

# Oxbow High School

## Bullying and Harassment Prevention

**"Bullying happens.....whenever someone uses his or her power unfairly and repeatedly to hurt someone."**

The administration, teachers, guidance department and support staff are committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment at Oxbow High School. Bullying and harassment are clearly at odds with this goal, and, therefore will not be tolerated at Oxbow High School or Oxbow High School sponsored events. However, we cannot do anything to prevent bullying if we do not know about it. The following information will help you identify bullying and harassment and give you information on how to intervene if you feel that you or someone you know is a victim.

### **Bullying and Harassment Defined:**

Bullying is aggressive behavior where a person is targeted by one or more people with repeated negative actions over a period of time. These are intentional attempts to cause discomfort or injury and can include name-calling, making faces, obscene gesturing, malicious ridicule, threats, rumors, physical hitting, kicking, pushing, and choking. Very often bullying will occur when there is an imbalance of power favoring the bully. Victims are often submissive and shy and fail to defend themselves.

**Intolerance will continue to be an issue in High School until everyone, the adults, the teachers, and the students can go about their own lives without judging others.**

### **Bullies Come in Different Forms:**

#### **Physical**

Physical bullies are action-oriented. This type of bullying includes hitting or kicking the victim, or, taking or damaging the victim's property. This is the least sophisticated type of bullying

because it is so easy to identify. Physical bullies are soon known to the entire population in the community. As they get older, their attacks usually become more aggressive.

## **Verbal**

Verbal bullies use words to hurt or humiliate another person. Verbal bullying includes name-calling, insulting, making racist comments, creating and spreading rumors and constant teasing. This type of bullying is the easiest to inflict on other teens. It is quick and to the point. It can occur in the least amount of time available, and its effects can be more devastating in some ways than physical bullying because there are no visible scars.

## **Relational**

Relational or relationship bullies try to convince their peers to exclude or reject a certain person or people and cut the victims off from their social connections. This type of bullying is linked to verbal bullying and usually occurs by (most often girls) spreading nasty rumors about others or excluding an ex-friend from the peer group. The most devastating effect with this type of bullying is rejection by a peer group.

## **Reactive victim**

Reactive victims are a cross between being a bully and a victim. They are often the most difficult to identify because at first glance they seem to be targets for other bullies. Reactive victims often taunt bullies, and bully other people themselves. In some cases, reactive victims begin as victims and become bullies as they try to retaliate. A reactive victim will approach a person who has been bullying him/her and say something like, "You better not bug me today, otherwise I'll tell the teacher and boy, will you be in trouble, so you better watch out." Statements such as this are like waving a red flag in front of a raging bull, and may provoke a bully into action. Reactive victims then fight back and claim self defense.

## **Types of Bullying or Harassment:**

**Cyber** -Through email, instant messaging, Internet chat rooms, and Facebook, cyber bullies forward and spread hurtful images and/or messages. Bullies use ever-changing electronic technology to harass victims at all hours and in wide circles of bystanders.

**Emotional** -Can be more subtle and can involve isolating or excluding a person from activities (i.e., shunning the victim in social environments) or spreading rumors. This kind of bullying is especially common among girls.

**Physical** -Can accompany verbal bullying and involves things like kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, hair pulling, or threats of physical harm.

**Racist** - Use of racial slurs, offensive gestures, or making jokes about a person's color,

cultural traditions, or heritage.

**Sexual** -Involves unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or inappropriate comments or gestures.

**Verbal** -Usually involves name-calling, incessant mocking, and laughing at another's expense

## **If you are being bullied:**

### **Always tell an adult:**

It's hard to talk about serious things with adults sometimes, but they can help put a stop to bullying. Tell an adult that you trust and can talk to: your parents, your teacher, your guidance counselor, your coach, your neighbor. If you've told an adult before and they haven't done anything about it, tell someone else. And if you're afraid to tell an adult that you have been bullied, get another person such as a friend or a sister or brother to go with you. Having someone else there to support you can make it less intimidating. Tell the adults exactly what has happened, who did the bullying, where and when it happened, how long it's been happening to you, and how it makes you feel. If you talk with an adult at your school, ask them what they will do to help stop the bullying. It is their job to help keep you safe. Most adults really care about preventing bullying and will do everything they can to help you.

### **Stay in a group:**

Kids who bully like to pick on kids who are by themselves a lot because it's easier and they're more likely to get away with their bad behavior. If you spend more time with other kids, you may not be an easy "target" and you'll have others around to help you if you get into a difficult situation!

## **If it feels safe, try to STAND UP to the person who is bullying you or for the person that is being bullied:**

If the person who is bullying you thinks you won't do anything about it, they are more likely to keep picking on you. This doesn't mean you should fight back or bully them back. Instead, tell the person bullying you that you don't like it and that they should stop! Keep it simple. You might just say, "**STOP!!!**", and then walk away. If possible, try to talk to them in a calm voice, because people who bully like to see that they can make you upset. If you don't act upset they will tire of it and leave you alone. If you're afraid to talk to the person who is bullying you by yourself, then you should ask someone else to be there with you. Bullies are more likely to listen, and less likely to bully you, when you're with someone and not alone. If you're not comfortable standing up to someone who has bullied you, that's definitely OK! Just walk away. But be sure to tell an adult!! You don't need to deal with this alone!!

