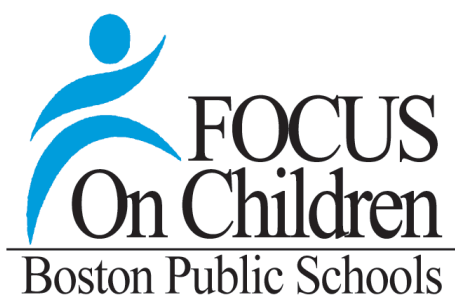


Embedding Bullying Prevention in Core Curriculum:

A Teacher's Guide K-12



Dr. Carol R. Johnson
Superintendent

Boston Public Schools
26 Court St.
Boston, MA 02108-2528
www.bostonpublicschools.org
617-635-9000



Introduction

In 2010, Massachusetts passed the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law. This law defines our legal responsibility and provides an opportunity for Boston Public Schools to enhance efforts to prevent and stop bullying. We all play a role in making sure that every student comes to school safe and ready to learn. Teachers can help create a bullying-free school environment—one that fosters positive learning experiences; promotes acceptance, tolerance and respect; encourages behaviors that support a nurturing and supportive school culture; and includes all students in meaningful ways.

One way teachers can help is by integrating messages about bullying prevention into their everyday instruction. This guide is designed to help teachers generate ideas for instruction that will help students learn about the issues of bullying and bullying prevention.

This curriculum guide provides information on the following:

- **Why include bullying prevention in the core curriculum?**
- **What bullying prevention messages are important to emphasize?**
- **How do these messages fit into the core curriculum?**

More information is available on the Massachusetts Department of Education website at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/>

Why Include Bullying Prevention in the Core Curriculum?



Each year millions of children and youth experience the humiliation and devastating effects of bullying.

Student rates of having bullied others or having been bullied at school (at least once in the last 2 months):¹

- **21%** for **physical** bullying
- **54%** for **verbal** bullying
- **51%** for **relational** bullying
- **14%** for **cyberbullying**

Over **40%** of school **staff** indicated that bullying was a **moderate** or **major** problem in their school.²

Given that much bullying takes place in school, educators have been asked to respond.

Teachers can help by embedding bullying prevention messages in their curricula.

School should be a safe place where students learn social and emotional skills as well as academic lessons. It can also be a place where students can learn that bullying is an unacceptable behavior and what to do if they are bullied or if they witness bullying. These messages can be introduced in anti-bullying and violence prevention curricula and reinforced in language arts, science, social studies, and other subjects.

¹ Wang, J., Iannotti, R., & Nansel, T. R. (2009). School bullying among adolescents in the United States: Physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 4*, 368–375.

² Gulemetova, M., Drury, D., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2011, March 10). Findings from the National Education Association's Nationwide study of bullying: Teachers' and education support professionals' perspectives. A paper presented at the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention, Washington, DC.



Bullying Prevention Messages

Through language arts, social studies, or science lessons, students can grapple with the following questions: What is bullying? Who is involved in bullying? Who gets hurt? What are the effects? How do you stand up to bullying? The messages conveyed often will be in response to these questions.

What is bullying?

Bullying is a form of emotional or physical abuse that has three defining characteristics:

- **Deliberate:** A bully's intention is to hurt someone.
- **Repeated:** A bully often targets the same victim again and again.
- **Power imbalanced:** A bully chooses victims he or she perceives as vulnerable.

Bullying is different from conflict, fights, or disagreements. It must meet the above criteria.

Bullying is used to assert or gain power.

Bullies like to set the rules, and they expect others to follow them.

This allows them to demonstrate that they have the power to control the people around them.

It may involve:

- **Physical bullying:** Poking, pushing, hitting, kicking, beating up
- **Verbal bullying:** Yelling, taunting, name-calling, insulting, threatening to harm
- **Relational bullying:** Ignoring, excluding, spreading rumors, telling lies, getting others to hurt someone
- **Cyberbullying:** Sending or posting hurtful, embarrassing, or threatening text or images using the Internet, cell phones, or other digital communication devices

Bullying occurs in many different forms, with varying levels of severity.



Bullying Prevention Messages (continued)

Who is involved in bullying?

Those who bully, are bullied, and witness bullying may play different roles in a bullying situation.

