

OMLA News



Oregon Middle Level Association February 2004

an affiliate of the National Middle School Association

No Name-Calling Week March 1-5, 2004



OMLA first and foremost is an organization that advocates for the needs of young adolescent. The need to have a life that is free from bullying is common to all children. Therefore, we are dedicating most of this issue to tools to combat bullying and harassment, ways to celebrate No Name-Calling Week, and related articles. The National Middle Level Association is one sponsor of this initiative.

The *No Name-Calling Week* Coalition aims to create safer schools by making bullying, harassment, and name-calling unacceptable through public education campaigns that motivate youth to change their behavior and mobilize students and educators to take school-based action around the problem of name-calling and verbal harassment.

No Name-Calling Week was inspired by a young adult novel

entitled "The Misfits" by popular author, James Howe. The book tells the story of four best friends trying to survive the seventh grade in the face of all too frequent taunts based on their weight, height, intelligence, and sexual orientation/gender expression. Motivated by the inequities they see around them, the "Gang of Five" (as they are known) creates a new political party during student council elections and run on a platform aimed at wiping out name-calling of all kinds. Though they lose the election, they win the support of the school's principal for their cause and their idea for a "No Name-Calling Day" at school.

Motivated by this simple, yet powerful, idea, the *No Name-Calling Week* Coalition, created by GLSEN and Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, and consisting

of over 40 national organizations, has organized an actual *No Name-Calling Week* in schools across the nation beginning the week of March 1-5, 2004. The project seeks to focus national attention on the problem of name-calling in schools, and to provide students and educators with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to eliminate name-calling in their communities. The project is targeted at grades five through eight—years when the problem of name-calling is particularly acute but the concept can be easily adapted by students and educators at other grade levels. This text is from the website:

www.nonamecalling.com

You can order a resource guide from the website and get information to assist you. We invite every school in Oregon to take part in No Name-Calling Week.

"Words hurt. More than that, they have the power to make students feel unsafe to the point where they are no longer able to perform in school or conduct normal lives."

From Your OMLA President Beth Madison

Not a rite of passage.
Not part of growing up.
Not part of normal conflict.
Not boys-will-be-boys.

This is how I begin the presentations I make at state conferences and national conventions when I speak on what educators can do to prevent and address bullying and harassment.

Over the past four years, I have addressed a couple thousand folks and have shared ideas and materials to assist them on the path to doing something to stop this problem. I have been asked to share materials and have had many, many education professionals tell me about the strides they have made against bullying.

One of my buddies and I have a saying: "What is the best exercise program you can do?" Our glib response is, "The one you'll do." I feel the same way about programs and activities to combat bullying.

Have you told your kids that it is absolutely not OK to pick on each other? Has your district developed a comprehensive policy that you can use? In every school in every corner of this country, kids are mean to each other at the great expense of physical and emotional trauma. While it may

seem like your energy is already taken up by the millions of things it takes to run our schools and teach all those kids, efforts to stop bullying pay off. We have decreased the number of fights we have in my school by 75% over the past six years. This is due mostly to two things: the anti-bullying program, and a "no horseplay" mandate.

Let me expound a bit about the "no horseplay" idea. Middle school kids like to be physical with each other. My observation is that their slapping, tripping, poking, punching and shoving often lead to heightened physical aggression, and can also be a great way to veil bullying. "I was just joking around." This is the excuse of the child who has just slammed another child into a locker. Meanwhile, the victim may not think it is funny at all, nor will they necessarily be willing to say so. It's a simple concept--hands off.

Congratulations to you for all you do to keep kids safe and to ensure they have the opportunity to have a nice day. I suspect most adults can remember incidents of being bullied or having been a bully. We have the chance to change children's lives.

No Name Calling

A tribute to Dr. Seuss on his 100th birthday, March 2, 2004, from North Albany Middle School

Don't call me names
It isn't nice
I'll tell you once
I'll tell you twice

To use bad names
Is really cruel
We don't do that
At our school

I don't like bad names
NAMS I am
I like them less than
Green eggs and ham

Calling names
Can cost you friends
It might take weeks
To make amends

Why did you shout
Cruel names at me
I hide my hurt
So you can't see

Don't use bad names
Not here or there
Don't use bad names
Not anywhere

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Talking and Writing to Realize the Success of Respect

Charlie Wilshire, Teacher, McFarland School, Albany

*“Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows.”
-Helen Keller*

In my classroom, I have on the chalkboard a motivational quote which changes weekly. Once a week I strive to have the students discuss the meaning of the quote as it would apply to their lives. During the discussion, I encourage the class to further look at the quote and see how it is able to make a statement about communication and respect. We talk about regretful incidents where if the quote was applied it could have created a positive exchange and solution.

Much of what is revealed about scenarios concerning failure, dismay, discouragement, anger, sadness, and disrespect is a common thread involving name calling that somehow has harmfully affected the situation being discussed. Students making disparaging comments to one another is a destructive cultural habit that unfortunately becomes part of many students' communication repertoire. In regularly analyzing how what is said or done can ultimately affect the dynamic of a situation, and thus the feelings of those involved, students begin to figure out for themselves how important it is to follow the rules and be respectful. To frame the discussion within the context of a motivational quote tends to generate discussion or writing with a positive spin.

We attempt to come to the weekly understanding of the quote through talking or writing about it. I point out to the students that living what the quote represents gives them opportunities, strength, and options. Instead of focusing on what not to do, such as no name calling, we might focus on the same concept but in a positive light—such as only speak respectfully to others so your experience at school today will be a good and growing one.

In general, there has been a change in the environment at our school. Recently, I have sensed that on more days than not the students and staff collectively will create a space that nurtures, communication that encourages, and relationships that grow stronger. The weekly motivational quote aspires to, at least upon reading it, make those who understand it feel good because it is always positive and it affirms the possibility of change. With respect to the forward changing of how we communicate, where we seek to build each other up instead of tear each other down, there is a promise of what very well could be a brighter tomorrow.

“There are many ways of going forward, but only one way of standing still.”

-Franklin D. Roosevelt

Harassment Text from a Middle School Student Handbook

Be nice to each other! It is absolutely not OK to pick on each other, or call names, or do anything that makes other students feel bad. This includes:

- name calling
- physical contact like pushing, poking, tripping, punching, pinching
- glaring or mean looks, staring at or following around
- making threatening gestures or statements
- taking, hiding or destroying property
- spreading rumors or lies
- lying to an adult about something someone did to get them in trouble
- slamming others' locker doors
- saying nasty, obscene or mean things
- making unkind remarks about the person's parents
- calling someone fat, short, or other remarks about their size or looks
- referring to homosexuality, race, or other things in a mean way

If someone is harassing you, it might be tempting to be mean right back. Don't do it! Getting even with someone for his or her bad behavior does not help. It is not allowed and can get you in trouble. Follow this plan instead:

1. First, tell the student/s to stop and that you do not like the behavior, then walk away.
2. If it happens again, ignore it and walk away.
3. If it happens a third time, seek help from a school official.

Disclaimer

This newsletter has names of programs and providers. OMLA in no way assumes responsibility for their effectiveness or anything else related to their use. The information supplied in this newsletter is a compilation of all kinds of ideas and sources. That's all!

Reconciliation: Lessons in the Classroom on Bullying and Harassment

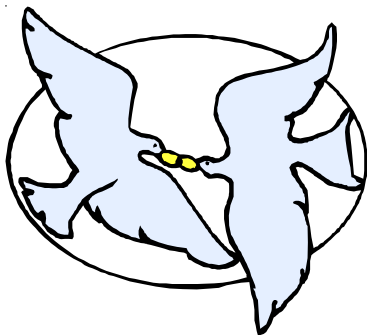
Jan Burgess, Former Principal, Oak Creek Elementary

Connie Johnson, Psychologist and Child Development Specialist

“Can a good person be a good citizen in a bad country.
Is there such a thing?
Can a good person be a good friend of a bad person?
Can you speak truth to power?
How loud do you have to say no to an evil command?
How softly can you safely say yes?”*

After 11 years at a 7th-8th grade middle school, I returned to Oak Creek Elementary School as principal, a K-6 school in the same district. Each fall, all administrators in the district are given an assignment to review the School Board policy on harassment with all students, define bullying and harassment, and relay to the students the consequences for participating in either. Finding appropriate materials for students in intermediate grades can be challenging. Those on hand were either too sophisticated or too childish.

So, Connie Johnson, Oak Creek’s Child Development Specialist, and I approached the policy review in another way. We decided to team-teach an affective lesson together. I developed questions to pose for student consideration, she found a video we agreed matched what we wanted to convey, then we spoke to each of our 5/6 grade classes.



