

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

An Introduction to Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010

The Massachusetts Bullying
Prevention Law

Staff Presentation

September 23, 2010/October 5, 2010

Legal Update

- May 3, 2010 Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed SB2404, An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools into law.
- The law defines bullying, cyberbullying, hostile environment, “perpetrator” and “victim”. We will use the terms “aggressor” and “target”.
- Mandates that schools prohibit bullying and have a prevention and intervention plan.
- Faculty and staff must be trained.

Legal Update

- Schools must provide age appropriate bullying prevention instruction to students and parents.
- Requires school employees to report any instance of bullying or retaliation.
- School officials shall investigate, notify law enforcement if necessary, take disciplinary action if appropriate, plan for prevention and notify parents of aggressor(s) and target(s).
- Special education teams must review whether a student is at risk to be a target of bullying or becoming an aggressor and include strategies in the IEP.

Andrea Nardone, Massachusetts District Attorneys Association

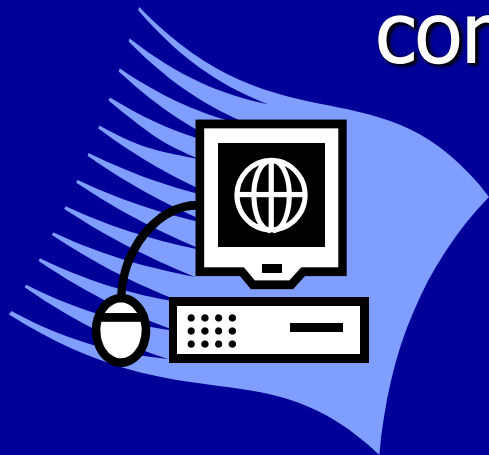
Definition of Bullying

- Bullying is repeated written, verbal or electronic expression or physical act.
- Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or places target in fear of harm.
- Creates a hostile environment.
- Includes cyber-bullying.

**See specific definitions in handouts

Cyber-bullying

- Use of technology or any electronic communication.



Definition of Cyberbullying

- Bullying through the use of technology or electronic communication
 - May include transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data
 - Includes any device – email, internet communication, instant messages, fax
- **See specific definitions in handouts

Definition of Retaliation

- Intimidation, reprisal or harassment
- Directed against a person in response to an action taken or knowledge that person has (includes witnesses to bullying).

****See specific definitions in handouts**

Hostile Environment

- “a situation in which bullying causes the environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education”

"Aggressor"



- A student who engages in bullying or retaliation.
- Formerly referred to as "bully".
- Also referred to as aggressor.

“Target”

- A student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.
- Formerly referred to as ‘victim’
- New term: target

