

## BULLYING PREVENTION



### ***What is bullying?***

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Typically, it is repeated over time. A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Bullying can take many forms, such as hitting (physical bullying), teasing or name-calling (verbal bullying), intimidation or social exclusion (non-verbal and emotional bullying), and sending insulting emails or texts (cyberbullying).

### ***How often does bullying occur?***

Studies show that between 15 and 25 percent of students in the U.S. are bullied. Recent statistics show that school violence has declined during the past several years, but the incidence of bullying has increased. Research indicates that children with disabilities or special needs may be at higher risk of being bullied than other children. Bullying has been identified as a major concern by schools across the U.S.

### ***What are possible warning signs of bullying?***

Many children, particularly boys and older children, do not tell their parents or adults at school about being bullied. It is important for adults to know the possible signs of bullying.

Possible signs that a child is being bullied:

- Comes home with torn, damaged, missing clothes, books, or other belongings
- Has unexplained cuts, bruises, or scratches
- Seems afraid of going to school, walking to school, riding the bus, or taking part in activities with peers
- Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he/she comes home from school
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or other ailments
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem

### ***What can parents do if they suspect their child is being bullied?***

If your child shows any of these signs, this does not necessarily mean your child is being bullied, but it is worth exploring the possibility. Talk with your child and talk with staff at school to learn more.

Some direct questions:

- "I'm worried about you. Are there any kids at school who may be picking on you or bullying you?"
- "Are there any kids at school who tease you in a mean way?"
- "Are there any kids at school who leave you out or exclude you on purpose?"

Subtle questions:

- "Do you have any special friends at school this year? Who are they? Who do you hang out with?"
- "Who do you sit with at lunch and on the bus?"
- "Are there any kids at school who you really don't like? Why don't you like them? Do they ever pick on you or leave you out of things?"

Set up an appointment to talk with your child's teacher. He or she will probably be in the best position to understand the relationships between your child and other peers at school. Share your concerns about your child and ask the teacher to talk with other adults who interact with your child to see if they have observed students bullying your child. Share your concerns with the school counselor.

***How does the school assess bullying?***

School staff continuously monitor school climate. Formal surveys of students, parents, and staff provide valuable information about the school climate including acceptance, positive interest in school, respect, and student involvement with adults. Aldie Elementary has adopted and implemented the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program to help foster a positive school climate. An important part of PBIS is collecting and using data to monitor student behavior and to provide positive behavior supports to students. Less formal measures are also in place; supervision of students, especially in "hot spots" such as the cafeteria, hallways, and playground is both informative and preventive.

***What policies are in place to protect children from bullying?***

The LCPS School Board has established a Health, Safety, and Wellness Goal to strengthen programs that support safe learning environments free of bullying, teasing, and physical violence. The *Student Rights and Responsibilities* booklet identifies harassment and bullying as unacceptable behaviors with strict consequences for such behaviors. LCPS has adopted *Guiding Principles of Bullying Prevention* that are in place in all elementary, middle, and high schools. All schools implement Bullying Prevention programs that meet the requirements outlined by LCPS.

***What actions and programs are in place at Aldie Elementary to protect children from bullying?***

Aldie Elementary, along with all LCPS elementary schools, has implemented a K-5 Bullying Prevention curriculum that includes pre- and post-tests to provide evidence of learning. Lessons are taught by Guidance Counselors and reinforced by teachers and staff on a daily basis. Students participate in assemblies to further reinforce concepts emphasized in the Bullying Prevention curriculum, including the roles in bullying and responsibilities of bystanders. As a PBIS school, clear rules and expectations about bullying behaviors are in place, along with appropriate consequences for infractions. Aldie Elementary will incorporate the *Bully Prevention in Positive Behavior Support* program during the 2011-2012 school year to further reinforce these expectations.

***What resources are available to parents?***

Stop Bullying Now: [www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)

Bully Prevention in Positive Behavior Support: <http://www.pbis.org>

National PTA Bully Prevention Resources: [www.pta.org/bullying.asp](http://www.pta.org/bullying.asp)