Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Toolkit

Resources for Parents, Educators and Professionals Serving Children, Youth and Families

Center for Safe Schools

Highmark Foundation

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Statement from the Highmark Foundation

In 2006, the Highmark Foundation launched an initiative to improve the health and well-being of Pennsylvania's children. A focus within the initiative was to achieve impact through supporting the broad scale dissemination of the evidence-based Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). The foundation also sought to develop and provide systems of support for schools engaged in bullying prevention.

As Highmark Foundation delved more deeply into the bullying issue and supported increasing numbers of schools in adopting the OBPP, a significant problem came to light. Some parents with children victimized and in crisis because of bullying needed immediate support and relief, but were not finding it. This is because some schools did not have bullying prevention programs in place or were ineffective in dealing with the parents' issues. In addition, many agencies typically called upon in crisis situations seemed to have little in-depth knowledge regarding bullying and were unfamiliar with the resources available to support parents and students.

The Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Toolkit begins to bridge these gaps and ensures that parents and various agencies have a fast track to assessing and meeting needs when a bullying situation causes distress in families. By supporting the development of this toolkit, the Highmark Foundation seeks to provide a lasting and valued resource to address difficult bullying incidents.

Introduction to the toolkit

To address the major public health issue of bullying, the Highmark Foundation collaborated with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Center for Safe Schools, Clemson University's Center for Family and Neighborhood Life, and Windber Research Institute's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention to deliver an evidenced-based bullying prevention program and technical assistance to Pennsylvania schools. Through the HALT! and PA CARES initiatives, **the Highmark Foundation supported the implementation of the research-based OBPP in over 400 schools, serving an estimated 210,000 students.** Through its Bullying Prevention Institute and the Center for Safe Schools infrastructure, the Highmark Foundation implemented additional strategies designed to support the enhancement and sustainability of the Olweus model.

While school-based programs, such as the OBPP, are known to reduce behaviors that contribute to bullying, at times bullying prevention programs fail to reach parents or other critical partners in bullying prevention. For students and families who are impacted by bullying, this disconnect can be particularly problematic.

In an effort to address the needs of families affected by bullying more comprehensively, the Highmark Foundation tasked the Center for Safe Schools with convening the *Pennsylvania School Bullying and Parents Supports Workgroup.* This workgroup, comprised of diverse stakeholders, met on four occasions to identify the needs of and available resources for families experiencing issues of bullying. The group then recommended strategies to improve families' access to meaningful information and supports.

Three themes and a set of related strategies emerged from the workgroup discussions. Specifically, the workgroup concluded that:

- **Bullying impacts a wide range of individuals and systems** (e.g., educational, legal, healthcare, community, etc.) that have a role in prevention and response.
- While reliable information about bullying and resources are available, **there is a need for a clearinghouse of information and advocacy resources** for Pennsylvanians who may be faced with bullying issues.
- Effective prevention and intervention related to bullying requires **multi-systemic and coordinated action across individuals and systems.**

Workgroup recommendations

The *Pennsylvania School Bullying and Parent Support Workgroup* recommended the following strategies to address families' needs related to bullying.

1. Implement strategies to promote inter-agency coordination and collaboration in order to promote more effective responses to parental/family needs surrounding bullying.

- Provide training to community stakeholders:
  - Define bullying, cyberbullying and related topics.
  - Introduce best practices in bullying prevention and intervention.
  - Ensure families receive appropriate resources and referral information. (See Appendix A)
  - Support the development of action plans targeting local needs.

- Engage Student Assistance Program (SAP) partners and Victim Services agencies in identifying resources at the local level that provide advocacy, restorative practices and counseling support for students impacted by bullying.

2. Implement strategies to improve public understanding of bullying and increase local engagement in the issue.

- Support schools in forging partnerships with key stakeholders (e.g., teacher's union, business, government, etc.) to develop and implement parent engagement and community-based bullying awareness campaigns.

- Develop multi-faceted and coordinated strategies for outreach and education to parents including education on relevant laws and procedures.

- Connect bullying education/outreach strategies to other initiatives related to youth development. This includes afterschool programs, sports programs and other out-of-school activities, as well as school-based programs designed to provide support to students (e.g., transition programs, SAP, ESAP, social-emotional learning programs, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support, etc.).

3. Provide tools to professionals serving youth and families to ensure that families affected by bullying have access to reliable information and systems of support.

- Create a training module for youth-serving professionals (e.g., afterschool providers, clergy, social workers, etc.) to introduce relevant information, laws, programs and exemplary resources related to bullying.

- Develop a quick-reference tool/resource for educators, advocates, healthcare providers and youth workers to provide introductory information about the issue of bullying, the role of youth-serving professionals in the issue, and available resources for families.

This "Bullying Prevention Toolkit" addresses recommendation number three. It is designed to be a quick-reference resource for Pennsylvanians who are seeking reliable information about bullying.

This Bullying Prevention Toolkit is available online at www.SafeSchools.info/BP_Toolkit.pdf

Section 1: What is bullying?

Bullying is a form of negative and hurtful behavior that is prevalent among children and adolescents.

It is characterized by three features.[1]

- The **aggressive behavior** is intentional and may be physical, verbal or nonverbal.
- An **imbalance of power** exists in the relationship, such that the person who is targeted has difficulty defending himself or herself.
- The **behavior is repeated or severe**, causing distress or disruption in the target's life.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a specific form of bullying that involves technology. According to Hinduja and Patchin,[2] cyberbullying is **"willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices."**

While the definition of cyberbullying aligns with the traditional definition of bullying, the likelihood of repeated harm from one cyberbullying incident is quite high. This is because instances of cyberbullying can be accessed by multiple parties, forwarded to others, linked to other sites and revisited by targets of the aggression – resulting in repeated exposure and repeated harm.

Relational Aggression

Bullying that affects a child's social standing or status is a form of relational aggression.[3]
It can take many forms, including shunning, hazing, spreading rumors, excluding others or teasing. Contrary to popular opinion, both boys and girls engage in relational aggression.

See Appendix C for a list of resources related to bullying, cyberbullying, relational aggression and other specific topics.

It is not appropriate to characterize all aggressive behavior as bullying.[4]
At times, students will engage in **rough play.** This type of play may appear aggressive. However, it serves to reinforce positive relationships and occurs among peers of equal standing. **Conflict,** in contrast, is motivated by negative intent and takes place between students of relative equal power or social standing. When rough play or conflict scenarios involve groups of students targeting a single student, the situation can easily escalate into bullying.

