

F.G. MILLER JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of Intent

F.G. Miller School is committed to providing a compassionate, caring and safe atmosphere for every student so that they may learn and succeed. Therefore, bullying of any sort is unacceptable in our school community. If bullying does occur, all incidents will be addressed quickly and fairly. Our goal is to enable students, staff and parents to identify bullying and address it appropriately.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be generally defined as repeated and systematic use of aggression, intimidation and/or cruelty with the result of hurting another person verbally, physically or emotionally. Bullying carries the ramification of causing pain and stress to the victim. It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. Bullying behaviour involves the following 4 key elements:

1. **Power Imbalance** – a power imbalance exists due to age, size, social status or some other factor
2. **Intent to Harm** – the purpose of the behaviour is to harm or hurt
3. **Deliberate** – the behaviour is deliberate, not accidental
4. **Repeated** – the behaviour continues over time, there is a real or implied threat it will not stop

Types of Bullying

Physical bullying includes pushing, kicking, hitting, tripping, punching or using any other sort of violence against a victim. An example would be shoving a victim into lockers while changing classes in the hallway.

Verbal bullying includes name-calling, ridiculing, using words to attack, threaten or insult. Examples would be spreading rumors, making fun of student's appearance, mannerisms or intelligence.

Relational bullying is deliberately ignoring, isolating, excluding or shunning. Examples would be deliberately leaving a child out of a game, purposefully ruining friendships, or hostile body language.

Intolerant bullying includes taunts, racial slurs and/or physical threats directed around a victim's race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation and gender expression.

Cyber bullying occurs through e-mail, text messaging and social networking sites. An example would be posting negative comments or pictures on the internet.

Sexual bullying is initiating and/or executing unwanted physical contact, making sexually threatening and/or abusive comments. Examples would be grabbing a victim inappropriately or using derogatory sexual labels.

Bullying is different from Peer Conflict and Mean Behaviour

Peer Conflict

Conflict between peers is a natural part of growing up. There will be times where peers disagree and cannot resolve the dispute on their own. In these cases adults need to help resolve the conflict. When dealing with a peer conflict, the children;

- usually choose to play or hang out together
- are both equally upset
- usually have equal power (similar age, size, social status etc)
- after calming down will be able to work through the conflict with the help of an adult

Mean Behaviour

Children may try mean behaviours to assert themselves by making fun of others, using a hurtful name or taking something without permission. Mean behaviour,

- usually seems to happen spontaneously
- may be aimed at any child nearby
- usually results in the perpetrator feeling bad once an adult points out the harm it caused

When adults witness mean behaviour they should respond quickly, firmly and respectfully to stop the behaviour and let the perpetrator know their actions are hurtful. It is important to stop this behaviour from developing into a pattern which can escalate into bullying if unchecked.

Teasing verses Taunting

Teasing

- contains an element of playfulness that is not present in taunting
- involves good natured back and forth banter
- maintains the dignity of everyone involved
- pokes fun in a light hearted, clever and benign way
- is meant to get both parties to laugh
- is innocent in motive
- stops immediately if one party becomes upset or objects to the teasing

Taunting

- is based on an imbalance of power and is one sided
- is intended to harm
- involves humiliating, cruel, demeaning or bigoted comments thinly disguised as jokes
- includes laughter directed at the target, not with the target
- is meant to diminish the sense of self-worth of the target
- induces fear of further taunting
- continues even after the person being taunted becomes upset or objects to the taunting

Warning Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Not all victims of bullying will tell an adult that it is happening to them. Often they will feel telling an adult might result in the bullying worsening. The victim might also be afraid no one will believe or support them, and in some cases, are too embarrassed to admit what is happening. Parents and staff should openly encourage students to report incidents of bullying that are observed or experienced firsthand. Even in the event that a student is not forthcoming about being bullied, there may be signs or symptoms that suggest a problem. Adults should be aware of these symptoms and what they signify, and should investigate immediately.

A child may be a victim of bullying if they;

- have unexplainable injuries or comes home with missing or damaged belongings
- have changes in sleep or eating patterns
- do not want to go to school (repeatedly claim to feel ill before school)
- refuse to talk about what is wrong
- begin to target siblings
- seem withdrawn, anxious or suddenly suffer from low self-esteem

It should be noted that the above signs may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

If a staff member becomes aware of bullying behaviour they should address it immediately in a firm respectful manner and then report the behaviour to the school administration. If a parent/guardian expects their child is being bullied they should contact school administration.

Resolution

- Parents/guardians of the student exhibiting bullying behaviour will be contacted and their aid will be enlisted to help put an end to the behaviour.
- The student exhibiting the bullying behaviour will meet with the school counselor to learn appropriate means of changing behaviour.
- There may be a range of disciplinary responses used to reinforce to the student exhibiting the bullying behaviour that it must stop.

After the incident has been dealt with, staff and counselors will monitor all students involved, which will include regular check-ins to ensure that bullying does not resume.