Bullies:

- Select and systematically train their victims to comply with their demands
- Seek active encouragement, passive acceptance, or silence from bystanders

Bullies can be girls and boys of all ages, sizes, and backgrounds.

Victims:

- Reward the bully by yielding control and showing signs of intimidation
- May fail to gain support from bystanders
- Sometimes avoid reporting the bullying
- Often are students who appear different and can include students with disabilities; students of ethnic or racial minorities; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth

Some children are more likely than others to be victimized because they appear different from their peers.

Bystanders:

- See or hear about bullying
- May exacerbate a situation by providing an audience or failing to say anything
- Can be actively complicit if encouraging or joining in
- Sometimes discourage the bullying by defending the victim or redirecting the situation away from bullying
- Can rally support from peers to stand up and/or report bullying

Bystanders have the power to play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying.



Who gets hurt? What are the effects?

Bullying is associated with some immediate and long-term effects for those who bully, their victims, and bystanders.

Bullies:

- Are less likely to develop social skills of reciprocity, empathy, negotiation, and trust
- Are generally not well liked in high school
- Are more likely to associate with aggressive friends
- Are at an increased risk for alcohol and drug abuse
- Are more likely to get into fights
- Are more likely to abuse their intimate partners in adulthood

Victims:

- Are more likely to show signs of depression and anxiety
- May feel sad or lonely, experience trouble sleeping, and lose interest in activities that once brought them joy
- Have increased thoughts about suicide
- Are more likely to have physical health complaints
- May refuse to go to school and struggle academically
- May retaliate with violence toward others

Bystanders (who witness bullying):

- Are more likely to use tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Are more likely to feel depressed and anxious
- Are more likely to miss or skip school

Bullying directly or indirectly affects every student in the school—undermining children’s safety, sense of belonging, feelings of value, and ability to learn. It creates a climate of fear and disrespect that spreads throughout the school and extends through the community.



Bullying Prevention Messages (continued)

How do you stand up to bullying?

*Bullying can be stopped when victims
and bystanders stand up against it.*

When teachers raise and discuss issues of bullying with students, it's important to explain that potential victims can protect themselves by learning to respond assertively. Assertiveness means expressing one's feelings and defending one's rights while respecting the feelings and rights of others.

Assertive responses neither provoke the bully nor reward him or her with submission. When teaching about issues of bullying in, for example, literature and history, it's important to help students understand the differences between submissive, aggressive, and assertive responses to bullying. Encourage students to think about alternative ways to respond to a bully's provocations.

What to tell students:

- **Bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.**
- **If a bully bothers you, it's OK to stand up for yourself, walk away, or ask a friend or adult for help.**
- **Responding to bullying by fighting back doesn't usually work—and may make matters worse.** Violence encourages more violence and fails to solve problems.
- **It is important to report bullying when you see it and when you hear about it.** Telling is not tattling.
- **Bullying does not have to happen.** Working together with adults and peers, there are specific things you can do to prevent and stop bullying.



Victims are not powerless—there are specific things they can do to stop bullying.

Victims should not respond by giving in, getting upset, or fighting back—this encourages bullying. Instead, victims should try to stay calm and be assertive. Sometimes the best way to respond to bullying is by not responding—just walk away.

When confronted with bullying, victims can:

- Take a deep breath and keep cool
- Size up the situation by checking their feelings, getting the facts, and understanding where others are coming from
- Think it through by weighing options and consequences
- Do the right thing by acting on the best option and reflecting on what they did and how it worked
- Get help from others if needed

Bystanders have the most power to turn a bullying situation around.

Bystanders can directly intervene by:

- Discouraging the bully
- Defending the victim
- Redirecting the situation away from bullying
- Rallying support from others to help
- Reporting the bullying to an adult

How Do Bullying Prevention Messages Fit into the Core Curriculum?



One way to promote bullying prevention is for teachers to include bullying prevention messages in their lesson plans.

The following link leads to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The subject and grade curriculum includes bullying prevention messages. There are many other ways to include these messages in daily lessons.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>

Lesson Ideas

This section includes suggestions for how to embed bullying prevention messages in the curriculum throughout the school year.