Because a power imbalance exists in bullying situations, it is usually inappropriate to use conflict resolution strategies to resolve bullying situations. This is because these strategies often assume that both parties are at fault or compromise is warranted. **In general, mediation is not recommended in cases of bullying.**

Children who are bullied *cannot* stop the bullying on their own. **Bullied students need the support of others to ensure that the bullying does not continue.**

Is it bullying, real fighting or rough play?

Rough Play	Real Fighting	Bullying
Usually friends; often repeated (same players)	Usually not friends; typically not repeated	Typically not friends; generally repeated
Relatively equal balance of power	Relatively equal balance of power	Unequal balance of power
No intent to harm	Intentional harm-doing	Intentional harm-doing
Mood is friendly; positive, mutual	Mood is negative, aggressive or tense; mutual hostile feelings	Mood negative; mood/response differs for victim and aggressor

Olweus, D. (1993) *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do (Understanding children's worlds)*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.; Olweus, D., Limber, S. P., Flerx, V. C., Mullin, N., Riese, J., & Snyder, M. (2007). *Olweus bullying prevention program: Schoolwide guide*. CA: Hazelden.

Section 3: Why should I be concerned about bullying?

Public awareness of the negative effects of bullying has increased dramatically in recent years due to the increased focus on bullying by media and researchers. Bullying is no longer seen as a "rite of passage" or an example of "kids being kids." **Bullying is now known to have a negative effect on children's physical and emotional well-being, social development and learning.**[5]

For example, children who *bully* others are more likely to:

- Be injured in a fight.
- Drink alcohol or smoke.
- Engage in other anti-social behavior.
- Be truant, drop out of school.
- Perceive a negative climate at school.

Students who are *bystanders* to bullying are more likely to:

- Feel afraid.
- Feel powerless to change things.
- Feel guilty.
- Feel diminished empathy for victims.

In one research study, bystanders were reported to have an intensity of trauma that compared to distress levels of police, firefighters and paramedics during the 1989 San Francisco Earthquake.[6]

Students who are *bullied* are more likely to have:

- Anxiety or depression.
- Suicidal ideation.
- Low self-esteem.
- School avoidance behaviors.
- Higher absenteeism rates.
- Dislike of school.
- Lower grades.
- Psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., sleep problems, bed-wetting, stomachaches, etc.).

Warning Signs that a Child May be the Target of Bullying

- Has damaged or missing clothing or other belongings.
- Has unexplained injuries.
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches or feeling sick.
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams.
- Loses interest in visiting or talking with friends.
- Is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers.
- Loses interest in school work or begins to do poorly in school.
- Is very hungry after school from not eating lunch.
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed after school.
- Suddenly has fewer friends.
- Avoids certain places.
- Acts differently than usual.

A child should be evaluated by a professional if the child:

- Runs away from home.
- Hurts himself or herself.
- Talks about suicide.
- Feels helpless.
- Blames himself or herself for his or her problems.

Section 4: The role of bystanders

Bullying is best understood as a group phenomenon in which children may play a variety of roles.[7]

These roles include the target of bullying, the child who bullies and children who observe the bullying, often referred to as bystanders. Bystanders may be passive observers, active observers or defenders.

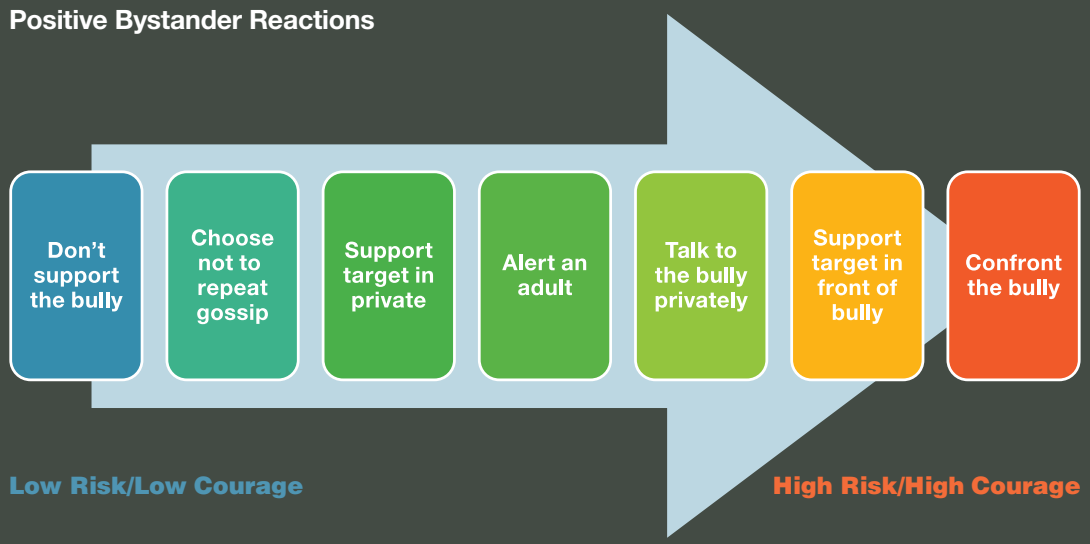
Passive observers may want to stop the bullying and defend the bullied student, but may not have the knowledge or confidence to act. Active observers are those individuals whose behavior encourages the bullying. They may show active support for the bullying by laughing or joining in or they may gossip about the incident. Defenders are students who take action to try to stop the bullying.

Bystanders play an important role in bullying prevention and intervention. **Children should be taught about the role of bystanders in bullying and should discuss and role-play helpful responses.**

The Bystander Continuum of Courage can be a useful tool for helping children recognize that there are a range of helpful actions that a bystander to bullying can take, each carrying a different degree of risk.

Bystander Continuum of Courage

Positive Bystander Reactions



Adapted from *Bullies & Victims: Helping Your Children through the Schoolyard Battlefield.* Fried, S., & Fried, P. (1996). New York, NY: M. Evans & Co.

Section 5: Why do kids bully?

While a child may act out for a variety of reasons, the following factors are known to contribute to bullying behavior:[8]

Control and Power

Many students bully in an attempt to gain control over others or power within a peer group or social setting. Social dynamics within a school, neighborhood or community may reinforce such abuses of power.

