

Individual Interventions



Photocopy this page and cut it in half. Laminate these cards and distribute to staff.

On-the-Spot Bullying Interventions

When you see bullying happen:

- Step 1: Stop the bullying.
 - Step 2: Support the student who has been bullied.
 - Step 3: To the student(s) who bullied: Name the bullying behavior and refer to the four anti-bullying rules.
 - Step 4: Empower the bystanders with appreciation if they were supportive to the student who was bullied or with information about how to act in the future.
 - Step 5: Impose immediate and appropriate consequences for the student(s) who bullied.
 - Step 6: Take steps to make sure the student who was bullied will be protected from future bullying.
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Detailed Step-by-Step Instructions

Here is a more detailed description of what to do (and not do) in each on-the-spot intervention step:

STEP	DO's	DONT's
Step 1: Stop the bullying.	Stand between the students who bullied and the student who was bullied. Set ground rules for all participants (for example, "I want you each to stand here and listen and not talk").	Don't get into a verbal or physical tussle with any student. Don't send any students away—especially bystander(s). Don't ask about or discuss the reason for the bullying or try to sort out the facts now.
Step 2: Support the student who has been bullied in a way that allows him or her to regain control of his or her emotions and to "save face."	Stand close beside the student who has been bullied. Make minimal eye contact—just enough to gauge his or her emotions. Consider physically comforting the student (for example, pat the student on the shoulder) only if you think it will not cause him or her to lose control or feel more embarrassed.	Be careful in showing too much overt attention to the student who was bullied. Too much sympathy (when expressed in public) may be uncomfortable for the student. Don't ask the bullied student to tell you what happened. Don't offer lots of sympathy (words or actions) on the spot—wait until later.
Step 3: Address the student(s) who bullied by naming the bullying behavior and refer to the four anti-bullying rules.	State what you saw/heard; label it bullying. State that it is against the school rules (for example, "The words I heard you use are against our rules about bullying"). Use a matter-of-fact tone to let the student(s) who bullied know exactly what behaviors are not okay and why.	Do not accuse—simply state the facts ("I saw ..." or "I heard ..."). Don't engage students in a discussion or argument about the facts. Remind them to listen and not talk.
Step 4: Empower bystanders with appreciation or information about how to act in the future.	Praise bystanders with specific comments about things they did to help, even if they were not effective.	Don't scold bystanders for not getting involved. Don't ask bystanders to state what happened or explain their behavior at this point.

STEPS continued on next page

STEP	DO's	DONT's
<p>Step 4: continued</p>	<p>If they took no helpful action, use a calm, matter-of-fact, supportive tone to let bystanders know that you noticed their inaction.</p> <p>If appropriate, suggest something they could do now to help the student who was bullied (for example, help to pick up books, accompany him or her to get a new lunch).</p>	
<p>Step 5: Impose immediate and appropriate consequences for the student(s) who bullied.</p>	<p>Plan a follow-up meeting with the student who was bullied and his/her parents (as appropriate).</p> <p>A verbal reprimand is likely to be the first reaction; in addition, you may want to take away some social opportunities from the bullying students as your role and relationship with them permit (for example, recess, lunch in the cafeteria).</p> <p>Let the students who bullied know you will be watching them and their cohorts closely to be sure there is no retaliation against the student who has been bullied.</p> <p>If these students are not members of your classroom, notify their primary teacher so he or she knows what happened and what disciplinary action was taken (verbal or written).</p> <p>If the students are in middle school/junior high school, notify the teacher who has the closest relationship to the students or your school's discipline officer.</p> <p>Depending on the system adopted by your school, you may also have to report the incident to your Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee and/or enter it into a special log.</p>	<p>Do not scold.</p> <p>Do not institute a reparation plan on the spot. Follow up later.</p>
<p>Step 6: Take steps to make sure the student who was bullied will be protected from future bullying.</p>	<p>Plan a follow-up meeting with the student who was bullied and his or her parents (as appropriate). Keep an eye on the situation and make sure the student who was bullied knows he or she should report any future bullying to you immediately.</p> <p>Try to involve the student with a positive peer group, so he or she is not isolated or alone.</p>	

Using Verbal Reprimands Effectively

Your staff's first reaction when dealing with bullying students will probably be a verbal rebuke or reprimand. To make a verbal rebuke as effective as possible, keep in mind the following suggestions:

- Intervene as early as possible. It is more difficult to stop a behavior that has “gone too far.”
- Approach the students who will be rebuked. Staff members often reprimand students from too far away. If your personal safety is not in danger, then you should be one or two arm lengths away from the students.
- Look the students in the eyes. Tell them to look you in the eyes, if this is culturally appropriate.
- Be brief, clear, and behavior specific. Being specific makes it easier for the students to comply with your request to stop doing what they are doing. For example, saying, “John, you are saying mean things to Emma again. Stop it right now!” is more direct than saying, “Are you making trouble again today, John? How many times have I told you that you have to stop being mean and making trouble?”
- Be firm and determined, but not overly emotional. Your request to stop the behavior should be said in a firm, steady voice with a clear expectation of being obeyed. It is important that you make the students know this is a serious issue without getting too upset or losing control by shouting or making derogatory comments about the students.
- Do not make “empty threats.” If the students do not obey you and stop the behavior, be prepared to tell them what negative consequences will occur if they don't stop immediately. Think about what kinds of consequences you would apply and make sure you can follow through on them, if necessary.
- Do not tell the students they will have a negative consequence that you would not actually be willing to give. It is important that the students trust that you will do what you say you will do.
- If the students involved are not in your classroom or homeroom, follow up with their classroom or homeroom teachers (or the teacher who has the closest relationship to the students) and possibly the staff member responsible for handling discipline issues at your school, so they are aware of the situation and can help enforce the consequences.