English Language Arts

Short stories, poems, and novels at all grade levels feature bullying themes. Many students may have personal experiences with bullying situations—as bystanders, victims, or bullies—and so will be able to relate to the reading and associated discussion and writing activities. Have students:

- Write a letter to a character in a book to help them resolve a bullying situation.
- Read a short story or novel with a bullying theme. Ask students to choose one character and describe her or him as a bully, victim, or bystander. Students should provide evidence from the text to support their assertions.
- Write a reflective essay recounting their own experience as a bully, victim, or bystander and their feelings during that experience.
- Interview a family member or fellow student and detail that person's experience with bullying. Interview questions can be either teacher or class generated. Have the class record the different emotions of each person interviewed.

Bullying behaviors are learned and can be unlearned and prevented.

Bullying spreads if supported or left unchecked as habits of thinking and behaving become entrenched. However, just as acceptance of bullying can spread, so can the commitment to prevent and stop bullying.



World and U.S. History

History contains multiple events and periods where people manifested bullying behavior, especially the bullying of one group by another. Such abuse of power often presents as social injustice, military force or failed diplomacy. With students:

- Focus on a historical event and determine who are the bullies, the victims, and the bystanders. Describe the characteristics of each.
- Pick a historical figure and ask students to write a persuasive argument about her or his role as a bully, victim, or bystander.
- Discuss a particular foreign or domestic policy of the U.S. government. Ask students to debate whether our actions were those of a bully, a victim, and/or a bystander.

Current Events

Many social issues or relatively current events present opportunities to examine bullying behavior. Have students:

- Write a letter to the editor taking a significant event or person in the news and either defend or denounce her or his role as a bully, victim, or bystander.
- Prepare a one-minute oral presentation defending or denouncing the U.S. military presence in a foreign land from the bully, victim, and/or bystander perspective.

In some cases, bullying is not clear cut, and students and teachers may not always agree that an incident really involves bullying. In these cases, agreement is not essential. The conversation is what's most important. Including bullying prevention messages in all subjects lets students know that bullying prevention requires ongoing work. This work helps create caring, sensitive communities where bullying is not tolerated for any student.

How Do Bullying Prevention Messages Fit into the Core Curriculum? (continued)



Life Sciences

Particularly relevant are theories of evolution and associated principles of natural selection, adaptation, and cooperation. Students may examine ways in which animals behave in supportive versus aggressive fashion toward each other.

Have students:

- Examine an example of our latest effort to protect the environment. Who assumes the role of bully, victim, and bystander?
- Explore how bullying is maladaptive versus adaptive. Ask students to relate to principles and theories of evolution.
- Document the number and location of bullying incidents they observe in school and prepare a presentation using the data they collected.



Resources

Lesson Ideas

Detailed lesson plans and activities that blend bullying prevention messages with different subject areas can be found on the Internet. The following are some examples of these lesson plans and activities for literacy in English language arts, history/social studies, and science instruction.

English Language Arts Lessons

Classroom resources on using English literature to teach bullying prevention

ReadWriteThink

International Reading Association/National Council of Teachers of English

http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?q=bullying&resource_type=6&sort_order=relevance&old_q=&srchwhere=with-filter

The Literature of Bullying (Grades 6–8)

Teaching Tolerance

<http://www.tolerance.org/activity/literature-bullying>

Teaching Guides to Literature about Bullying

TeacherVision

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/bullies/school-safety-month/65589.html?detoured=1>

Words that Heal: Using Literature to Teach Bullying Prevention

Anti-Defamation League Curriculum Connections

http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/winter_2005/

History/Social Studies Lessons

Classroom resources on using history/social studies to teach bullying prevention

One Survivor Remembers: Bullies and Bystanders (Grades 6–12)

Teaching Tolerance

<http://www.tolerance.org/activity/one-survivor-remembers-bullies-bystanders>



Resources (continued)

Speak Up, Speak Out: Robert F. Kennedy, Champion of Social Justice (Grades 4, 8, and 11)

New York State United Teachers

http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/rfk_10681.htm

Classroom Curricula on Social Justice

Teachers for Social Justice

<http://www.teachersforjustice.org/search/label/all%20curriculum>

Martin Luther King, Jr.: Lesson Plans and Teacher Guides

National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/lessonplansandteacherguides.htm>