Peer Attention

Students often receive positive attention for their bullying. When bystanders laugh or participate in the bullying in other ways, the aggressive student receives social reinforcement for his or her bullying behavior. Thus, bystanders have an important role to play in addressing bullying and preventing it from reoccurring.

Inadequate or Ineffective Supervision

Bullying often occurs in settings where there is little adult supervision or when supervision strategies are ineffective. Schools and other youth programs should ensure that there are reasonable student to adult ratios in classrooms, play areas, hallways, lunchrooms and other areas. Supervising staff should be trained to recognize and intervene in all instances of peer aggression.

Indifferent Attitudes Toward Bullying

Adults' attitudes toward peer aggression and bullying can have a profound effect on students' perceptions of the behavior. When adults – through action or inaction – condone bullying, young people may mistakenly conclude that bullying is a normal part of growing up. Adults should always intervene when bullying is suspected and let young people know bullying behavior will not be tolerated.

Bias Issues

Some bullying is motivated by actual prejudice or can be reinforced by prejudicial norms. Certain groups of students are more likely to be targets of bullying or prejudicial comments. These include students with disabilities, students who are obese and students who defy gender norms. Students who are not in the racial, ethnic or religious majority are also at greater risk of being targeted. It is important to know that this type of bullying can have legal ramifications for schools, if ignored. See page 11 for information about protected class bullying and see Appendix C for other resources.

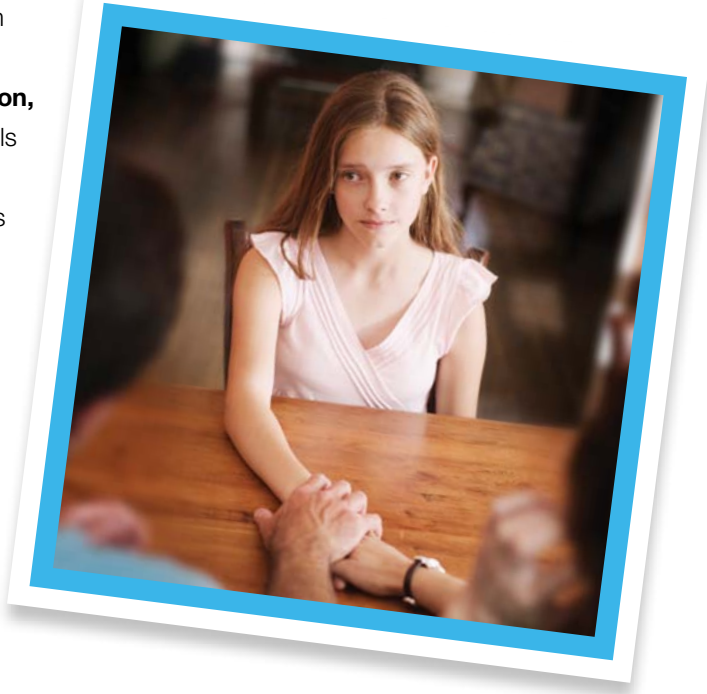
Section 6: When bullying crosses the line

Some forms of peer aggression can cross the line and have criminal or civil implications under the law.

The majority of bullying behaviors are most appropriately responded to by supervising adults. In some instances, however, peer aggression may cross the line into illegal activities. When a crime is committed, students who are targeted may be eligible for support from the local victim services agency.[10] If civil liability is suspected, parents should contact an attorney.[11]

Examples of potential crimes and civil laws that may be implicated in bullying situations are listed in the chart below.

Public schools should be aware of their responsibilities to address certain forms of bullying under **federal and state civil rights laws.** Specifically, when bullying targets a child's protected class, schools are obligated to provide a remedy and prevent the bullying from reoccurring. **Protected classes include race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, disability or other characteristic.** When schools fail to respond effectively, parents may file a complaint with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and/or the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. The contact information for these organizations can be found in Appendix C.



Potential Crimes	Civil Issues
Assault	Civil Redress (victims of ethnic intimidation)
Harassment	Defamation
Harassment by Communication	Discrimination
Possession/Distribution of Child Pornography	Harassment/Sexual Harassment
Sexual Assault	Libel
Stalking	Slander

Section 7: What can be done to prevent bullying?

Bullying is not a rite of passage. In the past, the notion that "kids will be kids" was a commonly held belief that allowed adults to overlook or ignore instances of bullying. Educators, psychologists and medical professionals now recognize that bullying is detrimental to learning and development. **Adults who work with youth have a responsibility to implement strategies to prevent bullying and ensure that children are protected from victimization.** The following prevention strategies are recommended.

Strategy #1: Focus on children's developmental environments.

Bullying happens in schools, homes, neighborhoods, afterschool programs, on sports teams or anywhere youth spend time. Because peer aggression and bullying is so pervasive, it is important that communities work to implement bullying prevention and intervention strategies across children's developmental contexts.

Strategy #2: Educate adults and children about bullying.

Children and the adults who support them need to know what bullying is, why it is wrong, and what to do if they witness or suspect bullying. Parents, teachers, principals, bus drivers, coaches and health care providers need to be educated about the issue.

Strategy #3: Establish and enforce rules and policies regarding bullying.

Pennsylvania state law requires that schools have policies that address bullying. Other youth programs should voluntarily adopt anti-bullying policies and develop consistent procedures for dealing with confirmed or suspected bullying.

Strategy #4: Increase adult supervision in places where bullying is known to occur.

Adults need to be vigilant in supervising students' interactions and be prepared to intervene if they witness excessive teasing, physical aggression or relational aggression among students.

Strategy #5: Encourage schools, afterschool programs and extra-curricular programs to adopt effective bullying prevention programs.

This will ensure that staff members learn appropriate ways of preventing and responding to bullying, as well as strategies for shaping bystander responses.

Section 8: What strategies do kids find most helpful?

What strategies do kids find most helpful?
Children who witness or experience bullying often may not know how to respond. They may have received mixed messages about bullying from adults or they may be worried about how their response will affect their relationship with other students. Often times adults will suggest that children use a predictable strategy or set of strategies when faced with bullying (e.g., ignore it, walk away, tell the person to stop, etc.).

In order to determine the effectiveness of these common strategies, Nixon and Davis[12] asked over 12,000 students, including over 1,600 bullied students, what strategies they have used in bullying situations and which of those strategies were most or least effective in making the situation better.

