

BULLYING PRESENTATION AND LAWS

A school's role is to educate students and this can best be accomplished in a safe environment. Beyond book learning, we are also responsible for teaching ethics, values, health, social skills, and such issues that go beyond our training in education. Our overall goal is always to create a safe environment for all and prepare students not only with academic knowledge, but also with life skills of tolerance and understanding, leading children to be productive and capable adults. We also need to protect those who might feel fearful in a school setting by giving them the tools to handle certain situations and educating them on how to be self advocates. This can be done most successfully when the entire school community accepts responsibility to ensure a climate of safety and acceptable behavior for all. Expectations must be clearly stated. Everyone must know how to respond to situations, model correct behavior and act appropriately to quickly stop inappropriate behavior. Schools must teach tolerance and understanding of differences and communicate expectations clearly. This has to be embedded, ongoing, and part of the accepted practice of a school's climate and community. It falls short to have a one day event to recognize something that we should be aware of and working on every day. Hiring a safe school environment expert and creating a safe school committee do not solve the problem that overseeing a positive environment every day within the whole community accomplishes.

Laws can be shaped to assist school leaders in creating positive climates to prevent any form of harassment or unwanted behavior in schools. Laws can assist schools by offering training through CAS or SDE to assist administrators and educators in:

1. Sharing already successful programs in place in schools
2. Providing workshops offering fresh ideas or new research from leaders in the field or colleagues
3. Assisting schools on how to store, track and use data within their buildings and between transition years as students move from one level to another.
4. Recognizing and publicizing model programs in schools
5. Supporting ancillary programs that can assist schools with solutions to bullying and educate and communicate with families (school resource officers, Youth and Family Services clinicians, school counselors, and psychologists).
6. Allowing support staff to facilitate mental health programs and initiatives for students and families

Rather than focusing on the consequences for bullying, we must focus on the problem so we can get to the root of the matter. Research has shown that a positive approach is most conducive to successful change. Schools need to be able to determine and assess when real bullying occurs and is an ongoing safety concern and move forward from there.

Connecticut could be a leader in this positive approach by following the State Board of Education Position Statement, February 2010, as well as by following the national standards for addressing bullying. Continued support from SDE of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) is a successful way to reinforce our goal of a positive school climate for all.

Donna Schilke, Principal
Smith Middle School
Glastonbury, CT

BULLYING PRESENTATION 2011

WE BELIEVE THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITY IT TO MAINTAIN AN ATMOSPHERE OF SAFETY FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

BE PROACTIVE VIA EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

- ✚ **Clearly Stated Policy:** Online and in student handbook
- ✚ **Internet Safety Night for Parents:** Presented by police
- ✚ **Internet Safety Presentation for Parents at Open House:** Presented by police
- ✚ **Student Handbook:** Reviewed with all students the first 2 days of school
- ✚ **School's Core Values:** Respect, Responsibility, Safety, Honesty (signage everywhere)
- ✚ **Administrative Council Meetings** – bi-weekly to create a positive climate and to discuss at-risk students and how to assist them. Council includes SRO, Youth and Family Services (also meet 1-on-1 with students during the school day), and school personnel.
- ✚ **Anti-Defamation League (ADL)** Assembly for grade 7 with follow-up, guided breakout sessions
- ✚ **DIRT Assembly** for 8th graders, addressing the core reasons for substance abuse such as self esteem, depression and a desire to find purpose in often chaotic life.
- ✚ **In-House "Just Kidding" Program** for grade 8 students
- ✚ **Adult-Student Mentor and Advocacy Program** (students assigned or informal)
- ✚ **Peer Mediation:** Students are trained for a full day on how to mediate with other students
- ✚ **Girls' Groups:** Organized by teachers; sponsored by YFS; full day self-esteem building and decision making workshop
- ✚ **LEAP (Leaders Engaged in Action Program):** Student leaders selected from a broad spectrum trained to carry out action programs throughout the year
- ✚ **Mentor Assistance:** 1 to 4 teacher to student ratio
- ✚ **Guidance and School Psychologists:** Social groups to help students develop social skills
- ✚ **Monitor Lunchroom:** Are students sitting alone?
- ✚ **School Resource Officer (SRO):** educating students in the classroom; acting of referrals; meeting with parents and students one-on-one.
- ✚ **Camera System:** Students are aware of this!
- ✚ **Parent Education:** Smith Parent Advisory Council (SPAC) serves as a forum for having conversation with police and helping them to communicate with their children. Also, parents informed in health classes and by DARE.
- ✚ **Formal Teacher Training**
- ✚ **Tracking Data** of students bullying and being bullied
- ✚ **Anonymous Reporting:** Quick and timely investigation of any reports of bullying
- ✚ **Outreach Social Worker (YFS):** Housed at Smith Middle School and able to make home visits and work with students

CONSEQUENCES FOR BULLYING:

- ✚ **Alternate Learning Classroom (ALC):** Learning reflection
- ✚ **SRO Referral:** Parents and students connect about gravity of incident. Can lead to student arrest or diversion program
- ✚ **Schedule Changes**
- ✚ **Bus Removal** (buses are monitored by cameras)
- ✚ **In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out-of School Suspension (OSS)**
- ✚ **Saturday Detentions**

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