



# BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION FOR YOUR CHILD

Parent Connection Workshop  
January 29, 2011

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# WHAT IS BULLYING?

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- When the behavior is aggressive and hurtful to another person
- When the bully is intentional in their actions and purposely hurts another.
- When the bully imparts a persona of power over the victim.
- When it is a continual threat and rarely occurs in isolation.



# BULLYING CAN TAKE SEVERAL FORMS:

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- It can be verbal and start as teasing
- Relational or non-verbal bullying is more subtle and is seen as leaving someone out of an event.
- Physical bullying can start with pushing or shoving and become more violent with threats of physical injury.
- Harassment typically falls to comments involving a student's supposed sexual exploits or identity issues.
- Electronic or cyber bullying has come into being in more recent years and has long lasting consequences.





# VERBAL TEASING VS. BULLYING

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- Teasing allows the teaser and person to swap roles. It is not intended to hurt another person, and is done in a lighthearted manner.
- Taunting is one sided and is intended to harm. It involves cruel and demeaning or bigoted comments thinly disguised as a joke.





# CYBER BULLYING

- Cyber bullying has been defined as “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of communication repeatedly and over against a victim who cannot defend him or herself.”
- Once something is put online, it is considered “there forever.”
- VBCPS addresses cyber bullying in schools with a stringent cell phone policy, filters on all student accessible computers, and by having parents/students sign acceptable usage policies related to computer usage in the schools.





# WHO BULLIES?

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Common traits of students who bully:

- Act impulsively and do not consider the consequences of their behavior.
- They want to be the boss and dominant all situations.
- They are easily frustrated and have difficulty following rules.
- These students tend to lack empathy and cannot put themselves in the place of others.
- They do not take responsibility for their own actions and blame others





# FAMILY RISK FACTORS FOR BULLYING

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- A lack of warmth and involvement on the part of parents
- Overly permissive parenting (including a lack of limits for children's behavior)
- A lack of supervision by parents
- Harsh, physical discipline
- Bullying incidences at home



# WHO GETS BULLIED?

- shy, socially isolated
- sensitive, insecure
- appear physically weaker
- low self esteem
- disability



Source: *Bullying: Prevention and Intervention for School Staff, A Presentation Kit*, Channing Bete Company, Inc.





# INDICATORS A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

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- Makes up excuses to avoid going to school
- Grades drop
- Wants to be driven or walked to and from school
- Has torn clothes and bruises
- Needs extra money because he/she was robbed
- Is hungry after school because lunch, or lunch money, was stolen
- Shows fear, anxiety
- Sleep patterns change, or has nightmares
- Shows sadness and/or depression, talks of suicide
- Has headaches, stomach aches
- Has angry outbursts
- Withdraws
- Loses possessions. Toys, jacket or sneakers were stolen



# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

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- Learn as much as you can about bullying among children and youth.
- Talk with children in your family about bullying and your expectations about their behavior.
- Be watchful for possible signs of bullying among children in your family.
- Take immediate action if you suspect bullying.
- Work with school personnel and other adults in your community to prevent and reduce bullying.



# WHAT CAN PARENTS OF THE VICTIM DO?







# YOUR ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS

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- Listen carefully to your child's reports of being bullied. Be sympathetic and take the problem seriously. Be careful not to overreact or under-react.
- Do not blame the victim. When a child finally works up the courage to report bullying, it isn't appropriate to criticize him for causing it or not handling the situation correctly. For example, don't ask, "Well, what did you do to bring it on?"
- Realize that for a child who is being bullied, home is his refuge. Expect him to have some difficult times in dealing with victimization. Get professional help if you think your child needs it.
- Encourage your child to keep talking to you. Spend extra time with him. Provide constant support and encouragement, and tell him that you love him often!



# TEACH YOUR CHILD SAFETY

- Remember that hitting back is not a choice at school and shouldn't be encouraged. In a school with a "zero tolerance policy" for physical aggression, encouraging your child to hit back may just get him expelled.
- Encourage your child to walk away and tell an adult if he feels someone is about to hurt him.
- Talk about safe ways to act in situations that might be dangerous. For example, identify a "safe house" or store or where he can find sanctuary if pursued by bullies. Encourage him to walk with an adult or older child. Give him a telephone number of an available adult to call if he's afraid and needs help dealing with a bullying situation.





# MORE SAFETY STRATEGIES

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What is being done to him/her that makes him fearful or uncomfortable?

Who is doing it?

What he/she has done to resolve the problem or to get the bully to quit?

Brainstorm and practice strategies with your child to avoid further victimization

A clear explanation of what he/she needs from the adult to get the bully to quit.



# WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS CYBER BULLYING?



- Never give out personal information online, whether in instant message profiles, chat rooms, blogs, or personal websites.
- Never tell anyone but your parents your password, even friends.
- If someone sends a mean or threatening message, don't respond. Save it or print it out and show it to an adult.
- Never open emails from someone you don't know or from someone you know is a bully.
- Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your classmates to see, even in email.
- Don't send messages when you're angry. Before clicking "send," ask yourself how you would feel if received the message.
- Help kids who are bullied online by not joining in and showing bullying messages to an adult.
- Always be as polite online as you are in person.



# ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS CYBER BULLYING

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Keep your home computer in a busy area of your house.

Set up email and chat accounts with your children. Make sure that you know their screen names and passwords and that they don't include any personal information in their online profiles.

Regularly go over their instant messenger "buddy list" with them. Ask who each person is and how your children know him or her.

Use the list of commonly used acronyms in instant messenger and chat rooms from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and post it by your computer.

Discuss cyberbullying with your children and ask if they have ever experienced it or seen it happen to someone.

Tell your children that you won't blame them if they are cyber bullied. Emphasize that you won't take away their computer privileges - this is the main reason kids don't tell adults when they are cyber bullied.



# NURTURING YOUR CHILD'S SELF ESTEEM

Educate your child about bullying and bullies. Help him put the problem in perspective and not take it personally.

Teach your child how to walk in a confident manner.

If needed, help him pay particular attention to personal grooming and social skills.

Identify and encourage your child's talents and positive attributes; doing so may help him better assert himself among his peers.





# CONTACTING SCHOOL AUTHORITIES

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- After talking to your child, but before contacting school personnel, write down the details of the bullying situations reported to you by your child. Note the dates and the names of the kids involved. Try to view the situation objectively and determine the how serious it is.
- Contact school personnel for assistance in ending the bullying. First share the problem with your child's teacher(s), and work together to decide how to approach the problem. If the teacher isn't able to get the bullying under control, go to the principal and make a formal request in writing that he get the bullying to stop.
- Do not contact the bully or the bully's family directly.
- Keep an ongoing log of the dates of any further bullying incidents and the actions you take to help your child deal with the bullying. Inform the school of ongoing bullying incidents.
- Your child may resist your involvement if he fears retaliation by the bully. If so, explain to your child that most bullying situations require adult intervention to resolve the problem. Let him know exactly who you plan to talk to.



# WHAT CAN THE PARENTS OF THE BULLY DO?

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Take the problem seriously. Resist a tendency to deny the problem or to discount the seriousness of it. Avoid denial thinking such as "Boys will be boys," or "Bullying is just a natural part of growing up."



Listen carefully and check out the facts. Do not believe everything your child tells you. Children who bully are good at manipulating adults and can be very artful at weaving a story that makes them look innocent.



The school or the victim's parents may be documenting reports of your child's bullying behaviors. It doesn't serve your child well to deny his involvement if there is evidence to the contrary. Check out the dates and the activities and determine if there is a pattern in his bullying behavior.



Explore the reasons for your child's negative behavior. Get professional help if necessary for your child and/or your family.



# HOLDING THE BULLY ACCOUNTABLE

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- Resist the tendency to blame yourself. Hold your child responsible for his own choices.
- Make it clear to your child that you take bullying seriously, and that you will not tolerate such behavior in the future.
- Make it clear that you expect all bullying activities to stop immediately.
- The issue of bullying should be monitored for some time through questioning your child and regularly contacting the school to determine if his bullying behavior has stopped.







# HELPING A BULLY CHANGE BEHAVIOR

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- Develop a clear and simple system of family rules. Offer frequent praise and reinforcement. Use non-hostile, negative consequences for violations of rule-following behavior. Consistently enforce the rules. Appropriate consequences for bullying might include the loss of privileges (e.g., television or computer game time).
- Follow through with appropriate consequences for your child's misbehavior. Do not use physical punishment, as doing so will only reinforce your child's mistaken belief that it's acceptable to bully those who are weaker to get what one wants. **If both you and the school are consistent in applying negative consequences for bullying, the chances he will change his behavior are considerably increased.**
- Spend more time with your child and monitor his activities closely. Find out who his friends are, where they spend their leisure time, and what activities they usually engage in. Is your child in "bad company"? If so, limit his exposure to the negative peer group and provide opportunities to become involved with more pro-social peers.
- Build on your child's talents and strengths, and help him develop less aggressive and more empathetic reaction patterns.
- Reward your child for positive, caring actions and for peaceful problem solving.

