

Bullying Prevention Newsletter

Responsibility & Accountability: Student Perceptions from our Spring 2011 Bullying Survey

Township High School District 211



For Parents of Academy-North Students

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***“Thou shalt not be a victim.
Thou shalt not be an oppressor.
But most of all, thou shalt not be
a bystander.”***

– Yehuda Bauer, Jewish historian

Last year, the district asked students to take a survey on bullying in our schools to see where we stand from the student perspective on this hot topic. What emerged from the many students who took the survey was the finding that almost 67% of students perceive most other students don't care about others being bullied or harassed. But, what was interesting was that 83% of those same students surveyed said they personally DO CARE when others are bullied or harassed. So, with that contradictory information, it brought to light the importance of educating students who become bystanders of bullying situations. District 211 wants to help the students' prevent bullying. We don't want our students to feel their peers do not care about them when we know this isn't true. Our goal is to help make students aware of the importance of standing up for others in a safe and appropriate manner and to help encourage them to seek help of the adults in their lives, both those at school and at home.

Think about this:

The definition of a bystander is a person who is present at an event without participating in the central actions of the event. Bystanders sometimes actively or passively condone or condemn the central actions by their words or actions or, alternately, by their silence or inaction. In a nutshell, whether our students join in on the bullying or say nothing, they are acting as a bystander and neither one is a positive choice. Students feel alone when peers do not reach out to them in times of need. By empowering our teens to demonstrate concern for the victims, we can dispel the perceptions that students don't care.

Our messages to students are consistent and constant:

- Say something to the bully
- Console the victim
- Tell someone else

By being silent, they are siding with the bully. It is important for our students to learn how to intervene in a safe and appropriate manner.

Student Voice

Our students had a lot to say about the bystander position in the survey; how they feel, how they see our role as the adults in their lives. Students worry about being “the snitch” and becoming a victim of retaliation. They also reported difficulty identifying the difference between people who are “just kidding” or “being teenagers.” Below are direct excerpts from student responses on our survey:

“I feel that most students don’t tell adults about being bullied, or about seeing someone else bullied because they think that they will be judged.”

“I feel like all bullying is not necessary to report because it’s hard to define bullying. Friends joke around and make fun of each other but it’s taken lightly and I do not consider it bullying.”

“Some students don’t report bullying because they are afraid of what might happen to them and think that it’s none of their business.”

“I think bullies will stop picking on people if they know the differences between people and accepted it.”

The way to prevent bullying from happening begins with creating a welcoming school. By encouraging our students to stand up for each other, we can help make our schools more inviting and safe. Our students perceive that “snitches get stiches”. We are all accountable. The responsibility lies on all of us. By helping our students become more compassionate and reach out of their comfort zone to someone in need, bullying behaviors can come to an end.

Resources

Eyes on Bullying

This site describes the various types of bystanders, talks about the basic perspective of bullying from the bystander, and indicates why the bystander often does nothing.

<http://www.eyesonbullying.org/bystander.html>

Stop Bullying Now!

Here you can learn more information on how to empower bystanders to make the right choice and say something when they witness a bullying situation.

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/bystanders.html>

Teaching Tolerance

All three parties involved in a bullying situation are addressed here with information about the bully, the victim and the bystander.

<http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-39-spring-2011/bully-bullied-bystanderand-beyond>

STEP UP SO OTHERS WON'T GET STEPPED ON!

Encourage your son or daughter to report bullying. If your teen has experienced or witnessed bullying, but wants to remain anonymous, a report can be made by calling 847/755-6700 or by using the following link:
http://www.academy-north.org/index.php?option=com_forme&Itemid=88

WE NEED EVERYONE'S HELP!