### **If you are being bullied on-line, don't reply:**

Replying may actually make the bullying worse. Instead, be sure to tell a family member or another adult you trust. If possible, block any more communications from this person. (For

example, it might be a good idea only to accept messages from people you know.) Save evidence of the bullying. If you get a nasty e-mail, print it out or save it so that you can show it to an adult.

### **Join Clubs/Activities:**

Join clubs or take part in activities where you'll meet other teens. Sometimes it can help to join clubs or take part in activities that interest you. Think about joining a sports team, taking an art class, or joining a club for example. You can meet other teens who share your interests and you might make some good friends!

**How far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong, because someday in life you will have been all of these.**

- George Washington Carver

### **What NOT to do if you are bullied:**

- ∞ Don't think it's your fault and don't believe the insults about you. Nobody deserves to be bullied!
- ∞ Don't fight back or bully a person back. This probably won't make things any better and it might get you into big trouble. Besides, you should try to act better than the person who bullies you.
- ∞ Don't keep it to yourself and just hope the bullying will "go away." It's normal to want to try to ignore bullying and hope that it will stop—or hope that the person will start to pick on someone else. Often, bullying won't stop until adults and other kids get involved. So, be sure to report the bullying.
- ∞ Don't skip school or avoid clubs or sports because you're afraid of being bullied. Missing out on school or activities that you enjoy isn't the answer. You have a right to be there!
- ∞ Don't think that you're a "tattle tale" if you tell an adult that you've been bullied. Telling is NOT tattling! It's the right thing to do.
- ∞ Don't get into a fistfight with a bully or try to retaliate in other ways.
- ∞ Don't hurt yourself. Some kids who are bullied get so sad and depressed that they may try to hurt themselves because they think there is nothing else they can do. This definitely isn't the answer. Talk with an adult immediately and tell them how you are feeling. They can help stop the bullying.
- ∞ Don't overestimate how much power a bully has over you.
- ∞ Don't waste time in places online where bullies target you.
- ∞ Don't be afraid to think of new ways to solve the conflict.

### **What to DO if you are bullied:**

- ∞ Do get real about bullying and how it makes you feel.

- ∞ Do learn to say and believe good things about yourself.
- ∞ Do speak confidently when telling a bully not to bother you.
- ∞ Do work on developing at least one good relationship with a classmate, neighbor, teacher or older mentor.
- ∞ Do walk or run away if a bully tries to hurt you.

## How to **REPORT** bullying or harassment at OHS:

- ∞ Write it down: who, what, where and when
- ∞ Find witnesses
- ∞ Report the bullying or harassment immediately to an administrator , guidance counselor, teacher, nurse, or other staff member at Oxbow High School

## **BE DIFFERENT BUT GET ALONG!**

***Compassion, kindness, and concern can be found everywhere in America. If we learn anything from the tragedy of September 11, 2001 it is that our time on earth is short so there is simply no time for hate.***

Sandra Dahl, Widow of Jason Dahl, Pilot of Flight 93

## **What is the HARM in being a bystander?**

Bullies feed off the power they have over a victim. By not intervening when you witness bullying or harassment, you are passively condoning and supporting the behavior. This gives the bully an even stronger sense of power and might lead to an increase in bullying. You can stop bullies in their tracks by:

- ∞ Refusing to participate, even passively, in bullying behavior
- ∞ Not laughing at or accepting comments that make fun of or hurt others
- ∞ Telling the bully on the spot that the behavior is wrong and makes you feel uncomfortable
- ∞ Standing up for the victim

**Being a victim of bullying can have lifelong effects.**

# Do YOU bully or harass others?

If you're not sure if what you're doing is really bullying or harassment, then think about how you treat others. If you are hurting or threatening others in some way and using your size, strength, power or popularity to do it - you're probably bullying someone!

Hurting and making others feel bad is NEVER acceptable. Just admitting that you are doing things to harm others takes some guts. But that's not enough. Trying to find out what you should do to change the way you're acting is a step in the right direction! So check out these tips ... they'll help you to start treating others with the respect they deserve.

Think about what you're doing and how it affects others. If you think calling others names is really funny, or if you think pushing, hitting, or stealing from others is harmless, you've forgotten what it feels like to be hurt yourself! Teasing, hitting, keeping others out of a group - all of these things can hurt someone. All of us have been hurt at one time or another and we all know how it feels! So the next time you are about to bully someone:

- ∞ think about how it must make them feel
- ∞ don't do it.
- ∞ AND get yourself some help!!

