

Teach kids to be an allies

We can all empower children to prevent and interrupt bullying types of behaviors by teaching them to act as allies.

1. Support the one who is targeted: Encourage the target to report the incident and go along with them to tell an adult. Teach out in person or via text to say you are sorry for what's happening to them; that it's not cool.
2. Don't participate: If a group of kids is laughing at a student in the cafeteria, change the subject or say "let's not do this"; nonparticipating students send a powerful message that both supports the victim and sends a message to the aggressor.
3. Tell a trusted adult: Many students don't tell adults because they don't think it will do any good or they think it will make things worse. Adults can't help if they don't know what's going on so encourage kids to tell an adult about bullying or harassing behavior they've witnessed or experienced.
4. Get to know people instead of judging: Especially in 'tween or teen years, students can be targets based on their appearance, body size, race, religion, disability, etc. Teach students to be accepting of all.
5. Be an online ally: If you see bullying or harassment online, do not participate and leave the group. Take a screenshot of the negative conversation and report it to an adult. Reach out to the victim with words of support. Encourage others to do the same.

How to report suspected bullying

This brochure, the BPS bullying policy, and the reporting form can be found online at www.bismarckschools.org on the right under Quick Links. You can also find them on each school web site under Resources. Please read the policy to see if the incident fits the definition of bullying. If so, follow the appropriate steps to make a report. If you are not sure, please contact the teacher, principal or assistant principal for guidance. They are there to help!

NOTE: In the state law on bullying, if an incident is based on a "protected class", whether actual or perceived, it is then investigated with the district's harassment/discrimination policy (*not the bullying policy*). Protected classes are classifications/characteristics protected from discrimination by state and federal law. These include race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability (physical or mental), and status with regard to marriage or public assistance.

To find the BPS policy on Harassment, go to www.bismarckschools.org under School Board & Policies in the black bar. Then click School Board Policies in the left. Type AAC in the blank "Search this site" bar.

Is it Bullying or Conflict?



- Bullying vs. Conflict
- A, B, C & D of Bullying
- Teach Kids to be Allies
- How to Report Bullying



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BULLYING VS. CONFLICT

Bismarck Public Schools, like other-North Dakota schools, has a bullying policy aimed at protecting students.

The state defines bullying as follows: Conduct that occurs or is received by a student while he/she is in a public school, on school district premises, in a district owned or leased school bus or school vehicle, or at any public school or school district sanctioned or sponsored activity or event which:

1. Is so severe, pervasive, or objectively offensive that it substantially interferes with the student's educational opportunities;
2. Places the student in actual and reasonable fear of harm;
3. Places the student in actual and reasonable fear of damage to property of the student;
4. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a public school.

Conduct includes the use of technology or other electronic media.

In most cases labeled as bullying, the victim is being bullied **without** provocation. In student conflict, both sides have a role in the incident.

This is an important distinction.
Most of the time, conflict resolution is what's needed; parents & schools can help students resolve their differences.

The A, B, C & D of Bullying

Bullying may be verbal, physical, emotional or cyber. In our elementary schools, counselors and teachers use the ABCD approach to teaching kids what bullying really looks like:

Aggression: Words or actions that harm another student; to scare, embarrass or intimidate someone.

Balance of power: The balance of power is unequal: a bigger vs. smaller student; an older vs. younger student.

Consistent: It happens repeatedly over a period of time, not just once.

Deliberate: Trying intentionally to harm or hurt another student.

Elementary counselors and teachers also use a chart like this to help kids distinguish between what is bullying and what is not.

Teasing:
--Everyone is having fun.
--No one is getting hurt.
--Everyone is participating equally.

Conflict:
--No one is having fun.
--There is a possible solution to the disagreement.
--There is an equal balance of power.

Mean Moment:

--Someone is being hurt on purpose.
--It's a reaction to a strong feeling or emotion.
--It is an isolated event; it does not happen regularly.

Bullying:

--Someone is being attacked physically, socially, and/or emotionally.
--Someone is being hurt on purpose.
--It happens more than once over a period of time.
--There's an unequal power balance.

Curriculum for students

Bismarck Schools has a social-emotional curriculum that helps give students life skills to handle all kinds of situations, including conflict, bullying, healthy relationships, etc.

BPS is working on a more unified social-emotional curriculum to give students the same tools for handling conflict, for example, from grade K through grade 12.

In Bismarck Public Schools, there's also a component on how to recognize, report, and refuse to be bullied, as well as what a bystander can and should do if he/she sees bullying.