According to the Youth Voice Project, the strategies bullied children identified as most helpful and least helpful are listed below.

MOST HELPFUL strategies:
- Told an adult at home
- Told a friend
- Made a joke about it
- Told an adult at school
- Reminded myself that it was not my fault

LEAST HELPFUL strategies:
- Hit or fought back
- Made a plan to get back at them
- Told the person to stop
- Did nothing (ignored it)
- Told them how I felt

These results suggest that strategies that involve **accessing support from others** are much more helpful to bullied students than other common strategies. In addition, most **bullied children do not benefit from being told to ignore the bullying or make assertive statements.** This research underscores the importance of training adults and bystanders to respond effectively to students' reports of bullying.

Section 9: The role of adults

Adults play a significant role in keeping children safe from bullying. All adults, whether at home, at school or in the community, have a role to play in bullying prevention and intervention. Adults should refrain from labeling children as "tattletales" and listen when a child reports bullying concerns.[13]

By being **effective and empathetic listeners,** adults are positioned to assist children who are impacted by bullying. Parents can increase the likelihood that their child will report bullying experiences by making listening a part of the daily routine. During dinner or another part of the day, initiate regular "talk sessions" and express interest in your child's day and allow the child to take the lead in talking about what is on his or her mind.

If a child shares a story of bullying, listen patiently and without judgment. Ask questions, help the child brainstorm possible responses and **ask the child what help he or she needs.**

Active supervision is a key to preventing and addressing bullying. If you see bullying or sense that it may be occurring, speak up and take steps to ensure that the environment is safe. Let children know what behavior is expected and what behavior is unacceptable. Offer structured activities that include all students. Intervene in all instances of peer aggression that you observe.

Take time to follow up with involved students. Children often report bullying during private conversations with adults who care.

Adults should serve as **positive role models.** Take care to ensure that your interactions with others are not abusive or harassing. Children learn from watching adults. It is important that your actions communicate that bullying behavior is unacceptable.

All Adults Should

- Recognize the signs and symptoms of a child who may have been bullied.
- Intervene when bullying is suspected.
- Talk with students about what bullying is and isn't.
- Reinforce appropriate bystander behavior.
- Communicate with supervising adults in a timely manner.

Section 10: Tips for parents and caregivers of children who bully others

Sometimes parents must deal with situations in which their children have behaved in a way that is mean and hurtful to others.

Parents can support children who bully to make positive behavioral changes by using the following strategies.[14]

Discuss bullying and set clear rules at home.
It is important to have consistent, clear rules that have fair and predictable consequences. Redirect your child and provide negative consequences when your child demonstrates verbal, physical, electronic or relational aggression directed at another child. Praise your child when he or she chooses not to participate in bullying behavior or when he or she helps a student who is being bullied.

Talk with your child.
Ask for your child's account of the bullying incident. Be prepared to be objective and to listen carefully. Explain your understanding of the bullying incident. Clearly communicate that this type of behavior is serious and will not be tolerated.

Understand bullying policies and work with the school.
All parents should be informed of the school's bullying policy and procedures. If your child is involved in bullying at school, be prepared to support the school's actions. You may wish to set up a schedule of regular meetings with school staff to gain feedback on how your child is responding to any interventions to address peer aggression.

Help your child connect with peers who demonstrate positive behavior.
Peers can serve as positive role models for children and are important players in the bullying dynamic.

Model the behavior you expect from your child.
Show respect to others. Solve problems without aggression. Set a good example for your child.

Section 11: Tips for parents and caregivers of children who are bullied at school

Because students are in school for most of the day, children are more likely to be bullied at school than anywhere else. **In addition to providing support to their children, parents should work with the school to ensure educators are aware of bullying issues and responsive to students' needs.**[15]

Be Proactive.
Parents and educators should work together, through Parent-Teacher Organizations or other task forces, to develop and implement effective bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

Know your school's policies.
Each public school district in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is required to have a policy which addresses bullying. It is important to be familiar with the policies and the procedures that your school employs.

Communicate with school staff.
If your child is the target of bullying, you will need to work with teachers and administrators at the school to implement strategies to end the bullying and prevent retaliation. If the school seems unresponsive to your reports, write a letter that formally requests an investigation and follow-up (an example letter can be found in Appendix B).

Talk with your child.
Explain what bullying is and why it is wrong. If your child reports bullying to you, praise him or her for having the courage to share the bullying incident with you. Let your child know that you are interested in supporting and helping him or her. Show your child empathy and encourage him or her to share thoughts and feelings about the bullying.

Document and report continued bullying.
Keep a log or journal based on information communicated to you from your child. Review the log regularly for frequency, severity and consistency, and share with supervising adults at school. Work with others to increase adult supervision of your child, especially at those times and in those places that you know bullying incidents have occurred. If the bullying escalates and your child is injured physically or emotionally, you may want to visit a doctor to have the injuries formally recorded. You should notify authorities if you suspect bullying crosses the line into criminal activity. (See Section 6)

If your child talks about suicide or seems unusually upset, seek help immediately.
Contact your physician or a mental health provider and request an evaluation. If professionals are not immediately available, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255.

How Children Should Respond to Peer Aggression
Keep cool. Avoid emotional or physical reactions in front of the bully.
If possible, remove yourself from the bullying situation. Walk away or use another exit strategy.
Tell a trusted adult **and** your parent(s).
Remember: bullying is not your fault.

Identify an adult at your child's school who has a connection with your child.
This adult can help your child feel safe at school by listening to your child, encouraging your child and receiving reports of suspected bullying. A trusted adult may also check in with your child on a regular basis and communicate with other adults in the school to promote more effective supervision and intervention. Parents may request that the school help them identify this type of support person as part of planning for their child's safety at school.

Encourage problem solving for safety.
While adults and other bystanders should intervene to stop bullying, this does not always happen. Therefore, it is important that children plan for their safety and develop an array of possible responses to bullying. Encourage the bullied child to identify safe peers, avoid the bullying student(s) as much as possible and inform adults of bullying that has occurred. Children may benefit from identifying possible responses to bullying, in advance of a bullying incident.

Respond to questions like, "Why did they do that to me?" with reassurances to your child.
A simple answer to this common question is that "some people are mean to others" or "maybe he or she was having a bad day." Do not give answers that may encourage your child to blame himself or herself.