Our 45 minute lesson included:

- Brief introduction: our goals for the session
- Each student was given a copy of the School Board’s policy on harassment, highlighting the definitions
- Each student received a handout with the questions listed above from the writings of William Stafford (Oregon’s poet laureate) to consider along with others directly from the video which they used as a scaffold while watching the video to focus listening and gather information
- We showed the video “Gum in My Hair ~How to Cope with a Bully”
- Students had three minutes following the video to reflect and answer questions listed individually
- Table groups were given five to eight minutes to discuss their answers to the various questions
- Finally, I facilitated class discussion led by a table group based the questions listed above

The approach generated lots of buzz in the classrooms. This video presented multiple scenarios from junior high schools that occur at your school and mine. The moderator

listed and demonstrated four or five ways to intervene in the different situations to defuse the harassment. Using these for foundation, students held lively discussions around ways an individual could lessen the incidents and effects of those using power (bullying) to cause damage to another. The follow-up came a month later when Mrs. Johnson returned to each class with a list of scenarios for students to role-play, recalling the tactics learned during this lesson.

Teachers from each of the six classes reported many additional conversations as a result of policy sharing, the video and the thoughtful questions. To ensure parents were involved, Mrs. Johnson devised a pledge form that parents signed after they discussed our lesson with their child. Students returned these pledges to the office for us to keep in case a student slipped and forgot their agreement. An information sheet about the School Board’s harassment policy and ways to respond to bullies was included in the parent newsletter. This dynamic approach not only gave information, it equipped parents and students with ways to take an active stance against harassing behaviors.

* From: *Early Morning: Remembering My Father*, William Stafford by Kim Stafford, 2002, pg. 34

Video: “GUM IN MY HAIR~How to Cope with a Bully” from Twisted Scholar, Seattle, WA, 888- 949-2628

Handouts: The Bully Free Classroom by Allan L Beane, Free Spirit Publishing, 800-735-7323

Anti-Bullying Resources

Student Programs

SkillTalk
425-644-0086
www.mindtalking.com

Lions-Quest Programs
800-446-2700
www.quest.edu

Steps to Respect, Committee for Children
800-634-4449
www.committeeforchildren.org
www.cfchildren.org/str.shtml

Don't Laugh at Me (Peter Yarrow)
www.dontlaugh.org

Hurt-Free Schools
603-672-3348
psu72@aol.com

Hands Are Not for Hurting Project
888-443-6299
www.handsproject.org

Pamphlets

"Dealing with Bullies", The Parent Institute
800-756-5525

NIMCO Inc. (many bully pamphlets)
800-962-6662, ext. 118
www.nimcoinc.com

Center for the Study & Prevention of Violence
University of Colorado at Boulder
866-NO-BULLY

Reporting System

www.openconnections@synrevoice.com
TipLine module allows students to report on bullying, weapons and drugs. SchoolConnects mask the identity of the caller by digitally transforming the voice through an irreversible random process.

Assembly/Speakers

Laugh It Off: Handling Bullies with Humor
Terry Brewer, presenter
800-500-4333

Allan Beane, author and speaker
866-703-7322
speakers@freespirit.com

Olweus Bully Prevention Trainers

Catherine Moffett
804-827-2622
cfmoffett@msn.com

Susan Limber
864-656-6320
slimber@clemson.edu

Bill Voors
260-436-8753
admin@stopbullyingnow.net

Staff Training Programs

Boys & Girls Town
800-545-5771
www.girlsandboystown.org

Partners Against Hate Faculty In-Services
www.partnersagainsthate.org

Northwest Regional Ed. Regional Laboratory
Equity Center
503-275-9604
www.nwrel.org

Posters

The Algra Corp.
800-336-1322
www.algra.com

Free Spirit Publishing
866-703-7322
www.freespirit.com

Miscellaneous Materials

The Johnson Institute (books, pamphlets, workbooks)
800-231-5165

Sunburst (booklets, pamphlets, videos, worksheets)
888-800-3028
www.sunburst.com

Bully B'ware Productions (books, posters, video)
888-552-8559
bully@direct.ca

NIMCO Inc. (posters, pamphlets, videos, DVDs)
800-962-6662, ext. 118
www.nimcoinc.com

Teacher's Video Company
"Stopping Teasing & Harassment"
800-434-5638
www.teachersvideo.com

Odd Girl Out—A Must Read for Middle School Educators

Amy Tiger, McLoughlin Middle School Principal

When you think of bullies, the first image you visualize is a boy. However, bullying is not an outcome of too much testosterone; girls can be bullies too. They simply manifest it more slyly and differently.

Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls, written by Rachel Simmons, examines this female aggression. She presents her research in a narrative format giving the testimonies of girls from elementary to adulthood as they share their experiences of early adolescence to teenage years. She demonstrates the damage girls can do to each other. The results are every bit as devastating as the results of boys' physical aggressions. The author makes all women realize that they were probably victims at one point, but also as guilty of being bullies or at the minimum being silent witnesses or accomplices. What Simmons manages to do is to identify and give the reader insights to understanding alternative aggressions.

The way girls are socialized about their anger contributes to this. Anger and conflict are not acceptable. Because of this girls do not always say what they mean. Girls look at body language and other signs to read the real meaning behind spoken words from each other. Girls learn quickly not to trust what is said.

For girls, life is all about relationships. Having and keeping friends is a motivation. Simmons examines the paradigm for girls that the bullies tend to be friends. This entangles the relationship and makes it more difficult for girls to actually walk away from the abuse. Girls also tend to use relationships against each other by turning a cold shoulder or making a person the outcast in a group.

Simmons frames this by providing definition. She states in her book: Relational aggression harms others "through damage (or the threat of damage) to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendships, or group inclusions." It includes any act in which relationship is used as a weapon, including manipulation. First identified in 1992, it is the heart of alternate aggressions, and for many girls an emotionally wrenching experience.

In more simple words, girls say, "Do this or I will not be your friend." Girls are afraid friendships will end when real feelings are revealed, so the

actual feelings tend to come out in less honest ways. Alternative aggressions can include rumor spreading, the silent treatment, exclusion, alliance building, and secret telling.

Alternative aggression can come from jealousy and competition. Simmons examines why the picked-on girl is most likely the girl who expresses a high level of confidence, not necessarily the outcast. She also examines the power of cliques, the pressures of popularity, and in one chapter she briefly touches on issues of class and race. Interestingly, minorities and lower class students are more likely to speak out; "...the everyday threats of racism and oppression make it unsafe for girls of color to put relationships first and be 'nice' to everyone." However, the author warns that this does not protect them from alternative aggressions.

Simmons gives parents tips on how to handle the situation giving both examples of what not to do and how to say things in a better way. The bottom line is for parents to be supportive and empathic listeners. She suggests four leading questions for a parent to talk with their daughter:

- § When girls want to be mean in your class, what kinds of things do they do?
- § Does the teacher see it? Why or why not? How does she react?
- § Are some girls more secret about their meanness? How?
- § Can friends be mean to each other? How?

She also gives parents tips as to when to step in and when not to. This book provides some approaches for parents to take with the school and guidelines for how parents should get involved. The author suggests that the "I'm calling the school right now approach" when feeling angry does not work. The book also includes a chapter from the perspective of moms and how their own experiences influenced how they dealt with the situation.

Simmons has some points of emphasis for educators as well as parents. She offers teachers as the best hope for changing the hidden culture of aggression in girls. She encourages:

A teacher can create a classroom culture that understands the range of girls' aggressions, refuses to tolerate them, invites girls' private and public

discussions of them, and seeks solutions whenever possible. It is in the classroom that a girl can be socialized into a consciousness of alternate aggressions as nonassertive acts. Teachers can show girls that indirection and manipulation are unsatisfactory ways to express negative feelings.

Simmons suggests schools can deal with this by teaching students early about the importance of expressing conflict in more healthy ways. Identifying and naming alternative aggressions is a start. The first thing to do is to be aware of it and deal with it as it comes up in the classroom openly. Many times the *nice* girl in class is the guilty party outside of class. The book will challenge some of your thoughts about classroom dynamics.

As an educator, you are probably thinking, I can not handle the things I have and now I have to look for this too? The author is not unsympathetic to this and describes the many pressures teachers are under. She does not expect the teacher to go it alone but to be supported by administrators in developing policies that define alternative aggression and work to stop it.

