

Brief Guide for Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of Effective Anti-Bullying Program

Once a school system/school has decided to deal with bullying, it should clarify its philosophy regarding bullying, write an anti-bullying policy, and implement and maintain an anti-bullying program.

In order to be able to stop bullying successfully, a whole school approach is needed. The ultimate goal of bully-proofing the school is to create safe and caring school communities where students feel connected and supportive of each other, taking a stand against bullying and treating each other with kindness and respect. All—students, teachers, administrators, support staff as well as parents—work together to create an environment that feels supportive to everyone. This process involves a climate change that may take several years.

The inclusivity of all concerned in the anti-bullying program fosters ownership and ensures loyalty in the implementation of the program. Sullivan (2000) has developed the following six-step anti-bullying initiative: (1) planning - defining the philosophy and response to bullying and getting started; (2) meeting of the concerned communities to find out what is known about the bullying, what can be done about it, establish an anti-bullying committee, establish the terms of reference for the committee, and decide on a timeline; (3) developing policies and programs - carrying out a SWOT (identifying strengths and weaknesses, and examining opportunities and threats) analysis, have a survey of bullying, writing a draft anti-bullying policy, developing strategies for dealing with bullying; (4) presenting a plan to the anti-bullying committee; (5) implementing the

initiative – disseminate the policy widely and establish the practice; (6) evaluation and maintenance of the initiative.

After formulating a clear anti-bullying philosophy and gathering information about the occurrence of bullying, a school needs to consider creating and adopting an anti-bullying policy based on Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) Education Code policy. This policy should serve as the basis of the anti-bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

The SDACC policy could have a general statement that student-to-student misconduct will not be tolerated and that school personnel must take seriously and act on any reported incidents of student-to-student misconduct, such as bullying, etc. The local conferences/schools policies would state intentions of dealing with bullying and how those intentions will be enforced.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Strategies for Adventist Schools in Canada

Research shows that adults can reduce bullying among students by taking an active role in creating and implementing prevention techniques (Olweus, 1993). The bullying prevention efforts could begin by examining school playgrounds' and hallways' behaviors with the goal in mind to improve student behavior through supervision and guidelines. Teachers need to offer support and assistance to students who report bullying incidents so they will be encouraged to continue to inform adults of harassment.

Gayle Laird (1999, pp. 72, 73.) suggested the following useful prevention and intervention ideas in dealing positively with bullying:

A. Have a bullying awareness program which educates the student body about the bullying issue

- The reasons some students become emotionally and physically abusive.
- The reasons some students become victims.
- How bullies and victims feel after a bullying incident.
- The reasons some people support a bully.
- Media messages which seem to condone bullying behaviour.
- The difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour.
- Implement classroom rules:
 - a. We will not bully other students.
 - b. We will help others who are being bullied by speaking out and by getting help.
 - c. We will include all students in activities at this school.

B. Have clear standards outlining the consequences of bullying

1. Since bullying behaviour hurts other children, assign consequences that involve helping others.
2. Some possible consequences for bullying include:
 - Missing recess and instead helping the teacher or helping in the office.
 - Making an anti-bullying poster for the school.
 - Explaining one's behaviour to parents and having them help determine a caring act as a consequence.
 - Role playing being the victim.
 - Observing and reporting acts of kindness.
 - Listening to the victim's story and making a sincere apology.
3. Students who are old enough should be charged under the law for all acts of violence.

C. Promote positive relationships with students to determine who is being bullied

1. Reinforcement is more effective than applying consequences for long-term effect.
2. Watch for the student's kind acts such as:
 - Speaking out when one child says something mean to another.
 - Including a child in a game or conversation.
 - Noticing another child's distress and asking if he is okay.
 - Sharing with another.
 - Being patient with another child who is slower, either mentally or physically.

3. Teacher attention and praise are the most powerful reinforcers for elementary students:

- Being allowed to sit next to the teacher.
- Helping the teacher with a special project.
- Receiving a note or certificate from the teacher.
- Being sent to the office for being good.

D. Teach strategies to encourage victims to resist bullying

Teach students to use the Four Footsteps:

1. Ignore

- Avoid eye contact.
- Practice deep breathing.
- Practice positive self-talk.

2. Say Stop

- Maintain an assertive body posture.
- Speak in a firm voice.
- Do not return aggression.

3. Walk away

4. Get help

- From a friend, ask him/her to help you talk assertively.
- From a teacher/adult, report what happened and what you did to try and stop the bullying.

E. Have teachers as an active presence in the school

Be especially alert during recess. Patrol the outer reaches of the schoolyard.

When you observe a bullying situation use Quick Talk.

1. Say what you saw/heard. "I just heard you call him a stupid idiot."
2. Identify the behaviour. "That's bullying/verbal aggression."
3. Ask the victim how he felt. "How did you feel when he said that?"
4. Explain the rule. "Bullying isn't allowed /tolerated."
5. Use conflict resolution:
 - Ask students what they think/feel/need.
 - Ask them for a resolution.

- Consequent the bully.

F. Have behavioural contracts with parents of bullies to help reinforce consequences of anti-social behaviour

This may not work with some parents who model abusive behaviour at home and are resistant to any intervention.

G. Create a caring school environment that teaches students to help each other

Students can learn to stand up for each other. Always include perceived victims in your classroom groupings.

H. Give lessons on anger management

Teach students to snap their fingers and count to ten when they feel like saying something mean or pushing someone else. This helps them to stop and think about the consequences of their behaviour and how their victim would feel.

I. Offer bullies help to improve their self-esteem by giving them special jobs to do

Bullying complaints from students, teachers, parents and community members should be respected. Action should be taken on these concerns. Bullies need help as well.

After establishing the anti-bullying initiative which includes planning, developing a policy and implementation, provisions should be made for the maintenance of the program by regular evaluation and reassessment. If a program is maintained, it will continue to work well, even when staff and pupils move on. This maintenance program will include in-servicing of each new cohort of students, faculty and staff in the school's anti-bullying philosophy, policy, and programs. Also, there should be regular evaluation of the anti-bullying program within the cycle of school administrative tasks to ensure that the program is working and that it is not neglected in the face of concentration of other

problem areas. Sullivan (2000) suggests that major evaluations should be carried out after eighteen months and after three years.

Selected Useful Anti-Bullying Resources

The following international anti-bullying resources are available on the Internet:

Australia

<http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/>

<http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/guide.html>

<http://www.caper.com.au/peacepack.htm>

Canada

<http://www.bullybeware.com/>

<http://www.lfcc.on.ca/friendly.htm>

<http://www.safeschools.gov.bc.ca/training.pdf>

England

<http://www.luckyduck.co.uk>

<http://www.educate.co.uk/bull2.htm#top>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying/>

<http://www.bullyonline.org/related/abuse.htm>

European Conference on Initiative to Combat School Bullying

<http://www.gold.ac.uk/euconf/index.html>

Scotland

<http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully/links.html>

United States

<http://lincoln.midcoast.com/~wps/against/bullying.html>

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/>

References

- Laird, G. (1999). *Crisis intervention for Teachers: A guide to dealing with aggressive and violent behavior*. Calgary, AB: The Inner Workshops Inc.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- Sullivan, K. (2000). *The anti-bullying handbook*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.