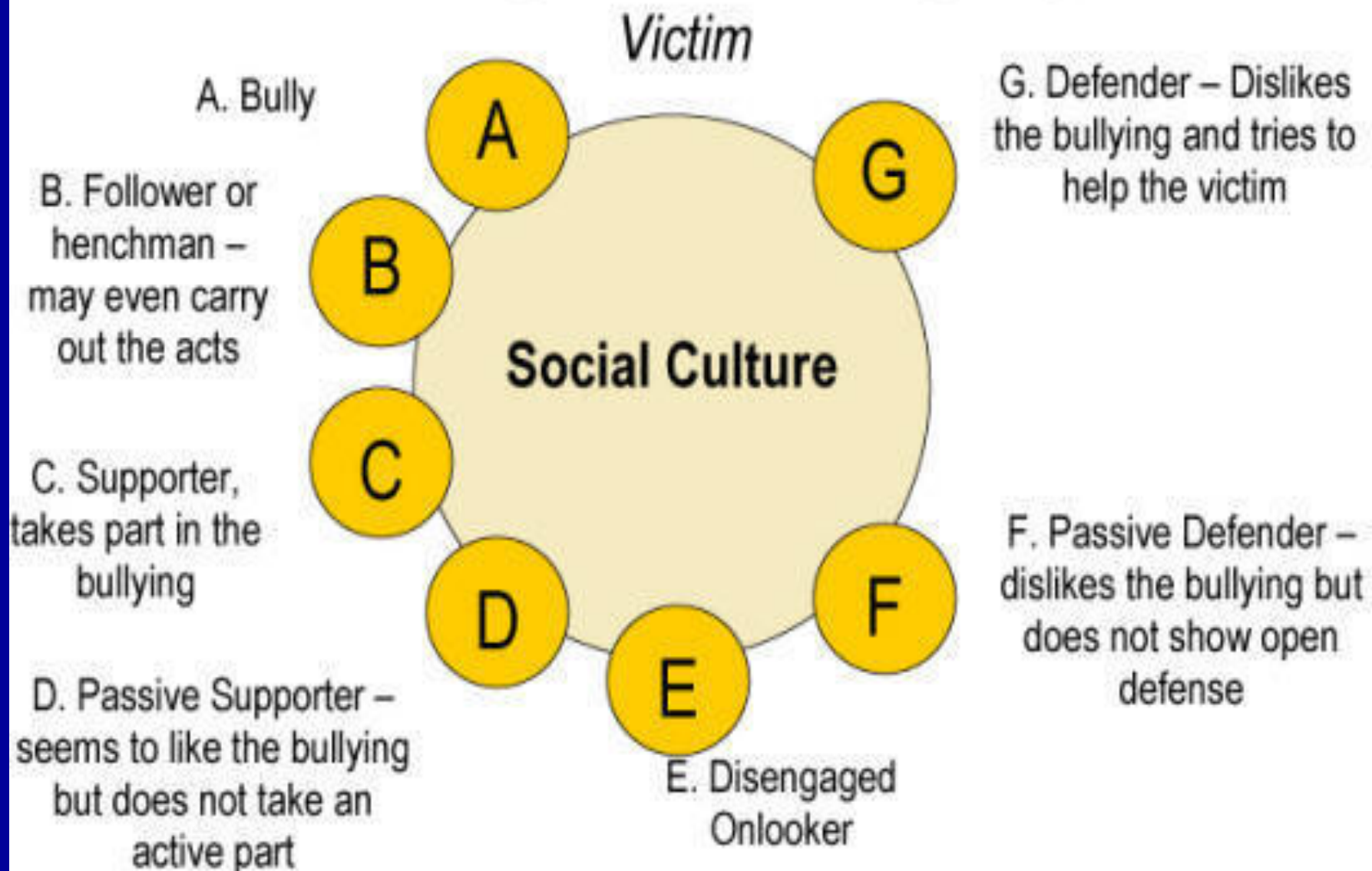


Bullying vs. Harassment

- Power imbalance
- Repetition
- May have legal implications
- Related to a student's race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- A civil rights violation
- Discrimination under the law.

Richard W. Cole, Attorney at Law

The Cycle of Bullying



Effect on Students

- Harassment and bullying leads to disengagement, absences, dropouts, achievement decline and violence.
- Students perception of safety, equity and inclusion impacts climate and learning.
- When students do not see or recognize when adults intervene, bullies may feel there is nothing wrong with their actions. Targets may feel they deserve the bullying.

Important to note

- Students often perceive that nothing is done about bullying.
- “Over two-thirds of students believe that schools respond poorly to bullying, with a high percentage of students believing that adult help is infrequent and ineffective.” (Essex, 2008).
- The new law requires that we inform parents and students of the steps taken to intervene and prevent recurrence of bullying behavior.

How to Intervene Effectively to Reduce Bullying.

- Intervene immediately
- Separate the target and aggressor. Do not interview them together.
- Identify unacceptable peer actions.
 - Verbal aggression: threatening, taunting, teasing, RUMORS, etc.
 - Exclusion from activities: Doesn't mean they have to be friends with everyone but they cannot be purposely left out "Don't be his/her friend."
 - Physical aggression: hitting, kicking, pushing, etc.

What DOESN'T work?

- Asking the target to solve the problem by
 - Being assertive
 - Blending in
 - Ignoring bullying
 - Pretending they are not bothered by bullying (“sticks and stones”)
- General statements to all students after bullying incident -Aggressors don't realize the presentation is about them
- Inequity - Making allowances for reported incidents involving ‘good kids’.
- Research shows that peer mediation does not work in bullying situations due to the power imbalance.
Never put the aggressor and the target together to work things out.

What DOES work?

- Consensus development regarding unacceptable peer behavior
 - Physical aggression, verbal aggression, social exclusion.
- Consistent enforcement
- Building positive connections between staff and students
- Effective counseling and support
- Empowering bystanders to tell adults, support targets and discourage unacceptable behavior.
- Responding effectively to substantiated reports of bullying
- Partnering with parents of both aggressors and targets

www.stopbullying.com

What can we do?

- Jokes, name calling etc. cannot be ignored or tolerated.
- Intervene immediately to stop any act that may cause physical or emotional harm or fear and creates a hostile environment.
- Report to your administrator any incidents that may be considered bullying.
- Encourage students to report incidents, but caution against false reports, which will have consequences.
- Engage all students. Students who feel disengaged or disrespected generally misbehave.



Gateway behaviors

- Joking
- Name calling
- Exclusion
- Gossip
- Stereotypes
- Eye rolling
- Isolation



These gateway behaviors cannot be ignored.
They can escalate into physical aggression.

This is climate setting.

What can we do?

- Assess school/classroom climate.
- Communicate with parents and the community often.
- Address onlookers and bystanders.
- Collaborate with law enforcement as needed.
- Follow procedures and protocols established in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Components of the Intervention and Prevention Plan

Who, What, Where, When?

Staff will:

- Report what you have observed, and any intervention steps taken, to an administrator in the building.
- You do not have to make a determination of “bullying”, just report what you have observed briefly in writing.
- Intervene just as you always have using professional judgment.
- Forms for reporting are included in the district plan (draft for review and comment).

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Administrators will:

- Organize reports and information.
- Investigate suspected bullying incidents.
- Meet with all parties.
- Contact parents of alleged perpetrator(s) and target(s).
- Develop pathways to engage parents in prevention and intervention steps to be taken.
- Promote safety of the target.
- Document all incidents and look for patterns.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Classroom teachers will continue to intervene and use best judgment when student issues arise.

If bullying is substantiated, the principal will respond by:

1. Building skills for appropriate behavior
2. Taking disciplinary action according to handbook or code of conduct as appropriate
3. Make adjustments for safety of the target

Middleborough Public Schools Resources

- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Draft is being reviewed and revised. It is due to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by December 31, 2010
- Family programs will be offered as guidance from the state becomes available
- Staff training is required every other year

Resources for Families and Educators

- Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University. <http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/index.html>
- Stop Bullying Now, **practical research-based strategies to reduce bullying in schools.** <http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/>
- Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw10/sl100092.html>. Retrieved August 5, 2010.
- Massachusetts Department of Education, Bullying prevention and intervention, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/bullying>

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