Keep open communication with your child.
Check in with your child regularly to see how things are going. Ask about his or her social relationships and if the situation has improved. Bullying incidents may not be resolved quickly and your child will benefit from your continued support.

If You Suspect Your Child Is Being Bullied

- Do not blame your child.
- Do not tell your child to ignore it.
- Do not tell a child to retaliate.
- Do not expect your child to work it out alone.
- Do not allow mediation, if the child is reluctant or a parent or trusted adult is not present.
- Do not demand apologies.

Help your child connect with other children and develop new friendships.
Encourage your child to participate in activities that he or she enjoys and create opportunities for your child to spend time with children who share his or her interests. Supportive and positive peer relationships are important to your child's development.

Section 12: Tips for parents and caregivers of children who witness bullying

It is very likely that your child has observed a bullying incident while at school or in the neighborhood. **Bystanders, while not directly involved in bullying, can be negatively impacted by these encounters.**

They may feel anxious about what they witnessed, worried about the bullied child or ambivalent about how to respond. Your response can help your child recognize that bullying is a serious problem and can **empower your child to become an ally to children who are bullied.**[16]

If your child reports that he or she observed bullying, listen carefully to the description of what occurred. Be on the lookout for escalating negative behaviors or increasingly violent behaviors against one child and report this to the school.

Establishing **positive communication** is key to supporting young people. This includes being available for your child, **listening** to him or her and **responding non-judgmentally** when your child shares a concern.

In order to promote positive communication, it is often helpful to ask your child to **brainstorm possible solutions** to problems before sharing your own ideas. Developing this routine in daily interactions can prepare your child to respond flexibly and effectively in problem situations.[17]

Talking to Children Who Are Bystanders
Ask questions to discover your child's experience with bullying at school: What is your child's relationship to the child who bullies and the target? What do your child's friends think and do about bullying? What does your child think he or she should do?
Reflect on your child's feelings. Consider what issues may be influencing your child and the choices of bystanders.
Brainstorm a range of helpful bystander responses.
Discuss potential outcomes to different responses and have your child identify a positive action he or she is willing to try.

Section 13: The role of educators

Educators have an important role in addressing acts of bullying they observe or that are reported to them.[18] By being vigilant in addressing instances of peer aggression, educators can effectively reduce the likelihood of bullying in their schools.

Understand the difference between bullying and conflict.
Conflict involves antagonism among two or more people. Any two people can have a conflict. Bullying only occurs when there is a power imbalance.

Understand that there are different ways to bully.
Bullying behaviors take several forms, including: direct bullying, cyberbullying and relational aggression.

Understand that there are possible legal concerns for your school when bullying issues are not addressed, including:

- State laws related to bullying/bullying prevention.
- State and federal civil rights laws.
- Civil suits brought against schools/school systems.

Intervene every time you see bullying or it is reported to you.
It is important that you address all instances of peer aggression and take all reports of bullying seriously. Follow your school's protocol for investigation and response.

Communicate with administrators.
Whenever you take action in bullying situations, be sure to document your actions and follow the school policies regarding reporting to other staff and parents. Effective management of bullying requires open communication to prevent reoccurrence.

Administrators should ensure there is ongoing communication among supervising staff when bullying is reported, suspected or confirmed.

Follow up with students who have experienced bullying.
These follow-up conversations allow you to determine whether the behavior has stopped or if it is recurring. Provide support to students through increased supervision, proactive intervention, and advocacy, if needed.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls of Bullying Prevention
Do not assume there is a "profile" of the student who most likely will bully, be a target or be a bystander.
Do not handle bullying incidents by having the two involved students "sit down and talk it out."
Do not believe that bullying occurs only when adults are not present.
Do not think that bullying prevention is someone else's job.
Do not disregard your school's bullying policies and procedures because they are a hassle or you are unclear about what to do.

Section 14: The role of health care providers

Bullying has many health implications including mental health issues, psychosomatic complaints of stomach pain, headaches, sleep problems and general school avoidance behaviors. In addition, students who are bullied may experience short-term or long-term symptoms of depression or anxiety.

Healthcare providers should be aware of the American Academy of Pediatrics' policy statement on the Role of Pediatricians in Youth Violence Prevention.[19]

Healthcare providers should:

- Inquire about bullying as a component of a routine well-child visit.
- Ask a child with a physical injury (such as a sprain, strain, bruise, fracture, abdominal blunt force injury, etc.) if someone intentionally harmed him or her.
- Discuss social relationships and peer interaction with young patients as a part of the routine check-ups or if children describe school avoidance behaviors.
- Follow up with children who indicate that they have been harmed, teased, targeted online or excluded by peers to determine if there is evidence of peer abuse or bullying. Help parents access useful resources described in this toolkit.
- Be prepared to advise parents of a child who is experiencing health concerns related to bullying about effective ways to help their child.
- Make appropriate referrals to ensure that the child and family receive psychosocial support in addition to any medical treatment that may be warranted if a child involved in bullying is also experiencing mental health issues.
- Be an advocate in your community for the use of effective bullying prevention strategies and support educational outreach efforts.

Section 15: Addressing cyberbullying at home

It is recommended that parents and caregivers supervise their children's online activities and know how to help children deal with cyberbullying and other issues.

Parents should be knowledgeable about current technologies and establish clear expectations for technology usage and safety.

Parents should teach children:

- Not to give out personal information online
- Not to share their personal password with anyone other than their parents
- Not to join in when they witness online cruelty
- Not to forward hurtful messages or pictures to others

It is important to note that the bystander dynamic that plays a role in face-to-face bullying is also present in instances of cyberbullying.

Just as parents monitor their children's face-to-face relationships and behavior, parents should make it clear to children that their online relationships and behavior will be monitored. **In addition to keeping computers in public areas of the home, parents may use tools to limit or monitor their children's online contacts.**

Many Internet service providers and cell phone companies offer services that support online supervision. In addition, parents may purchase software that monitors or blocks social network activities (e.g., webwatcher, safetyweb, Guardian Monitor, netnanny, etc.).

When issues emerge online, parents should discuss these issues with their children and assist them in developing appropriate responses.

Parents should strive to establish routine and ongoing communication and adopt a problem-solving approach to assisting children in dealing with online challenges. While setting limits around technology usage can be helpful, banning children from technology is not recommended. This may actually encourage children to hide their online lives from their parents.

