

WHAT EVERY EMPLOYEE MUST DO TO ADDRESS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS

Adult intervention is one of the best defenses against bullying. School employees must be prepared to intervene when bullying happens and send the message that bullying is not okay.

Which BVSD employees have an obligation to respond to bullying?

All school personnel, including teachers, counselors, paraeducators, bus drivers, school nurses, and food service and custodial staff.

What is bullying?

According to Colorado law, bullying means “any written or verbal expression, or physical or electronic act or gesture, or a pattern thereof, that is intended to coerce, intimidate, or cause any physical, mental, or emotional harm to any student.”

When bullying is based on a student’s disability, sex, race, color, national origin, religion or gender identity it can also be illegal harassment under the federal civil rights laws.

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying and happens through the use of technology such as computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. Examples of cyberbullying include:

- Sending hurtful, threatening or mean text messages or instant messages

- Spreading rumors or lies about others on social networks
- Creating websites, videos or social media profiles that embarrass, humiliate or make fun of others
- Assuming another person’s electronic identity to post or send messages about others with the intent of causing harm

Cyberbullying is different from face-to-face bullying because messages and images can be sent 24 hours a day, shared instantly to a very wide audience, and sent anonymously.

Know where to look for bullying and closely monitor those settings.

Bullying is more likely to happen when large groups of students are supervised by a small number of adults, including during lunchtime, recess, physical education, and when students change classes. Bullying also happens in the classroom when the educator’s attention is diverted.

Students who are bullied tend to be more socially isolated than other children. They also may be shy, sensitive or insecure.

Data shows that children and youth who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, or are perceived to be so, can face unrelenting bullying. Students with

disabilities also have a higher risk of being bullied and sometimes aren't able to effectively respond or make a complaint.

Recognize these signs of bullying:

- Damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- Lost items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry
- Unexplained injuries
- Frequent complaints of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- Trouble sleeping or frequent bad dreams
- Changes in eating habits such as loss of appetite or hunger from not eating their lunch
- Hurt themselves
- Loss of interest in talking with friends
- Is afraid to go to school or other activities with peers
- Loss of interest in school or begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed
- Talks about suicide
- Feels helpless or like they are not good enough
- Blames themselves for their problems
- Suddenly has fewer friends
- Avoids certain places or parts of the building
- Acts differently than usual
- Decline in class participation
- Drops extracurricular activities

Know that Intervening Helps and Intervene – Be an Upstander!

There is no set formula for the best way to intervene when you suspect or observe a bullying incident. You must consider a

variety of issues, including the safety of all children, the age and gender of the children involved, the circumstances surrounding the bullying, the form and type of bullying, and the role of bystanders.

Here are some actions you may want to consider:

- Intervene immediately.
- Say "Stop that" or "We don't do that."
- Separate the students involved.
- Physical intervention is not usually recommended.
- Let the students know you are aware of their behavior.
- Do not immediately ask about or discuss the reason for the bullying or try to sort out the facts.
- Helping bystanders understand what has happened may be important for preventing future incidents.

Report the incident to the Principal, who will hold follow-up meetings to get the facts. The students involved (participants and observers) in the incident will be asked separately about what happened. The Principal will take steps to prevent future incidents.

To summarize:

1. Be on the lookout for bullying, including cyberbullying.
2. Be an upstander and intervene.
3. Report the incident to the Principal, who will investigate and take appropriate corrective action.
4. Help promote a school culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect.