for them. Here are some starter ideas:*

- Learn to recognize the signs that you're about to explode. Do something *before* you explode.
- Walk away from the person or situation that's making you angry. You're not running away. You're doing something positive to make sure things don't get worse or out of control.
- Take five deep breaths. Take five more.
- Count to ten s-l-o-w-l-y. Do it again if you need to.
- Let off steam in a safe, positive way. Go for a run. Shoot some hoops. Take a bike ride. Jump up and down.
- Make yourself relax and cool down. Think calm, peaceful thoughts. Try tensing, then relaxing every muscle in your body, from your head to your toes.
- Pretend that you're not angry. You may do such a good acting job that you convince yourself.
- Ask yourself, "Why am I angry?" Maybe the person didn't mean to make you angry. Maybe it was an accident or a misunderstanding.
- Try not to take things so personally. Understand that the whole world isn't against you.

* See also "Teach Anger Management Skills" (page 32).



Go farther: Talk with your school psychologist or counselor about starting an anger management group for students. The group might meet during recess or lunch—times that are otherwise unstructured.

GET OLDER STUDENTS INVOLVED

Often, students who bully others find it easier to talk and work with older students than adults. See if your local high school trains students to serve as peer mediators and peer counselors. If the answer is yes, ask if one or more students might be available to work with bullies at your school.

USE "STOP AND THINK"

Most teachers have developed a "sixth sense" when it comes to student behavior. They can detect a problem before it occurs and act quickly to prevent it. Sometimes all it takes is a look or a word from the teacher to get students back on track.

"Stop and Think" takes this a step further. Not only does it interrupt inappropriate behavior, it also invites students to consider what they're doing (or about to do) and make a better choice.

Here are three ways to use "Stop and Think" in your classroom:

1. Tell your students, "You have the power to *stop and think* before you speak or act. This is a way to keep yourself from saying or doing something that might get you in trouble or hurt someone else. Whenever I say 'Stop and Think,' I want the person or people I'm addressing to do just that. STOP whatever you're saying or doing. Then THINK about what you're about to say or do. Decide if you should say or do something else instead."

Once you've introduced "Stop and Think," use this short, simple phrase whenever necessary. Keep your voice calm and your expression positive or neutral. (This is a great alternative to yelling or other emotional responses.)

2. Distribute copies of the handout on page 140. Have students color in the stop sign and thought bubble, then cut along the dark solid line, fold along the dotted line, and tape or staple the top together.

Younger students might want to wear their "Stop/Think" signs as necklaces (punch two holes in the top corners, then weave a length of yarn or string through the holes). Older students can carry their signs in their pockets.

Tell your students, "You have the power to *stop and think* before you speak or act. Your 'Stop/Think' sign can remind you to do this."

3. Give students permission to use "Stop and Think" with each other. Enlist their help in interrupting impulsive or negative behaviors.

GIVE STUDENTS MEANINGFUL RESPONSIBILITIES

As you're planning special class projects and events, try giving some of the most meaningful and desirable tasks to students who might otherwise use their time and energy bullying others.* Make sure these are tasks that really matter, and let students know you're counting on them to do their best.

Tip: If you know that a younger student is being bullied on the playground, consider assigning one of your class "bullies" as that child's protector. Talk this over with your student ahead of time; emphasize that he or she is not to bully

* See also "Give Them Opportunities to Shine" (page 108).

the child's bully. Your student's presence might be enough to dissuade the child's bully from picking on him or her.

TEACH THEM TO "TALK SENSE TO THEMSELVES"

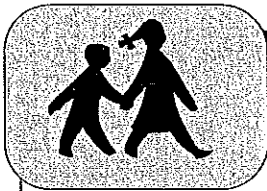
Schools can have rules and anti-bullying programs, adults can determine and apply consequences, but ultimately each student must learn to control his or her own inappropriate and/or impulsive behaviors.

Just as students can learn positive self-talk (see pages 68 and 71), they can also learn to "talk sense to themselves"—to talk themselves *out of* behaviors that are likely to hurt someone else and/or get them into trouble, and *into* behaviors that are more desirable and acceptable.

Work with your students one-on-one or in small groups to come up with brief, powerful, easy-to-remember words and phrases they can use to "talk sense to themselves." *Examples:*

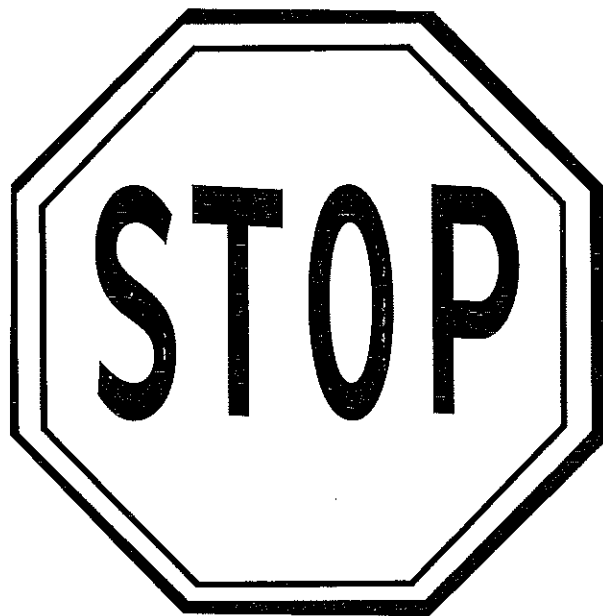
- I don't have to do this.
- I can make a better choice.
- I can keep my hands to myself.
- I can walk away.
- I can control myself.
- There's a better way.
- I'm better than this.
- I'm in charge of me.
- I can stop and think.
- I can put on the brakes.

Have students choose their favorite word or phrase, then write it on a 3" x 5" card and carry it in their pocket. Tell them to think (or whisper) their phrase whenever they feel they might say or do something to hurt another person.



STOP/THINK SIGN

1. Cut along the dark line



2. Fold on the dotted line



COMPILE BEHAVIOR PROFILES

For each student who exhibits bullying behaviors, create a Behavior Profile in a special folder.

Throughout the day and/or at the end of the day, jot down detailed notes about the student's behavior.



Important: Be sure to include positive as well as negative behaviors.

Use the folder to collect and store notes and reports you receive from other students, teachers, and staff about the student's behavior; notes taken during meetings and conversations with the student's parents; and anything else you feel is meaningful and relevant.

Toward the end of each week, review and summarize the Behavior Profile. Has the student's behavior improved during the week? Are there areas that still need work? What strategies and techniques did you try to help the student? Which ones were most effective? If the student behaved inappropriately, what consequences were applied? Did the consequences have the desired effect?

Share pertinent information from your Behavior Profile with the student, his or her parents (through a phone call or a note home), and other staff members involved in helping the student improve his or her behavior.

Tip: Careful notes can be very useful during parent-teacher conferences and meetings with school officials.

TEACH POSITIVE WAYS TO FEEL POWERFUL

Offer bullies positive ways to channel their need for power. Here are ten examples and ideas to try:

1. In one school, officials learned that an older student was harassing younger students. The school counselor took the bully aside, told him that someone was picking on the little kids in the school, and asked him to help. The bully became a guardian.
2. In another school, bullies were sent to clean up the kindergarten classroom as a subtle form of punishment. The kindergartners then wrote thank-you notes to the bullies—a not-so-subtle form of praise that made the bullies feel good about themselves.
3. Consider having bullies hand out awards to students who have done good deeds, taken part in social service projects, helped other students, or otherwise set positive examples for others to emulate.
4. There's power in correcting mistakes and righting wrongs. Emphasize that mistakes are for learning and wrongs are opportunities to step forward, be a leader, and win well-deserved admiration from peers and adults.
5. Assign bullies to watch out for and help students who are especially timid or shy. Encourage them to feel good about protecting their new friends.
6. Some experts suggest holding bullies responsible for the safety and well-being of their victims. If something happens to their victims, the bullies suffer the consequences—even if someone else did the deed.
7. Encourage (even require) bullies to get involved in school activities—plays, sports, clubs, etc. Do everything in your power to ensure that their experiences are positive and successful. If they aren't interested in any of the activities currently available, offer to help them start a club or group of their choosing. Participating gives students a sense of belonging, which helps them feel valued—and powerful.

8. Ask your school counselor or psychologist to assess bullies' self-esteem. It's a myth that all bullies have low self-esteem (in fact, some have *high* self-esteem), but it's worth checking into. If bullies are found to have low self-esteem, start a group or program to help them.
9. Doing good by helping others is a powerful feeling. See "Get Students Involved in Service" (pages 73–75).
10. Invite bullies to brainstorm their own ideas for being powerful without hurting or intimidating others. Express confidence in their ability to come up with good strategies.

TRY CRITICAL QUESTIONING

Immediately after intervening with a bullying incident (removing the audience, removing the bully, and giving the bully a few moments to calm down), ask the bully a series of questions that require him or her to reflect on the incident. *Examples:*

1. What just happened? (Insist on "just the facts"—no excuses, no rationalizations, no blaming the victim.)
2. What exactly did you do? (Not *why*, just *what*.)
3. What will happen next for you? (Remind the student of the consequences of his or her behavior.)
4. How do you feel right now?
5. How do you think the other person feels?
6. Is this really what you wanted to happen?
7. What could you do next time instead of (hitting, kicking, name-calling, teasing, or whatever occurred)?

8. How can you make sure something like this doesn't happen again? What can you do?

PROVIDE A PLACE FOR STUDENTS TO GO

If at all possible, set aside a room in your school where students who bully others can be sent to calm down and consider their behavior.

You might call this the Resource Room, the Learning Room, the Quiet Room, the Thinking Room, or anything else that sets it apart from a regular classroom (and doesn't obviously label it "the place where bullies go"). Staff it with a full-time, trained professional who can work with students, talk with them, provide structured activities, listen to their concerns, and help them learn and practice positive ways of relating to others.

Going to this special room might be a consequence for bullying behavior, or a choice students can make for themselves when they feel they're losing control.

START A CLUB

Once you've identified the bullies or potential bullies in your classroom (see pages 119–122), start a club exclusively for them. Have it meet during recess or lunch—times when students' activities usually aren't structured and bullying can be a problem.

You might run the club yourself or train someone else to run it. Or see if another teacher or staff person at your school has experience in this area. If you've identified only one bully or potential bully in your classroom, ask other teachers if they have students who might benefit from belonging to the club.


Use meeting times to discuss inappropriate vs. appropriate behaviors, role-play various situations, teach empathy, reiterate the consequences

of bullying behaviors, invite students to think about the consequences, practice prosocial skills, teach anger management, and more. All three sections of this book include activities you might try in the club; many activities in the "Helping Victims" section can be adapted to fit. *Tip:* From time to time, let students set the agenda.

HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND WHY THEY BULLY OTHERS

If you can help bullies to *recognize* that they behave inappropriately and take *responsibility* for their behavior,* you can start to help them *realize* why they do the things they do.

This activity and the "Reasons Why" questionnaire (pages 145–146) may not be appropriate for some students. Some questions may be too complex or confusing for their age or developmental level. Use your judgment and your knowledge of your students; adapt where appropriate—or come up with other questions you think will work better. If you use this questionnaire, be sure to tell your students that this isn't a test. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers—only answers that are true for them and may not be true for anyone else.

 **Important:** Consider inviting the school counselor or psychologist to join you for this activity. He or she will be a valuable resource. Also: This activity should precede "Help Students Stop Bullying" (following). If you decide to use the "Reasons Why" questionnaire, be sure to follow through with "Reasons Why (Guidance Questions)" (pages 147–148).


Depending on your students' ages and abilities, they can complete the "Reasons Why" handout and turn it in to you, or you might choose to go over the questions one at a time during a face-to-face meeting or small group discussion.

* See "Change Their Thinking" (pages 128–129).

HELP STUDENTS STOP BULLYING

This activity should follow "Help Students Understand Why They Bully Others" (preceding). If you haven't yet done that activity, please read through it carefully. If you choose not to do that activity, skip this one, too.

"Help Students Stop" returns to the questions in "Help Students Understand," with the addition of more questions designed to start students thinking about alternatives and solutions. If a student has identified one or more "Reasons Why" as true for him or her, you can refer to "Reasons Why (Guidance Questions)" (pages 147–148) for ideas on where to go next.

 **Important:** The "Guidance Questions" aren't meant to be comprehensive or conclusive, and you'll notice they don't have "the answers." Read them, think about them, then add your own notes and ideas. Be sure to consult your school counselor or psychologist; he or she will be a valuable resource.

STARTER TIPS FOR HELPING THEM STOP

A few possibilities to consider:

- Pair each student with a partner—an older student he or she respects, admires, and would like to be friends with. The older student can offer advice, just listen, and monitor the younger student's behavior (speech, actions, body language, etc.). The older student can praise positive changes and point out when the younger student reverts to bad habits or negative behaviors.
- When a student commits to making a change, suggest the "one-day-at-a-time" approach rather than a blanket promise for the future. *Example:* Instead of "I'll never pick on anyone ever again," try "I won't pick on anyone today."

- If possible, have students apologize and make amends to their former victims. Have them keep trying, even if the former victims are suspicious or don't believe the students are serious.
- Pair students with newcomers to your classroom or school. The newcomers won't know about the students' past, which will help clear the way for a possible friendship.
- Help students find and pursue interests outside of school and away from their former victims (and reputations). Encourage them to make new friends.
- Help students find and pursue physical sports or discipline (biking, blading, softball, martial arts) as a way to let off steam and use their strength in positive ways.
- Try to form a "safety net" of adults (teachers, administrators, playground supervisors, lunchroom supervisors) the students can go to when you're not available. These people should know that the students have had behavior problems and sincerely want to change. The students can go to their "safety net" people when they feel angry, upset, or about to lose control.



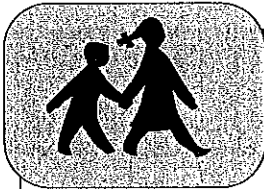
REASONS WHY

You know that you sometimes bully other people.
Have you ever wondered why? When we know the reasons
for our behaviors, this can give us the power to change our behaviors.

Maybe one or more of these reasons are true for you.
Read them, think about them, and decide for yourself.
Write answers only if you want to.

1. Is there someone in your life who picks on you?
2. Do you feel lonely at school?
3. Are you afraid of being picked on?
4. When other people hurt you, do you feel you have to get back at them?
5. Do you feel you have to prove that you're tougher and stronger than other people?
6. Do you just like to show off and get a reaction? Do you like lots of attention?
7. Do you always have to win at everything? Do you get angry when you lose?
8. Are you jealous of other people?
9. Is there someone who irritates you so much you just can't stand it?

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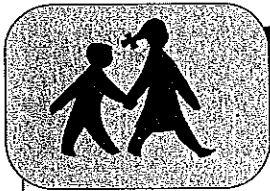


REASONS WHY (continued)

10. When you say or do something to hurt someone else, does that make you feel strong and important?
11. Is there something in your life that makes you feel unhappy or afraid?
12. When you feel sad, frustrated, angry, or afraid, does it seem like the only way to get rid of your bad feeling is to take it out on someone else?
13. Is there something in your life that makes you feel angry much of the time?
14. Is school really hard for you?
15. Do you feel like you're always letting other people down? Are their expectations just too high?
16. Are you bigger and stronger than other people your age? Does this make you feel powerful?
17. Do you hang around with other bullies? Do you feel you have to go along with whatever they do?
18. Is it very hard for you to control your temper? Does it seem impossible sometimes?

One more thing to think about . . .

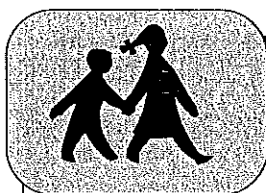
Is there an adult you trust and respect—someone you think you could talk to? Would you be willing to talk to that person? OR: If you can't think of anyone, would you be willing to meet someone who's a really good listener?



REASONS WHY Guidance Questions

1. Is there someone in your life who picks on you? *Go farther:* Do you want to tell me who it is? Would you like me to help you do something about it?
2. Do you feel lonely at school? *Go farther:* Would you like to feel less lonely and more like you belong here? Are you willing to try some ideas for fitting in?
3. Are you afraid of being picked on? *Go farther:* Do you feel the only way to protect yourself is to get other people before they get you? Would you like to learn other ways to feel safe and not worry so much?
4. When other people hurt you, do you feel you have to get back at them? *Go farther:* Would you like to learn other ways to deal with the hurt? And maybe avoid feeling hurt? Is it possible that people aren't hurting you on purpose?
5. Do you feel you have to prove that you're tougher and stronger than other people? *Go farther:* Are you willing to try other ways to feel powerful and important?
6. Do you just like to show off and get a reaction? Do you like lots of attention? *Go farther:* If you knew other ways to get attention—positive ways—would you try them?
7. Do you always have to win at everything? Do you get angry when you lose? *Go farther:* Would you like to learn how to enjoy things more and not worry so much about winning or losing?
8. Are you jealous of other people? *Go farther:* Why are you jealous? What do they have that you want? Is it really that important? Would you like to learn ways to be happy with who you are and what you have?
9. Is there someone who irritates you so much you just can't stand it? *Go farther:* Would you like to learn ways to avoid the person—or not let him or her "get to you" as much?
10. When you say or do something to hurt someone else, does that make you feel strong and important? *Go farther:* Are you willing to try other ways to feel good about yourself?

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REASONS WHY Guidance Questions (continued)

11. Is there something in your life that makes you feel unhappy or afraid? *Go farther:* What would make you feel better? Would you like someone to help you?
12. When you feel sad, frustrated, angry, or afraid, does it seem like the only way to get rid of your bad feeling is to take it out on someone else? *Go farther:* If you knew other ways to get rid of bad feelings, would you try them instead?
13. Is there something in your life that makes you feel angry much of the time? *Go farther:* Would you like to know how to handle your anger—maybe even get rid of some or all of your anger?
14. Is school really hard for you? *Go farther:* If you knew ways to make school easier and more fun, would you try them?
15. Do you feel like you're always letting other people down? Are their expectations just too high? *Go farther:* Would you like to tell them how you feel? Would you feel better if they backed off a bit and accepted you the way you are?
16. Are you bigger and stronger than other people your age? Does this make you feel powerful? *Go farther:* Do you ever wish you weren't so big and strong? Would you like to know positive ways to use your size and strength?
17. Do you hang around with other bullies? Do you feel you have to go along with whatever they do? *Go farther:* If you had a chance to get out of that group (or gang), would you?
18. Is it very hard for you to control your temper? Does it seem impossible sometimes? *Go farther:* Would you like to learn ways to control your temper, or how to get help when you can't?

Finally . . .

Is there an adult you respect and trust—someone you think you could talk to? Would you be willing to talk to that person? OR: If you can't think of anyone, would you be willing to meet someone who's a really good listener? *Go farther:* If you know someone and tell me who it is, I can help get the two of you together. Would that be okay? OR: May I suggest someone you might want to meet?