

Dear Parents,

Bacchus Elementary is striving to be proactive and take a stand against bullying. Our goal is to raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behavior ("prevention") and to have measures in place to deal with bullying behavior when it occurs ("intervention"). Not every problem that happens at school is bullying, but we understand that as a parent you are concerned whenever something negative happens with your child.



Sometimes it can be difficult to tell the **difference between bullying and playful teasing**. Teasing usually is between two or more people who are acting in a friendly way that appears to be fun for ALL of the people involved. On the other hand, bullying consists of unwanted or aggressive behavior. The act of bullying is defined by three main factors:

- 1) There must be **intent by the bully to cause harm** to the victim.
- 2) The behavior is **repeated over time**. We all get a little angry at times, but if someone is targeting someone else then it could be bullying.
- 3) There exists an **imbalance of power** between the bully and the bullied. Often bullies are stronger than their victims, or they perhaps hold a higher status among their peers or have access to some kind of embarrassing information. In this way, standing up to bullies can be difficult.

In order to reduce bullying problems and prevent the development of future problems, Bacchus is doing the following to ensure the safety of our students:

- Conduct a bullying survey to determine the extent of the problem and to assess how students are dealing with it.
- "Be Kind" focus. Each class has read the book "Have You Filled A Bucket Today?" and we are encouraging students to post positive notes when they see someone else being kind to others.
- A positive school wide behavior system is posted, reviewed and enforced on a daily basis.
- Bacchus participates in assemblies which teach students what bullying is and what they can do when they either see or experience it.
- We encourage students to use the "Stop, Walk, & Talk" system when others are doing something they don't like.
- Daily announcements are made to the students regarding our school rules and a reminder to be kind.
- The school provides adult supervision in the hallways, cafeteria, and playground.

We would also like to share some ideas about how parents can help their children (These and other materials are available online at: www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov)

- Check your emotions. A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Although it is difficult, a parent is wise to step back and consider the next steps carefully.
- Empathize with your child. Tell him/her that bullying is wrong, not their fault, and that you are glad he/she had the courage to tell you about it. Ask your child what he/she thinks can be done to help. Assure him/her that you will think about what needs to be done and you will let him/her know what you are going to do.
- Contact your child's teacher and/or principal. Give factual information about your child's experience of being bullied—who, what, when, where, and how.
 - Emphasize that you want to work with the staff at school to find a solution to stop the bullying, for the sake of your child as well as other students.
- Do not encourage physical retaliation ("Just hit them back") as a solution. Hitting another student is not likely to end the problem, and it could get your child suspended or expelled, or escalate the situation.
- Help develop your child's talents and positive attributes. Involve your child in athletics, music and art. Doing so may help your child be more confident among his/her peers.
- Teach your child safety strategies. Teach him/her how to seek help from an adult when he/she feels threatened by a bully.
- Home is where the heart is. Make sure your child has a safe and loving home environment where he/she can take shelter, physically and emotionally. Always keep the lines of communication with your child open.

As always, please call, visit or email me with any celebrations or concerns. Together we will provide a safe, enriching environment for our students. We hope you have a wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,

Becki Monson, Principal
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