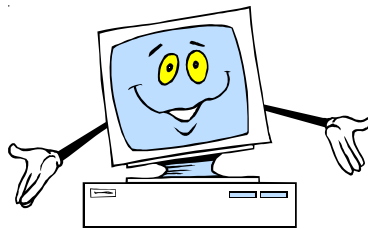
While she notes Oregon for its anti-bullying legislation, the author feels it fell short because it is defined as a "written, verbal or physical act." It does not include alternative aggressions such as nonverbal and relational aggression. In addition to having schools develop policies, she asks for an anti-bullying curriculum to be implemented and gives several examples such as the Ophelia Project and the Empower Program.

It is important not to teach girls to avoid conflict. Fear that conflict will cause rejection forces girls to avoid it and encourages them not to express it. Conflict is inevitable. Girls need more avenues to discuss their conflict and aggressions rather than stifling them only to have them manifest themselves in other ways.

If you are a parent of a daughter, this book is worth reading. If you are an educator, this book is worth reading. If you are woman, this book is worth reading. As a woman, the book will make you reflect on your own situations and your experiences growing up as well as your relationships now. It challenges us all to better educate and socialize our girls to be healthier adults. Seldom can a book touch you on so many levels; give this one a try.

Websites on Bullying

1. antibullying.net
2. bctf.ca/ezine/archive/1997-05/support/bully.html
3. bullybeware.com
4. bullying.co.uk
5. bullying.org/
6. cafv.inet2000.com/chilyouth.htm
7. cary-memorial.lib.me.us/bullyweb/bully.htm
8. cfc-efc.ca/docs/vocfc/00000805.htm
9. colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints
10. dontlaugh.org
11. ecsu.ctstateu.edu/depts/edu/textbooks/bullying.html
12. education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/
13. education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson191.shtml
14. elca.org/dhes/schools/bully.html
15. geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Cottage/5207/antiviolence.html
16. gold.ac.uk/tmr/
17. hurt-free-character.com
18. jaredstory.com/bully.html
19. k12associates.com
20. lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm
21. mcgrathinc.com
22. modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/factsheets/olweus%20bully.pdf
23. pps.k12.or.us/district/depts/edmedia/bibbully.shtml
24. ravendays.org
25. rileyforkids.org/safetysmart/parents/bullying
26. scre.ac.uk/bully/
27. ssta.sk.ca/research/school_improvement/97-06.htm
28. stopbullyingme.ab.ca
29. stopbullyingnow.net
30. studentcrimestoppers.com
31. successunlimited.co.uk/
32. talk-helps.com/
33. talkingwithkids.org/violence.html
34. tonyjewers.co.uk/
35. umanitoba.ca/cm/vol6/no6/bullying.html
36. workdoctor.com
37. nonamecalling.com



Bully Prevention: Targeted Risk Factors to Decrease

from Olweus Bullying Prevention, a data-driven program from Norway that has proven to be very successful in decreasing bullying in schools. For more information, contact the Center for the Study & Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado at Boulder, and ask for the "Blueprints" publication on bullying. 866-NO-BULLY. Trainers of the Olweus method are listed in the resource guide in this newsletter.

Individual

- Impulsive, hot-headed
- Dominant personality
- Lack of empathy
- Difficulty conforming to rules
- Low frustration tolerance
- Positive attitudes toward violence
- Gradually decreasing interest in school

Peer

- Friends/peers with positive attitudes toward violence

Family

- Lack of parental warmth and involvement
- Overly permissive parenting
- Harsh discipline/physical punishment
- Lack of parental supervision

School

- Indifferent or accepting staff and teacher attitudes toward bullying
- Indifferent or accepting student attitudes toward bullying

No Name-Calling Week

March 1-5, 2004

- * **Make daily announcements**
- * **Ask kids to do skits**
- * **Have a poster or essay contest**
- * **Teach anti-bullying lessons**
- * **Talk to kids**

www.nonamecalling.com

Bullying Prevention: A Whole-School Approach

Barb Woehle, Safe and Drug-Free School Coordinator, Waldport Middle School

In Lincoln County School District, Safe & Drug-Free Schools Grants provided funding for four coordinators to receive training on bullying from some of the foremost experts in the field. The coordinators then provided workshops and coaching for school staff members. Individual schools became involved in Bully Prevention in a variety of ways.