Putting the Movement Back into Civil Rights Teaching

Teaching for Change

<http://www.civilrightsteaching.org/>

Resources on Bullying and Cyberbullying

The *New York Times* Learning Network

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/28/resources-on-bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

Teaching a People's History: Teacher Guides and Activities

Zinn Education Project

http://zinnedproject.org/posts/category/list_resources/teaching_guides

http://zinnedproject.org/posts/category/list_resources/teaching-activity-pdfs

Science Lessons

Classroom resources on using science to teach bullying prevention

The *New York Times*: The Learning Network

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/28/resources-on-bullying-and-cyberbullying/>



Bullying & Violence Prevention Websites

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

www.casel.org

Cyberbullying Research Center

<http://www.cyberbullying.us>

Education.com/Bullying at School and Online

<http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/>

Education Northwest

<http://educationnorthwest.org/resources/topic/182>

Eyes on Bullying

www.eyesonbullying.org

Facing History and Ourselves

<http://www.facinghistory.org>

It Gets Better Project

<http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>

National Bullying Prevention Center

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying>

National Crime Prevention Council

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying>

National Education Association's National Campaign Against Bullying

<http://www.nea.org/home/NEABullyFreeSchools.html>

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

www.safeyouth.org

StopBullying.Gov

www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov



Resources (continued)

Online Guides and Professional Development

The ABC's of Bullying: Addressing, Blocking, and Curbing School Aggression

CSAP's Prevention Pathways

http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/bully/bully_intro_pg1.htm

Bullying: A Module for Teachers

American Psychological Association

<http://www.apa.org/education/k12/bullying.aspx>

Eyes on Bullying Toolkit

Bullying Prevention and Research Institute, Education Development Center, Inc.

<http://www.eyesonbullying.org/pdfs/toolkit.pdf>

Books, Articles, and Teaching Guides

Coloroso, B. (2003). *The bully, the bullied, and the bystander: From preschool to high school, how parents and teachers can help break the cycle of violence*. New York, NY: Harper Resource.

Education Development Center, Inc. (2004). *The MetLife Foundation Read for Health Program: Taking action to stop bullying: A literacy-based curriculum module*. Newton, MA: Author.

Haner, D., Pepler, D., Cummings, J., & Rubin-Vaughan, A. (2010). The role of arts-based curricula in bullying prevention: Elijah's kite—A children's opera. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 25*, 55–69.

Hillsberg, C., & Spak, H. (2006). Young adult literature as the centerpiece of an anti-bullying program in middle school. *Middle School Journal, 38*, 23–28. <http://www.nmsa.org/Publications/MiddleSchoolJournal/Articles/November2006/Article3/tabid/1093/Default.aspx>

Horne, A. M., Bartolomucci, C. L., & Newman-Carlson, D. (2003) *Bully busters: A teacher's manual for helping bullies, victims, and bystanders: Grades K–5*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.



Humphrey, S. M. (2007). *Hot issues, cool choices: Facing bullies, peer pressure, popularity, and put-downs*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books (Book for Children Ages 9–12).

Morris, V. G., Taylor, S. I., & Wilson, J. T. (2000). Using children's stories to promote peace in the classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 28, 41–50.

Newman-Carlson, D. A., Horne, A. M. & Bartolomucci, C. L. (2003). *Bully busters: A teacher's manual for helping bullies, victims, and bystanders: Grades 6–8*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Ross, D. M. (2003). *Childhood bullying and teasing: What school personnel, other professionals, and parents can do* (2nd Ed). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Smith, P. K., Pepler, D., & Rigby, K., eds. (2004). *Bullying in schools: How successful can interventions be?* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Suckling, A. & Temple, C. (2002). *Bullying: A whole-school approach*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

***Eyes on Bullying* provides specific insights, strategies, activities, and resources to address bullying.**

To access this resource, please visit:

www.eyesonbullying.org

<http://www.eyesonbullying.org/pdfs/toolkit.pdf>



Notes



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Ed Donnelly, MEd; Kim Storey, EdD; and Ron Slaby, PhD
With assistance from Kimberly Dash and Susana Valverde

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Eyes on bullying toolkit. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

Photo by Burt Granofsky

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