Making other people feel badly should never make you feel good. If it does, or if you're not really sure why you bully others, you need to talk to someone about it. Whether it is your parent, a teacher, a coach, a club advisor, a guidance counselor, or another trusted adult, you should tell someone how you've been acting so that they help you deal with it and how to change the way you treat others.

## Teachers Can Help Eliminate School Bullying

- ∞ Be a positive role model. A teacher is in a position of power; make sure that your actions/interventions do not make you an unsuspecting bully.
- ∞ Ensure that students understand that you take bullying very seriously and that it is not allowed in your classroom.
- ∞ If you witness bullying, intervene immediately, but in a manner that supports and protects the victim while defusing the incident.
- ∞ Stand between the bully and the one being bullied to block eye contact and stop the behavior. Without putting students on the spot, use a matter-of-fact tone to state the behavior you witnessed and why it is unacceptable.
- ∞ Deal with perpetrators, the witnesses, and the victims in private. It can be embarrassing to be lectured or questioned in front of other students.
- ∞ Praise/recognize bystanders who make a positive intervention to curtail bullying; make or model suggestions for those who don't.
- ∞ Do not require students to apologize or make amends during the heat of the moment. Do not require mediation or face to face contact between the bully and the victim. this is

not appropriate in a situation of bullying and harassment. Have logical consequences for the behavior. Let the perpetrators know that you will be watching to make sure there is no continuation of the behaviors or retaliation against the victim or bystanders. Notify colleagues of the incident.

- ∞ Follow up with victims to make sure that they remain safe and secure, and feel that the behavior has stopped and/or been dealt with successfully.

## **What Should Parents Know About Bullying?**

Parents are often unaware of a bullying problem and rarely discuss it with their children. Additionally, students typically feel that adult intervention is infrequent and ineffective and that telling adults will only bring more harassment from bullies, and therefore suffer in silence. This section for parents offers advice on how parents can prevent bullying and intervene when it becomes a problem for their adolescent, and suggests sources for further information.

### **Signs of bullying:**

- ∞ Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school.
- ∞ Refuses to go to school.
- ∞ Experiences a loss of appetite.
- ∞ Appears anxious and/or suffers from low self-esteem.
- ∞ Have few, if any, friends with whom he or she spends time.
- ∞ Complains frequently of headaches, stomach aches, or other physical ailments.

### **Strategies for parents in dealing with victims of bullies:**

- ∞ If your child tells you about a bullying problem, listen and take it seriously.
- ∞ Never tell your child to ignore bullying; teach appropriate ways to respond to defuse bullies.
- ∞ Offer comfort and let them know you are on their side and that it is not their fault.
- ∞ Encourage your teen to respond non-violently and assertively.
- ∞ Emphasize the importance of reporting bullying incidences.
- ∞ Recognize the emotional impact on you and your adolescent.
- ∞ Listen, empathize, and problem solve together.
- ∞ Teach them to have a strong sense of self.
- ∞ For bullying occurring at school; contact the school immediately and speak to the teacher and/or principal. Work with the school to ensure the safety of your child. Encourage the involvement of the parents of the child exhibiting the bullying behaviors.

### **Suggestions for parents in dealing with their child, the bully:**

- ∞ Contact your child's guidance counselor.
- ∞ Support the school's efforts to modify your child's behavior.
- ∞ Recognize that bullying is a real problem.
- ∞ Teach your children social skills. A confident, resourceful child/teen is less likely to bully.
- ∞ Don't model bullying behavior, either physically or verbally. Set a good example for

your adolescent.

- ∞ Clearly communicate to your teen that you will not tolerate behavior that hurts another person.
- ∞ Get familiar with the school's policy regarding bullying/harassment.
- ∞ Watch for symptoms of inappropriate behavior e.g. aggressive tendencies.
- ∞ Develop a consistent family rule system. When rules are followed use praise and reinforcement. When rules are broken, use consistent, non-hostile, logical consequences.
- ∞ Monitor and supervise your child's activities: TV viewing, video games and computer activities that might lead to aggressive or bullying behavior.
- ∞ Help your teen to be assertive and not aggressive.
- ∞ Nurture and model empathy.
- ∞ Teach and encourage friendship skills.
- ∞ Encourage opportunities to be a good citizen.
- ∞ Make time for your teen! Make time to listen and make time to talk!

### Resources:

<http://stoppingschoolviolence.com/ Stopping School Violence> – A good website developed by a Doctor and his wife about the problem of school bullying today, and many resources that they recommend on the topic including books and workshops.

<http://www.cyberbullying.org/ Cyber-bullying.org> – This website defines cyber-bullying: "Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory online personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others." They provide information on the facts of this problem, examples, explanations on how to handle this type of bullying and links to a variety of related resources on this topic.

<http://www.bullying.org/index.cfm Bullying.org-Where You Are Not Alone>-This organization provides a wonderful website for students affected by bullying and those trying to prevent or stop bullying in their school. They offer a wealth of information about what bullying is and resources on how to deal with and stop bullying including support groups, submission of students stories, poems, etc., information about bullying Awareness Week and much more.

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