Best Practices in Bullying Policy
Prevent School Violence Illinois (PSVI)

Loyola University Chicago School of Law’s
Corboy Law Center
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Bullying Policy Best Practices

Law/
District
Policy

Policy Implementation
Comprehensive School Transformation

Creating Optimal Supports for Effective Learning and Healthy Development
Peer Conflict and Bullying

• Peer Conflict
  – Equal Power
  – Not systemic or repeated
  – Spontaneous/Accidental
  – Usually instrumental in nature
  – Disengaging an option
  – Relationships is valued
  – Effort to Resolve
  – Normative → critical to development

• Bullying/Harassment
  – Imbalance of power
  – Occurs repeatedly or systemically
  – Intentional and hurtful
  – Motivation to gain power
  – Victim is vulnerable and has few options for disengaging
  – No remorse
  – No effort to resolve
  – Harmful to development
Bias-Based Bullying

- 2012 Bias-Based Bullying Survey revealed that 87% of Illinois students who reported bullying (57%) reported that it involved or was motivated by bias.
- Students who experience bias-based bullying demonstrate elevated mental health issues, increased absence from school, and are at increased risk for being threatened at school.
- Typical pre-packaged, “one off” bullying programs available to schools do not include or integrate information about the role of bias in bullying.
  - Generalized programs assume that we are “beyond” making derogatory remarks about race, sexual orientation, disability, etc. or that these issues are too sensitive to discuss in schools, and so we don’t discuss them with students.
  - This assumption leaves kids to their own devices on how they respond to difference and leaves the door open for kids to use these differences as the basis of torment.
Reporting

On the 2012 Bias-Based Bullying Survey, 81% of students reported that they were uncomfortable reporting bullying to an adult because

- Wasn’t sure if it was a joke
- Didn’t want to be considered a snitch
- Didn’t think it would change anything
- Thought getting adults involved would make things worse
- Worried about getting bullied for reporting
Retaliatory Aggression

- On the 2012 Bias-Based Bullying Survey, 61% of students reported that they had engaged in bullying against another student or students because they themselves had been bullied.
- Ecology of bullying is far different from the typical scenario of bully-victim-bystander.
Ideas for Putting Bullying Policies to Work

- Make policies and reporting forms easily available in numerous places (e.g., homepage of website, student handbook, visible in common areas of a school)
- Encourage schools to administer the Bias-Based Bullying Survey either along with the Illinois Youth Survey or as a stand alone survey
  - Conduct student focus groups to better understand information
  - Partner with students and families to develop solutions
- Encourage schools to make time for professional development on issues of
  - The impact of bias on bullying
  - Child and adolescent development and impacts on behavior
  - The differences between bullying and conflict, and the different ways to effectively intervene in both
  - The relationship between bullying and discipline
- Call PSVI!
Contact

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