If a Child Experiences Cyberbullying
Don't respond. Children who engage in cyberbullying activities are seeking a reaction from their target. Even if it might seem warranted, do not respond out of anger.
Save the evidence. Save harmful messages and print a copy of web content. These hard copies of the evidence can aid authorities when they investigate the situation.
Immediately seek help from a trusted adult. It may be helpful for parents and children to identify, in advance, to whom their child will report concerns prior to any cyberbullying experience.
Work with adults to ensure the person who engages in cyberbullying activities is held accountable. If the cyberbullying includes a direct threat to someone's physical safety, a police report may be warranted. If the cyberbullying occurs at school, is brought into class, or continues as face-to-face bullying during the school day, the bullying should be reported to school administrators. (See Appendix B)
Contact the technology host to request that offensive content be removed and cyberbullies blocked. Many technology companies accept abuse complaints via a web-portal on their site or through email.

Section 16: What should schools do to address cyberbullying?

Ensuring that children are equipped to deal with cyberbullying requires education to prevent cyberbullying and effective responses when it occurs or is suspected.

Adopt school policies that specifically address cyberbullying.
Schools should integrate cyberbullying into their district acceptable use policies for technology and required bullying policies. If the issue of cyberbullying is a persistent problem, it may be appropriate to have a specific policy related to online harassment and cyberbullying.

Develop clear administrative guidelines for responding to and investigating reports of cyberbullying.
Make sure these guidelines clearly spell out how investigations will be conducted, when law enforcement or parents will be contacted and how discipline will be administered. While it may not be possible for schools to administer disciplinary consequences for online behavior that occurs outside of school, schools may conduct educational meetings with students and parents to share their concerns and discuss possible responses.

Include cyberbullying education as part of the scope and sequence of courses that promote technology literacy.
In addition to educating students about these issues, schools should work to educate parents about technology and youth development by integrating these themes into newsletters and outreach activities, including tips on how to prevent and respond to cyberbullying.

Establish partnerships with parents, the school, the parent-teacher association, YMCA, police department and other community groups to develop strategies for addressing issues of cyber-safety and cyberbullying.
Consider inviting representatives of law enforcement or the local district attorney office to participate in an advisory group that develops these strategies.

Integrate cyberbullying into memorandums of understanding with the local police department.
Make sure the school and law enforcement know how each entity will respond to cyberbullying and when it is appropriate to refer online issues to the police.

Recognize that when cyberbullying is motivated by a child's status as a member of a protected class, the school may have an obligation to act under federal and state civil rights laws.
In such cases, the administrators should consult the school solicitor or the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Protected status categories include: race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, handicap or disability, use of a guide or service animal, G.E.D. versus high school diploma, being known to be related to a handicapped or disabled person, and being retaliated against for reporting crimes.

Provide support to students that experience cyberbullying, even if the incident did not occur in school.
Because children experience real distress when bullied online, it is important that adults pay attention and offer support. School counselors and SAP professionals may play a role in helping children cope with the emotional effects of cyberbullying. Schools should make referrals to professionals, when appropriate.

Appendix A: Referral protocol for suspected bullying

Referral Protocol Chart

Professionals who work with children may use this protocol to identify information and resources that are available to support bullied students and their families.

Stages of Support/Referral	Questions to Ask	Relevant Information and Resources
Step 1: Assess the problem	What happened? Did the child experience bullying, harassment, conflict or something else? If bullying, what role did the child play in the bullying situation (target, bystander or perpetrator)? How has this experience affected the child?	Gather information about the situation and determine if bullying or harassment has occurred.
Step 2: Inform and support	What type of information and support does the child or family need?	Provide appropriate information about the bullying dynamic, including information about how adults can support and follow-up with involved students.
Step 3: Refer for additional support, if appropriate	Would the child or family benefit from social/emotional evaluation or support?	If the child is experiencing physical symptoms or emotional distress, an assessment may be warranted. *Refer the child/family to the appropriate professional for evaluation and support.*
Step 4: Inform of complaint processes, if appropriate	Does the behavior violate criminal law, civil law or professional standards of practice?	If a crime was committed, parents or school administrators may file a police report. If a child's civil rights were violated, parents may file a formal complaint with the US ED or PHRC. PDE accepts complaints about educator misconduct. An attorney can help a family determine if a civil lawsuit is warranted.
Step 5: Provide advocacy information	Would the child or family benefit from additional support in advocating for the child's needs?	Provide information about victim services or other advocacy options.

Appendix B: Sample letter to schools

(Adapted from an Education Law Center Resource, Rev 9/08)[20]

Keep a copy of the letter for yourself. It is recommended that you send this request to the principal by certified mail, return receipt requested. You should also send a copy of your letter to your school district's superintendent.

Your Address
Your Phone Number
Date

Principal's Name
Name of Your Child's School
School Address

Dear Principal_____:

I am the parent of _____, whose date of birth is _____.

My child was bullied at school. I am therefore requesting an investigation and a prompt response from the school district to ensure that the bullying will stop.

The bullying occurred on [insert date(s) of bullying] at [insert time(s) of bullying]. The bullying took place in [insert where the bullying happened]. The bullying involved [insert detailed description of the bullying, including the name(s) of those student(s) who were bullying your child]. Witnesses of the bullying included [insert the names of anyone who saw your child being bullied].

I request that the school interview all persons who were involved in or who witnessed the bullying. After the investigation, please intervene with the students responsible for the bullying in order to ensure that the bullying stops. For more information on how to prevent bullying at school, the District can contact the Center for Safe Schools at (717) 763-1661.

Should you have any questions about this request, please contact me at [insert your phone number(s) and/or email address].

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Appendix C: Bullying prevention resources

General Resources on Bullying

Beane, A. L., & Espeland, P. (1999). *The bully-free classroom: Over 100 tips and strategies for teachers' K-8.* MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Coloroso, B. (2003) *The bully, the bullied, and the bystander: From preschool to high school: how parents and teachers can help break the cycle of violence.* NY: Harper Collins.

Fried, S., & Fried, P. (1998). *Bullied and victims: Helping your children through the schoolyard battlefield.* New York, NY: M. Evans & Co.

Garbarino, J., & deLara, E. (2002) *And words can hurt forever: How to protect adolescents from bullying, harassment and emotional violence.* NY: Free Press.

Mullin, N. L. (2009). *Olweus bullying prevention program companion bibliography.* Pittsburgh, PA: Highmark Foundation.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying in school.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.

