

Ten Strategies In Bullying Prevention For Schools.

1. Focus on the social environment in school. To reduce bullying, it is important to change the climate and culture of the school and the social norms in regard to bullying. It must become “uncool” to bully, “cool” to help out students who are bullied, and standard practice for staff and students to notice when a child is bullied or excluded. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment—teachers, administrators, counselors, bus drivers, nurses, school resource officers, custodians, cafeteria workers, librarians and of course students.

2. Assess bullying at your school regularly.

Teachers and administrators are not always very good at estimating the extent of bullying at their school.

I have been to schools where there was “very little bullying” until we did anonymous surveys. Staff was quite surprised by the amount of bullying that students reported, the types of bullying that are most common, or the “hot spots” where bullying happens. As a result schools now have anonymous call and email protocols in place to report bullying.

3. Rally the staff and parent support for bullying prevention. Bullying prevention should not be the sole responsibility of an administrator, counselor, teacher—or any single individual at a school. To be most effective, bullying prevention efforts require buy-in from the majority of the staff and from parents.

4. Form a group to coordinate bullying prevention activities. Bullying prevention efforts seem to work best if they are coordinated by a group from the school. This coordinating team (which would include an administrator, a teacher from each grade, a member of the non-teaching staff, a school counselor or other school-based mental health professional, a school nurse, and a parent) should meet regularly to study the survey, plan bullying prevention rules, create anti bully activities, motivate staff, students, and parents.. A student advisory group must be formed to focus on bullying prevention and provide valuable suggestions and feedback to adults. Students can create contests through posters, anti bully videos or creating a website that features their youtube collection of anti bully information.

5. Train staff in bullying prevention. All administrators, faculty, and staff at your school should be trained in bullying prevention and intervention. In-service training can help staff to better understand the nature of bullying and its effects, how to respond if they observe bullying, and how to work with others at the school to help prevent bullying from occurring. Training should not be available only for teaching staff. Rather, administrators should make an effort to educate all adults in the school environment who interact with students (including counselors, media specialists, school resource officers, nurses, lunchroom and recess aides, bus drivers, parent volunteers, custodians, and cafeteria workers).

6. Establish and enforce school rules and policies related to bullying. Although many school behavior codes implicitly forbid bullying, many codes do not use the term or make explicit our expectations for student behavior. It is important to make clear that the school not only expects students not to bully, but that it also expects them to be good citizens, not passive bystanders, if they are aware of bullying.

Developing simple, clear rules about bullying can help to ensure that students are aware of adults' expectations that they refrain from bullying and help students who are bullied.

Here are four easy steps for students to follow.

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will make it a point to include students who are easily left out.
4. If we know someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

School rules and policies must be posted and reviewed with students and parents. Appropriate positive and negative consequences also should be developed for following or not following the school's rules. Students that report bullying must be rewarded and spotlighted. Let's be good finders.

7. Increase adult and student supervision in hot spots where bullying occurs. Yes students! Empower students that are responsible to be anti bully monitors. Teach them what to look for, as well as how to intervene and report issues. Bullying tends to thrive in locations where adults are not present. Once you have identified hot spots for bullying from the student questionnaires, look for creative ways to increase monitoring of these locations.

8. Intervene consistently and appropriately in bullying situations. All staff should be taught how to intervene effectively on the spot to stop bullying.

9. Focus some class time on bullying prevention. Bring in a yearly anti bully speaker to motivate your student body and staff. It is important that bullying prevention programs include a school wide and classroom component. Teachers (with the support of administrators) should set aside 20–30 minutes each week (or every other week) to discuss bullying and peer relations with students. These meetings help teachers to keep their fingers on the pulse of students' concerns, allow time for discussions about bullying and the harm that it can cause, and provide tools for students to address bullying problems. Anti-bullying themes and messages also can be incorporated throughout the school curriculum.

10. Continue these efforts over time. There should be no "end date" for bullying prevention activities. Bullying prevention should be woven into the entire school environment. Students need a regular "inoculation" against bullying.

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