# POLICY

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Code Of Student Conduct

**A Partnership in Responsibility**  
*Administrators, Parents, School Board, Students, Superintendent, Teachers*

2010-2011 School Year

Dear Parents and Guardians:

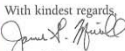
It is a pleasure to welcome you and your family to the 2010-2011 school year. The *Code of Student Conduct* was developed to ensure every school continues to offer all students a safe and productive environment. To help us maintain a safe environment, free of disruptions, it is important that we share with you the *Code of Student Conduct*. The *Code of Student Conduct* outlines the district's expectations regarding student conduct in the classroom and at all school-related activities. Although this document clearly addresses consequences for behavior that is unacceptable, it also serves as a useful resource that helps all students feel safe and secure every day.

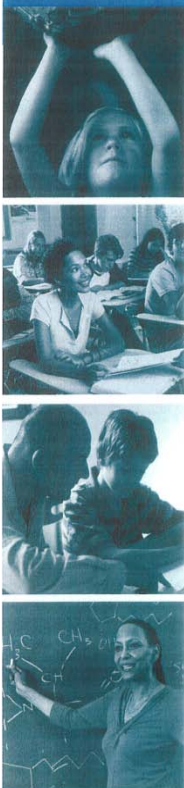
I would like to bring to every parent's attention that while cell phones are a primary means of electronic communication, using a cell phone during the school day is not permitted. While middle and high school students have the privilege of possessing a portable communication device while attending school, use of these devices is only permitted *before and after* the instructional day. *Elementary level students are not permitted to possess these devices.* Most importantly, please make note of the consequences all students will face for using a cell phone or any portable communication device during the instructional day. This information can be found on page four.

I would also like to ask every parent to encourage your children to act immediately when they become aware of any threat intended to cause harm to anyone. The responsible course of action is to immediately alert school officials or the police. The Virginia Beach police will arrest and press charges against students involved in such instances. In addition, this school system will *take disciplinary action* against those who make threats or who participate in behavior that spreads fear and panic, resulting in disruption of school.

As we begin a new school year, please take the time to review and discuss the importance of the *Code of Student Conduct* with your child or children. I consider each and every parent or guardian a partner with Virginia Beach City Public Schools in helping our students achieve at their maximum potential in a safe, engaging, inspiring and challenging learning environment.

On behalf of our principals, teachers, bus drivers, and school staff, we thank you for your support and extend our best wishes for a school year that is productive and exciting for your family.

With kindest regards,  
  
James G. Merrill  
Superintendent



## Policies and Regulations

School Board of the City of Virginia Beach  
Regulation 5-36.3

### STUDENTS

#### Hazing/Assault and Battery/Profane, Obscene or Abusive Language or Conduct/Bullying

##### A. Hazing

Students who haze or otherwise mistreat another student so as to cause bodily injury shall immediately be suspended from school under the provisions set forth in Policy 5-21 and Regulation 5-21.1.

##### B. Assault and Battery

Fighting on school grounds or in school buildings, school buses, on the way to or from school, or at school sponsored extra-curricular or other activities is prohibited. Violators may be subject to prosecution as provided by state law.

Any student grabbing, striking, hitting, kicking, or otherwise physically abusing a teacher or any other school personnel shall immediately be suspended and recommended for expulsion to the Superintendent. Criminal action may be taken against such student.

##### C. Profane or Abusive Language or Conduct

Students who use language, a gesture, or engage in conduct that is vulgar, profane, obscene, or abusive, or which disrupt the educational environment shall automatically receive a discipline referral to the principal or assistant principal for appropriate disciplinary action including suspension and/or a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

##### D. Bullying

Bullying is defined as negative behaviors intended to frighten or cause harm, which may include, but are not limited to verbal or written threats, or physical harm. Bullying will not be tolerated and students shall be referred to the principal or assistant principal for appropriate disciplinary action which may include suspension and/or recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion.

#### Legal Reference:

Code of Va., § 18.2-36. Hazing unlawful; civil and criminal liability; duty of school, etc., officials.

Code of Va., § 18.2-57. Assault and battery.

Code of Va., § 22.1-279.8. School safety audits and school crisis and emergency management plans required.