Olweus, D., & Limber, S. (2007). *Olweus bullying prevention program: Schoolwide guide.* Center City, MN: Hazelden Publishing.

Center for Safe Schools – The Center is an educational services agency that focuses on providing schools with training and technical assistance with issues related to school safety and school climate. The Center also provides information and resources to parents and other stakeholders in school safety. The bullying prevention page provides information about current issues in bullying and how to access a bullying prevention consultant. **www.safeschools.info** (717) 763-1661

Stop Bullying.gov – This website provides information from various government agencies on how kids, teens, young adults, parents, educators and others in the community can prevent or stop bullying. **www.stopbullying.gov**

Cyberbullying Resources

Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. W. (2009). *Bullying beyond the schoolyard: Preventing and responding to cyberbullying.* CA: Corwin Press.

Kowalski, R. M., Limber, S. P., & Agatston, P. W. (2008). *Cyber bullying: Bullying in the digital age.* Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Willard, N. E. (2007). *Cyber-safe kids, cyber-savvy teens: Helping young people learn to use the internet safely and responsibly.* CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Commonsense Media, Cyberbullying Toolkit – This toolkit, accessible online, provides tips and resources for educators, parents and youth on the topic of cyberbullying. **www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/cyberbullying-toolkit**

Cyberbullying Research Center – The Cyberbullying Research Center is dedicated to providing up-to-date information about the nature, extent, causes and consequences of cyberbullying among adolescents. **www.cyberbullying.us**

National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) – The NCPC provides information and resources related to crime prevention, including cyberbullying and cyber crimes. **www.ncpc.org/topics/cyberbullying**

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – The center's Netsmartz program is an online resource for parents and educators on the topic of online safety and cyberbullying. **www.netsmartz.org/cyberbullying**

Protecting Kids Online (PKO) – PKO is a network of law enforcement officers that have training in internet safety. They are available to conduct free workshops in schools and communities. **www.safeschools.info/internet-safety/about-internet-safety**

Appendix C: Bullying prevention resources

Relational Aggression Resources

Dellesaga, C., & Nixon, C. (2007). *Girl wars: 12 strategies that will end female bullying.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Kindlon, D., & Thompson, M. (2000). *Raising Kain.* New York, NY: Random House.

Garbarino, J. (2006). *See Jane hit: Why girls are growing more violent and what we can do about it.* New York, NY: Penguin.

Simmons, R. (2002) *Odd girl out: The hidden culture of aggression in girls.* NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wiseman, R. (2009). *Queen bees and wannabes: Helping your daughter survive cliques, gossip, boyfriends, and the new realities of girl world* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Crown Publishers.

Club and Camp Ophelia – This project combats relational aggression by providing training for club advisors and a yearly camp experience for girls. **www.clubophelia.com/clubophelia/ra.php**

Girls on the Run – This nonprofit organization offers programs for pre-teen girls that build self-esteem and encourage healthy relationships through training for a 5K race. **www.girlsontherun.org**

Bullying and Children's Health

Pennsylvania Student Assistance Programs (SAP) – Pennsylvania public schools are required to implement assistance programs for students that are experiencing barriers to learning, including behavioral or emotional barriers related to bullying. SAP referrals should be made directly to the school administrator or school counselor. For more information about SAP, go to **www.sap.state.pa.us**

Pennsylvania Network of Care is a web resource, which provides mental health information and tools as well as service directories for every county in Pennsylvania. You may also contact your county's office of mental health. Phone numbers for county offices are usually listed in the blue pages of the local phone book. **http://pa.networkofcare.org**

Windber Research Institute, Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention – This organization provides information and resources for health care providers and the public health community on the health effects of bullying and effective approaches to bullying prevention. (814) 361-6966

Bullying and Protected Class Issues

Wasley, L. (2005). *Taking bullying seriously: Is your child a target? Strategies and interventions for parents/guardians of children with special needs.* Novato, CA: Matrix Parent Network. **www.matrixparents.org/pdf/packetsArticles/BullyingArticle.pdf**

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – The ACLU is an advocacy organization that publishes numerous guides to students' rights. Several recent publications focus on the issue of bullying and gay/lesbian students. These publications can be found by searching the ACLU website. **www.aclu.org**

Anti-defamation League (ADL) – The ADL works to end anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, while working to protect civil rights for all. The ADL has numerous publications and programs that focus on ending harassment in schools and communities. **www.adl.org** (215) 568-2223

Disability Rights Network (DRN) – The DRN's mission is to advance, protect, and advocate for the human, civil and legal rights of Pennsylvanians with disabilities. **www.drnpa.org** (800) 692-7443

Appendix C: Bullying prevention resources

Office of Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education – OCR enforces several Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive Federal funds from the Department of Education. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. OCR's 2010 "Dear Colleague Letter" outlines school's responsibilities in responding to bullying and harassment, particularly in relations to protected groups. **www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html** (215) 656-8541

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) – PACER works to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents. They have extensive online resources for parents, educators and students on the topic of bullying. PACER publishes a booklet called *Beyond Sticks & Stones: How to Help Your Child with a Disability Deal with Bullying.* **www.pacer.org** (888) 248-0822

Pennsylvania Council for Independent Living – The mission of the Pennsylvania Council on Independent Living is to support the network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and to advance the Independent Living movement. This organization can help parents and advocates access local supports for students with disabilities through its network of CILs. **www.pcil.net**

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) – PHRC is responsible for the enforcement of Pennsylvania's civil rights laws, including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. For information or to file a complaint about bullying related to a protected class, contact: **www.phrc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/phrc_home/18970** PHRC, Division of Education and Community Services (717) 787-4410

Bullying and LGBTQ Resources

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – The ACLU is an advocacy organization that publishes numerous guides to students' rights. Several recent publications focus on the issue of bullying and gay/lesbian students. These publications can be found by searching the ACLU website. **www.aclu.org**

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) – GLSEN works to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN provides resources for educators, youth and advocates. **www.glsen.org**

It Gets Better Project – The It Gets Better Project was created to show young LGBT people the levels of happiness, potential and positivity their lives will reach – if they can just get through their teen years. The It Gets Better Project wants to remind teenagers in the LGBT community that they are not alone — and it WILL get better. **www.itgetsbetter.org**

The Trevor Project – The Trevor Project is a national organization that provides information, resources and crisis prevention services to gay, lesbian, transgender and questioning youth and their allies. It publishes educational resources for parents and schools. **www.thetrevorproject.org.**

