

BULLYING

Bullying is an act of repeated aggressive behaviour in order to intentionally hurt another person, physically or mentally. Bullying is characterized by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person.

Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus defines bullying as when a person is:

"...exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons." He defines negative action as "...when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways..."

Bullying behaviour may include name calling, verbal or written abuse, exclusion from activities, exclusion from social situations, physical abuse, or coercion. Bullies may behave this way to be perceived as popular or tough or to get attention. They may bully out of jealousy or be acting out because they themselves are bullied.

It has been noted that there tend to be differences in how bullying manifests itself between the sexes. Males tend to be more likely to be physically aggressive whereas females tend to favour exclusion and mockery, though it has been noticed that females are becoming more physical in their bullying, whereas conversely, males tend to opt for exclusion and mockery rather than physical aggression when the victim is perceived as too strong, or being physical would otherwise cause problems for the bullies (i.e., cowardice), and/or the bullies see physical aggression as immature (i.e., the bullying is occurring among adults).

The effects of bullying can be serious and even fatal. It is still a greatly un-researched area.

Never ignore bullying; bullies use provocation to elicit a response from their target and if you ignore it the provocation will get worse. When people say "ignore it" they mean "don't engage and don't respond". When bullying starts, recognise it immediately, keep a log of events, do your research, and get your parents and teachers involved. Be persistent. You have a right not to be bullied, harassed, assaulted or abused.

What can an adult do against child bullying?

- Listen and respond to all complaints from children, parents or adults responsible for children about bullying, even the seemingly trivial ones such as name-calling. Consistency matters!

- Support the adults who work directly with children in their constructive approaches to end bullying such as separating disruptive children, increasing supervision in bullying hotspots and placing vulnerable children in positive groups.
- Create an effective anti-bullying policy in your organization that clearly sets the limits on acceptable behaviour. Include meaningful consequences in the policy to help teach the aggressive children healthier ways of interacting.
- Allow time for the policy to be reviewed and agreed upon by everyone (including children).
- Ensure the policy is consistently and universally applied by all involved.
- Consider how you treat others in the organization and how you allow others to treat you. As a role model, your actions and reactions can influence how children relate to each other.

Dealing with instances during a lesson

If I perceive an act by a student to be bullying/harassment then I will deal with that incident immediately.

My first act will be to separate the children involved and partner them with other students. If I have a clear understanding of the relationship i.e. which one is the bully and which is the victim, then I will take the child who has been bullying off to one side and discuss their actions and do the same with the child who has been bullied.

I will then keep them apart for the duration of the lesson.

At the end of the lesson I will ask the two children to shake and make up but let them know I will be keeping an eye on them for the near future. I will also take their names and inform the Senior Instructor on the mat. The severity of the incident will determine if parents will be informed.

If I see persistent acts of bullying from a child after they have been warned the first time then I will inform the parents of that child, the children being bullied and also the Chief Instructors of the club and that child will be subjected to the clubs disciplinary actions.