

Three P's for a school-led/community based approach

Anti-bullying Policy: Must be clearly articulated, consistently enforced, and broadly communicated. It should include a clear definition of what bullying is, the types of bullying, and the overlays that often increase the cruelty and impact of the bullying.

Sample: Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate activity intended to harm where the perpetrator(s) get pleasure from the targeted child's pain/and or misery. It can be verbal, physical, and/or relational; have as it's overlay race, ethnicity, religion, gender (including sexual orientation), physical, or mental ability; includes all forms of hazing and cyberbullying. It can be and often is continuous and repeated over time, but does not have to be. Once is enough to constitute bullying.

Include in the policy a statement of responsibility of those who witness the bullying to seek to stop it by intervening, helping the targeted student escape, and/or telling a caring adult.

Anti-bullying Procedures: Clearly outline the consequences for the **bully**—and any henchmen or other bystanders who played an active supporting role in the bullying. These procedures should include discipline measures that will be taken to hold the students accountable for their actions. (I recommend some form of restorative justice, i.e. Restitution, Resolution, and if possible, an attempt at Reconciliation at the targeted student's behest.) Procedures for restorative justice are tailored to the unique problems and possible solutions to repair the damage done. It is helpful to incorporate into the plan the six other ways to reform the perpetrator(s). Parent are notified of the bullying and asked to take measures at home that will help in the restorative justice process.

Clearly outline what measures will be taken to keep the **targeted student** safe at school, give him or her tools to stand up to the perpetrators, and support to keep the targeted student from succumbing to the bullying. Identify a person or persons to whom the student can safely report any further bullying incidences. Notify parent(s) of incident and school's plan. Give parent(s) the method to use to report any further targeting of their child. (see how to report)

Programs: Develop programs that back up and reinforce the policy as well as help to create a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all students.

It is the school culture and social environment that these policies, procedures, and programs create as well as reflect. We can rewrite the script and create for our youth alternative, healthier roles that require no pretense or violence. We can rechannel the behaviors of the youth who bully into positive leadership activities; acknowledge the non-aggressive behaviors of a youth who is bullied as strengths that can be developed and are honored; and transform the role of the bystander into that of witness, resister, and defender. A daunting but necessary task.

Barbara Coloroso © 2002, 2005, 2009