Appendix C: Bullying prevention resources

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) – PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through support, education and advocacy.
http://community.pflag.org

Office of Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education
www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html
Philadelphia Office (215) 656-8541

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) www.phrc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/phrc_home/18970 PHRC, Division of Education and Community Services (717) 787-4410

Bullying and the Law Resources

Education Law Center – The Education Law Center engages in legal advocacy, training and information sharing to ensure educational access for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable children – poor children, children of color, children with disabilities, English language learners, and children in foster homes and institutions. **www.elc-pa.org** Philadelphia Office (215) 238-6970

Pennsylvania Bar Association – The Pa. Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Services helps Pennsylvania residents identify attorneys in their community, who provide a discounted rate for the initial consultation. **www.pabar.org** (800) 692-7375

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Office of Victims' Services (OVS)
OVS ensures that victims of crime get the help they need to transcend their trauma and move forward with their lives. OVS does this in many ways, including providing financial help through the Victims Compensation Assistance Program, administering funding to local and statewide victim service agencies that work directly with victims of crime and training victim service and allied professionals.
For more information about OVS victim services programs, call (717) 783-0551.

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)
PDE is responsible for providing for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of education in Pennsylvania. If a school district fails to maintain a policy on bullying or fails to maintain an environment safe for learning, a complaint may be filed against the educator or administrator.
For information about this process, contact (717) 787-6576 or go to: **www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/guidelines,_policies,_complaint_forms,_reports_and_related_documents_/8850/code_of_conduct/529193**
To reach the PDE Office of Safe Schools, call (717) 703-0353.

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC)
www.phrc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/phrc_home/18970
PHRC, Division of Education and Community Services (717) 787-4410

Office of Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education
www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html
Philadelphia Office (215) 656-8541

Safe Schools Act of the Pennsylvania School Code – House Bill 1067 of 2008, a revision to the Safe Schools Act of 1995, requires all public schools to have a board policy addressing bullying. For a list of the requirements of this law, go to: **www.SafeSchools.info/bullying-legislation**

Dating or Domestic Violence Resources

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR)
PCAR works to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of sexual assault. If a child is bullied sexually or within a dating relationship, PCAR may be able to provide support. **www.pcar.org** (888) 772-7227

Pennsylvania Coalition against Domestic Violence (PCADV) – PCADV is a private nonprofit organization working at the state and national levels to eliminate domestic violence, secure justice for victims and enhance safety for families and communities. If a child experiences bullying within the home or experiences sexual harassment, PCADV may be able to help. **www.pcadv.org** (800) 553-2508

Additional Resources

Center for Safe Schools Bullying Prevention
The Center for Safe Schools is committed to providing schools with information and resources to create and maintain safe, productive learning environments by addressing issues that interfere with the educational process. The Center's focus on bullying prevention is significant, providing resources for effective implementation, sustainability, transfer of knowledge, and evaluation of bullying prevention programs that contribute to changes in student attitudes and behavior, and cultivate nurturing school and community environments. **www.SafeSchools.info/bullying-prevention** (717) 763-1661

Youth Voice Project
Youth Voice Project is first known large-scale research study that solicits students' perceptions about strategy effectiveness to reduce peer mistreatment in school. The project has published several reports scribing the most helpful interventions to reduce bullying and harassment. The website provides information to guide educators, parents and youth in applying effective interventions to reduce bullying and optimize students' development. **www.youthvoiceproject.com**

Endnotes

[1] Olweus, D., Limber, S. P., Flerx, V. C., Mullin, N.,Riese, J., & Snyder, M. (2007). *Olweus bullying prevention program: Schoolwide guide.* MN: Hazelden.

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[4] www.stopbullying.gov/educators/followup_intervention; www.stopbullying.gov/community/tip_sheets/misdirections.pdf; Olweus, D., Limber, S. P., Flerx, V. C., Mullin, N.,Riese, J., & Snyder, M. (2007).

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[6] Janson, G. R. & Hazler, R. J. (2004). Trauma reactions of bystanders and victims of repetitive abuse experiences. *Violence and Victims,* 19(2), 239-255.

[7] Fried, S., & Fried, P. (1996). *Bullies & victims: Helping your children through the schoolyard battlefield.* New York, NY: M. Evans & Co.; Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do.* UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.

[8] www.glsen.org; Rigby, K. (2005). Why do some children bully at school: The Contributions of Negative Attitudes Towards Victims and the Perceived Expectations of Friends, Parents and Teachers. School Psychology International, 26(2),147-161; Olweus, D. (1993).

[9] A list of comprehensive crimes contained in the PA Code Crimes can be found at www.pacode.com/secure/data/204/chapter303/s303.15.html

[10] For a listing of victim advocacy organizations, see: www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/clickable_map/11201

[11] Contact your local chapter of the Bar Association for a referral to an attorney who deals in civil law. www.pabar.org/ (800) 692-7375

[12] Information about Nixon and Davis' research can be found at www.youthvoiceproject.com

[13] David, S & Davis, J (2007). Schools where everyone belongs: Practical strategies for reducing bullying. Champaign,IL:Research Press

[14] www.stopbullying.gov

[15] www.stopbullying.gov; Bush, E. S., & de Guzman, M. (2007). *Bullying and victimization: What adults can do to help.* (Participant's Manual HEF583). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension; David, S & Davis, J (2007). Schools where everyone belongs: Practical strategies for reducing bullying. Champaign,IL: Research Press; Beane, A. L. (1999). *The Bully Free Classroom: Over 100 tips and strategies for teachers k-8*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

[16] www.stopbullying.gov; Fried & Fried (1996); www.olweus.org

[17] Shure, M. B. (2005). *Thinking parent, thinking child: How to turn your most challenging everyday problems into solutions.* NY: McGraw Hill.

[18] www.olweus.org; www.stopbullying.gov; Davis & Davis (2007).

[19] American Academy of Pediatrics' Policy Statement on the Role of the Pediatrician in Youth Violence Prevention can be found at Appendix C: Bullying prevention resources

[20] http://www.elc-pa.org/pubs/downloads/english/dis-Bullying%20By%20Peer-Sample%20Letter%20Requesting%20Investigation%209-08.pdf

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This Bullying Prevention Toolkit is available online at
www.SafeSchools.info/BP_Toolkit.pdf

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