At Waldport Middle School, all of the staff received Bully Prevention Training in the 2002-03 school year. In October of the following year they implemented the curriculum "Bully Proofing Your School". This is a five-lesson curriculum taught by all teachers to all students. About every six weeks thereafter, teachers presented a "booster lesson", often a video with discussion, to keep the awareness heightened and the students skilled at dealing with bullying. One teacher commented that there is now "much more open discussion and awareness of bullying."

The "Kiwanis Builder's Club" is a community service group for students within the school. Because of the bullying curriculum, the Builder's Club made a decision to have students monitoring the halls with three goals in mind: to act as role models for appropriate behavior, to keep the

halls clean, and to intervene when they see incidents of bullying.

A parent night is planned where parents can come together for dinner and social time. Parents will learn more about the issue of bullying in schools, and what they can do to help and support Safe Schools.

The WMS Staff has formed a committee to monitor the school behavior process. The team is working to implement a schoolwide discipline system, which includes clear expectations and consistent consequences for behavior. Clear expectations and consistent consequences are vital when dealing with students who exhibit bullying behavior.

A variety of student positive feedback opportunities are used at Waldport Middle School. Keeping the environment as upbeat as possible helps to lessen inappropriate behaviors, including bullying, and increases learning at school. Pirate Gold tickets, a token reward model, are given to students by staff members when students display appropriate or outstanding behavior. These tickets can be turned in for a drawing that is held each week and also during "Pirate Gold Assemblies" once every two months. Staff and students created a student lounge called the

"Pirate Pit". The lounge has games, a huge screen television, a popcorn machine, and a small school store. The Pirate Pit can be used by students during free time and lunch recess. The teachers can use the Pirate Pit for a special reward for groups of students. Another reward and acknowledgment for students are Positive Behavior Certificates that are given out each semester to students who have had no more than one behavior incident. And as in any school, staff members often use less formal ways to give positive feedback to students and parents, and this varies from teacher to teacher.

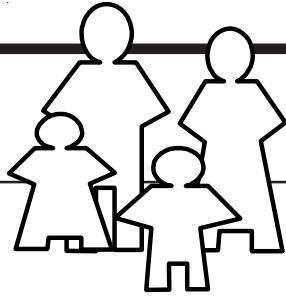
The problem of bullying at school is an extremely complicated issue, and is an ongoing challenge for staff members to deal with. The most ideal situation is one in which the staff is willing to all work together to prevent bullying in their school. When staff members implement the classroom curriculum, give a consistent message that bullying is unacceptable, have a structure in place to deal with bullying problems that arise, and evaluate and revise these systems as necessary, bullying problems decrease, and that is well worth the effort.

The bullied child:

- Is disinterested in and reluctant to attend school
- Complains of headaches, stomach aches or other untraceable illnesses
- Withdraws from social groupings
- Is reluctant to participate in any co-curricular activities
- Is depressed
- Is apathetic
- Loses sleep
- Is reluctant to walk to or from school
- Is reluctant to talk about daily happenings at school

Victims experience many consequences from being victimized such as:

- lowered self-esteem
- physical symptoms including stomach aches fatigue and or headaches
- an increased dislike for school
- irrational need to retaliate
- difficulty with friendships and peer relations
- increased aggression
- see themselves as the cause
- feel there is something wrong with them



REPORT TO PARENTS

Bullying

Whether as direct as a punch or as subtle as a smirk, bullying is a serious problem in American schools, where many children have been bullied, and many children bully others. Bullying can leave permanent physical and emotional injuries.

Here are things to consider about bullying:

Know what bullying looks like.

Most bullying is verbal, not physical, like teasing, mocking, name-calling, and spreading hurtful rumors. Boys do the majority of the bullying and are more physical. Girls tend to bully by using verbal abuse and by excluding others. This form of bullying can be equally devastating to physical bullying because it is quick and often invisible to others.

Bullies enjoy bullying.

Don't feel sorry for children who bully because they are "sad on the inside." New research shows that they enjoy the power of bullying and making other people suffer. Far from regretting their acts, they often rationalize them by saying the victims provoked them in some way.

Children "go along to get along."

Victims of bullying are often avoided and rarely defended by their classmates because they don't want to chance becoming the bully's next victim.

Victims keep mum.

Children who are bullied usually suffer in silence because they feel that nothing can be done to help them. Some become isolated and depressed, and may even resort to violence against themselves or others.

Never be a bully and don't allow your kids to be.

Bullying often begins at home. Parents who bully model behavior that may lead to children doing the same. If you observe your child being cruel to others, including siblings, explain why their actions were wrong and require change.