Approved by Superintendent: September 21, 1993 (Effective August 14, 1993)

Adopted by School Board: May 19, 1998

Amended by School Board: August 2, 2000

Amended by School Board: April 4, 2006

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Superintendent: Sila Miao

LAST REVISION ON TRANSMISSION, OCTOBER 01, 2009



# CURRENT EFFORTS

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Commitment



Cooperation



Continuing effort



**Prevention**





# CURRENT EFFORTS

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# CURRENT EFFORTS





# PROGRAMS FOR SPECIFIC LEVELS

## Elementary

- Second Step curriculum available at some schools
- Character education : Kelso's Choices
- Leader in Me program at the Tri-Campus
- Conscious Discipline
- Guidance Lessons

## Middle

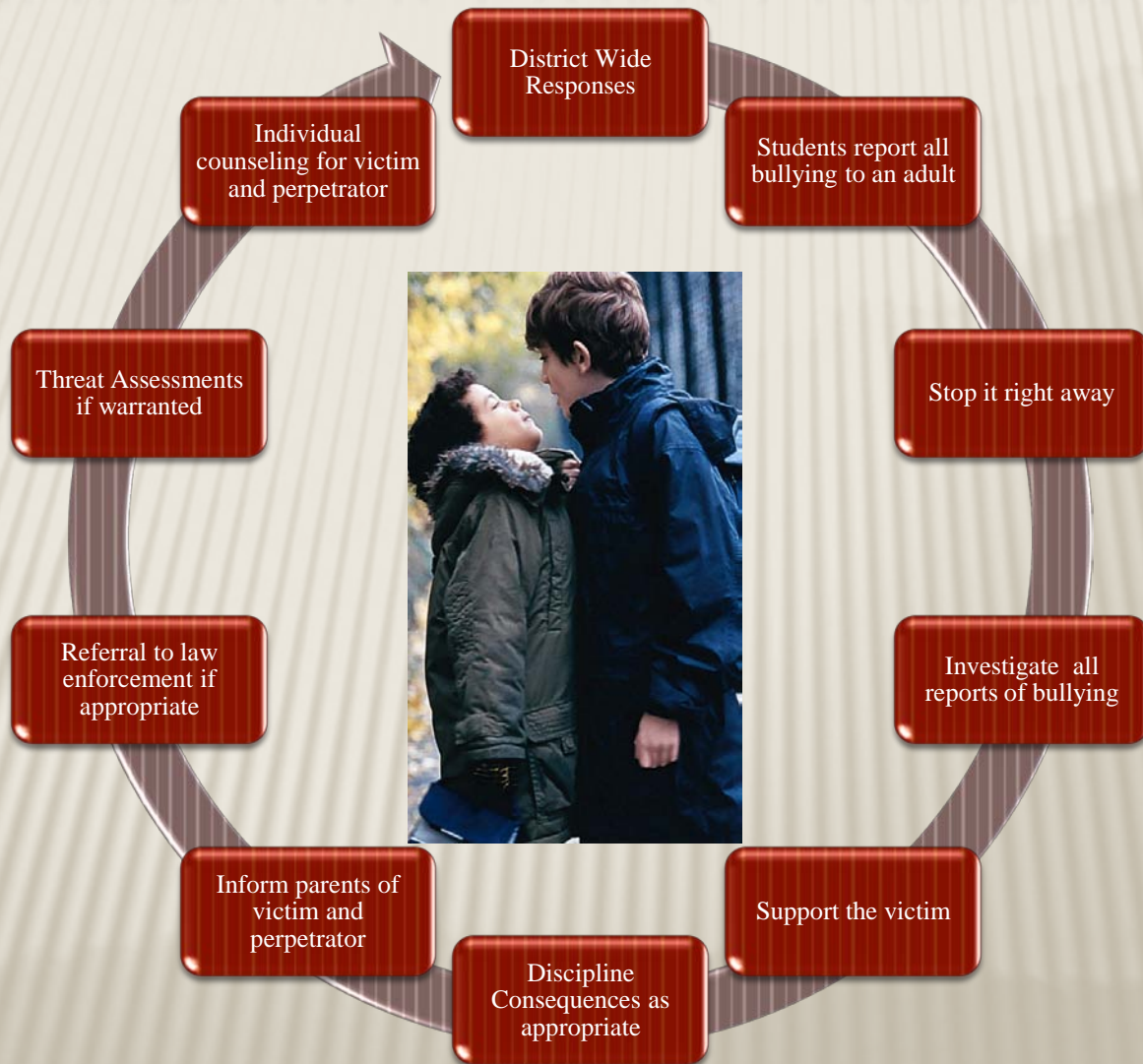
- Schools utilize proximity controls during class changes and other times with lower levels of supervision.
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
  - Great Neck MS
  - CEL –transferred over to Renaissance on MS level.
- Character Education: Choices
- Police provide training for 7<sup>th</sup> graders
- Guidance Lessons

## High

- Schools utilize proximity controls during class changes and other times with lower levels of supervision.
- Character Education: Principles of American Citizenship
- Police provide training for 9<sup>th</sup> graders
- Guidance Lessons



# WHEN BULLYING HAPPENS



# BUILDING A BULLY FREE FUTURE

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# RESOURCES

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Resources available from US Department of Health  
Resources and Services

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Stop Bullying Now Campaign







# QUESTIONS

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