Schools are aware of bullying and are always looking for ways to reduce or eliminate it. There are ways for parents to help as well. Teach your children to:



Be assertive. Every child should be taught how to respond to malicious comments. It works better to tell bullies to stop than to just laugh like it is funny, a natural reaction from embarrassment. If telling the bully to stop does not work, ignoring it once or twice may be the key as they will see they are not getting the reaction they desire. If it still does not go away, they need to get help. Bullies thrive on the results they get by hurting others. Help your children to understand that they can deprive bullies of satisfaction by not openly reacting to their taunts and insults.

Be a friend in need. Stress to your children the importance of looking out for their friends and supporting students who are being bullied. Encourage them to notify a responsible adult when they know of a child who is being seriously bullied, either physically or verbally.

Have strong self-esteem. Children who feel good about themselves, and show it, aren't as likely to become victims of bullies, who prefer easier targets. Build children's self-esteem by genuine praise, unconditional love and character education to help them walk tall.

Finally, let your children know that you are always available to discuss problems such as bullying with them. Ask if they or their friends are experiencing it at school. Talk to them about how to cope with them and the dangers of letting bullies "get away with it." And don't hesitate to alert the school as well.

Student Survey on Bullying and Harassment

How often have other students done these actions to you at school?

a) Every day b) Once or twice a week c) A couple of times a month d) Hardly ever e) Never

1. Physical things: hit, punched, shoved, grabbed, tripped you
2. Stared at you or given you mean looks
3. Spread rumors or talked behind your back in a mean way
4. Called you names or nicknames you didn't like
5. Slammed your locker door shut
6. Unwanted flirting or sexual remarks
7. Other bullying or harassment

This survey is set up to be done on Scantron Form 20-S. Just white this box out, copy, and distribute. To compile, send them through the Scantron machine and use Scantron Form 9700 to collect the answers. Fast and easy!

8. How big of a problem do you think harassment is at this school?

a) Not a problem at all b) Not too big c) It's a big problem d) It's a huge problem

9. Do other students at this school bully or harass you much?

a) No, they do not c) You get harassed often
b) You have a few problems but not many d) You get harassed every day

10. Do you do harass or bully others much?

a) Never b) Hardly ever c) Sometimes d) Often e) Every day

11. If you talk to adults about being harassed, what happens? (leave blank if you don't get harassed)

a) It stops right away c) It gets better but doesn't stop e) It gets worse
b) It stops eventually d) No change happens and it continues

12. Are the students who harass you or other kids known for this kind of behavior?

a) I don't get harassed or don't know c) Yes, some students know about them
b) Yes, almost everyone knows about them d) They're not really known

13. Do you think there is too much horseplay at this school?

a) Not at all b) Not really c) Yes, too much d) Yes, way too much

14. What is your gender? a) Male b) Female

15. For how long have you gone to this school? a) All year b) Part of the year c) Just started

For these questions, mark AS MANY answers as you feel apply to you:

16. Where does harassment occur most in this school? (leave blank if you don't know)

a) Halls b) Classrooms c) Outside at lunch d) Cafeteria e) Bus or Bus Stop

17. How do you usually respond to somebody harassing you?

a) Tell someone b) Ignore it c) Get even d) Avoid the student/s e) Avoid school

18. If you ignore harassment, why do you ignore it?

a) Fear of what might happen c) Don't want to get others in trouble
b) It doesn't really bother you d) No one will believe you e) Don't want to be a tattletale

19. If you get harassed or bullied, who does it?

a) Your friends c) Students you don't know e) Bigger or taller students
b) Students you know d) Older students

20. If someone is harassing you, whom do you tell?

a) Friends or other students c) Administrators or other school adults e) No one
b) Teachers d) Parents or other adults in my life

Taking our Cultural Temperature

Jan Burgess

Retired 12/31/03 from Lake Oswego School District, where she spent 11 years at the middle level.

This article about cultural diversity was part of the principal's newsletter to parents a year ago. It is as timely today. I share it with you as another way to communicate with your communities, to assess where your school is and where you are going as together we take on bullying, harassment and disrespect among our middle schoolers. Wherever you see "LOJ", just insert the name of your school and see if what we experienced rings true for your school as well.

The next time you look around Lake Oswego Junior High School (*your school's name inserted here*), notice the many cultures and groups represented. Of course you will hear English spoken in the halls, but you will also hear Korean, Bosnian, Farsi and Spanish. Skin tones range from pink to tans to black. Religious celebrations include Christmas, Kwanzaa, Ramadan and Hanukah. As you look around LOJ, ask, "What is our cultural climate?" As a body, how "healthy" is the school's temperature for difference? The answers are a "*work in progress*," just like the young adolescents with whom we work and the society in which we live.

Diversity is a reality in our school, it brings opportunities for understanding and it brings challenges.

Cultural diversity is the theme of our February 14th team day activities. Our focus that day will be to understand stereotyping, define tolerance and make connections. The school's positive connections goal and the teacher meetings prior to the 14th will focus on this theme as well.

At our school, as in other middle schools in the area, in the past we have had a few reported incidents of racially or ethnically motivated name-calling or put-downs among our students. We have addressed each and every incident that has been brought to our attention and we will continue to do so. We are working with students and teachers to broaden our understanding that these behaviors impact individuals, small groups and the climate of our entire school.

Here are some things we are doing:

- 1: For team day, groups will be working through role-playing simulations, and/or seeing films where differences are explored. These are followed up by teacher-led group discussions.
- 2: Using our literature, social and studies and health curricula as a

base, we continue to find ways to tie cultural understanding directly to the life at our school

3: To begin a serious and thoughtful dialog, we often use the following questions with our students.

- Would I like to have my behavior reported on the front page of the school newspaper?
- Would I like to have a member of my family treated this way?
- Would my parents be proud of my behavior?
- Would I act this way if another person were present?

We know that teasing and bullying behaviors such as name calling, insulting comments and jokes, jeers and gestures cause a person to feel angry, humiliated, lonely, scared, panicked and vulnerable. We all have been on the hurtful end of these comments. Remember how it feels? These comments are not about sex, race, color or ethnicity. They are about intimidation, control and a misguided sense of power. It is stereotyping without any real understanding of the person, the person's beliefs or culture and it leads to diminished self-esteem and an imbalance of power.

Stereotypes are formed when we take one experience we have had with one person and apply it to every similar group or person. We also pick up stereotypes from friends, parents and the media. For example, ask your child what groups there are at LOJ. They no doubt will respond with things like jocks, popular kids, geeks, skater, rich kids, etc. These are common forms of stereotyping. There are others that are more hurtful and derogatory. We know names like these reduce people to one dimension. We need to help our children understand that each individual is more than a name. That "skater" is also a straight A student and is highly musical. That the popular girl worries daily about whether she really fits in, if anyone likes her. That

Asian American is fourth generation American, no one speaks Japanese in his household, he plays lacrosse and isn't a computer wiz.

As we continue to foster the values of respect, understanding, tolerance and appreciation of people's differences as well as similarities, your support and modeling as adults is significant. The single most influential factor in affecting attitudes as well as success in school is "home". What can we all do?

- Promote mutual respect.
- Do not tolerate racial or ethnic slurs or name calling
- Point out your discomfort with inappropriate jokes or swearing
- Be honest about lack of specific knowledge about another culture
- Respect differences: interact in a positive way with people who are different
- Confront bias or discriminatory behavior when encountered

These and other actions will make a big difference for individual students, which in turn promotes a healthy, and safe school environment. After all, our number one goal is to provide a safe school for all students in which to learn. So...

- Help your youngster know the difference between tattling and reporting. Reporting is done to keep everyone safe.
- Reporting is communicating. So support your child and encourage communicating of harassing behavior to a trusted adult.

Please take the time to read "Ideas for Parents; Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Youth". We will continue to be aware of our cultural temperature and work together to provide a safe and welcoming school rich in diversity that values all in the community.

We used many of the 40 Assets for Building Resilience in Youth as sources for parent, student, and teacher dialog.

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**Special Issue
on Bullying!**



**Special Announcement:
Patti's Running for
President-Elect of NMSA!**

Patti Kinney, Principal of Phoenix-Talent Middle School, has announced her candidacy for President-Elect of the National Middle School Association! This is our opportunity to have an Oregonian in the top NMSA position. Ballots will be sent in late March to NMSA members. Please be sure to VOTE! Patti is a former OMLA president, has been active in NMSA as our Trustee, and has presented to audiences across the nation and written a book on Student-Led Conferencing.