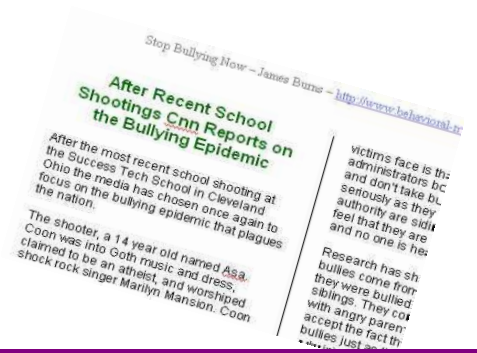


**COMPLIANCE**



## Stop the Bullying Epidemic Now Permanent Help not Temporary Relief

**RESPECT**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

This book provides practical methods of teaching respect, encouraging student responsibility, and building compliance.

Build Compliance, Teach Respect,  
Encourage Responsibility

It also contains a supplemental character education section with techniques for praising students and encouraging more positive classroom behavior. This book is designed to stop the bullying epidemic now.

**For everyone, educators, teachers, parents, students, kids, children.  
Are up for the challenge? Make a difference, pass this along!**

**THE BOTTOM LINE: "...I did no more than you let me do."**

**James H Burns MA, DHL**

**<https://www.bullyproofclassroom.com>**

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## **Bullying Behavior, Behavior That No One Forgets**

I speak to teachers all over New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia so I was thrilled when I got a call from my hometown school district, and they asked me to do a workshop for their teachers. Some of the teachers I had when I was a student were still there, and it was a lot of fun for me to be teaching them something. The topic that they asked me to speak about was “Student Behavior Management.” I started to talk about bullying which is a significant part of behavior management today, and what an impact this horrible behavior can have on the school climate, individual classrooms, students, teachers, and even the community where the students live.

When I gave the group a break one of the teachers in the audience came up to me and said, “When we were kids, you and I were both bullied by Tommy.” I looked at him and realized that he must have been the cousin of two boys that I played with when I was in elementary school. One of those cousins had been Tommy, who had bullied me. As soon as he mentioned Tommy and the fact that I was bullied by this boy I automatically started to look around to see if Tommy was there, even though I knew he probably wasn’t. This young teacher shared with me that even though Tommy was his cousin, Tommy had bullied him. He told me that his cousin used to hold him under water, push him, shove him, slap him, and to sum it all up, terrorize him.

Both of us agreed that we were still scared to death of him, even though we were grown men. We talked about how he had been much bigger than we were and used his size to intimidate and frighten us. The part of our conversation that concerned me the most was that even after more than 30 years we both still remembered every bullying thing Tommy had done to us; we still had the experience of being bullied tucked away somewhere in our minds.

It is no surprise to me that bullying has gotten worse over the years. Bullying has gotten so bad that the government has had to step in and make it mandatory that programs be created to stop bullying in our schools and in society. Not all people understand this behavior, and some people don’t even realize what bullying actually is. Many people don’t understand how they contribute to the continuation of the behavior, and in their own way make it worse.

What is bullying? Bullying among children is most commonly defined as intentional, repeated, hurtful acts, words, or other behavior such as name calling, threatening, and/or shunning committed by one or more children against another. These negative acts are not intentionally provoked by the victims, and to be defined as bullying, an imbalance in real or perceived power must exist between the bully and the victim. Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional, or relational. Bullying interferes with learning. In schools, acts of bullying usually occur away from the eyes of the teacher or responsible adults, consequently, if the bully goes unpunished, a climate of fear envelopes the victims. A comprehensive approach to bullying is necessary. Many children and adults seriously underestimate the effects of bullying and the harm that it causes the victims. Educators, parents, and children concerned with violence prevention should be concerned with the phenomenon of bullying because it is linked to more violent behavior.

## **Three Behaviors That must be developed in All Children**

- **Respect** - Is the child's behavior violating the rights and privileges of others? Does his/her attitude communicate ingratitude or disregard for others? (People)
  
- **Responsibility** - Are tasks being followed through to completion? Have I motivated the child to do the job initially by working with him, making it enjoyable and enabling him to sense the achievement for having accomplished the task?
  
- **Compliance** - Is the child being respectful to the instruction given from the adult in charged? Does he/she respond correctly to authority? (Parents, teachers, employers, law enforcement officials).

## **The Key to the Foundation of Character is Respect**

Educators today are under constant pressure to improve students' standardized test scores and to improve students' overall academic performance. If a student's test scores are not up to snuff or if students have academic difficulty that can't be explained, often, a principal will find his or her way into the classroom for an observation to try to find something wrong with the teacher's instructional methods. The question I would like to raise here is: who truly is responsible for a student's academic performance?

I was not the very best student. I struggled just to get C's and an occasional B. Never in all my time as a student did anyone question how good my teachers were. Instead I was questioned about what my responsibilities were as a student. When I was in elementary school, my father would know when marking periods were over and when report cards were issued. Once he had that report card in hand he would sit me down and go over my grades. If there was any grade that was below a C he would ask me what was going on, why that happened, and then he would discuss with me what my responsibilities were in order to raise my grade. I remember once I tried to pull a fast one and tell him that the teacher didn't like me. He didn't buy it, and told me that the teacher didn't have to like me, and I didn't have to like the teacher, and that my job was to work as hard as I could to understand what the teacher was teaching me. When I was a freshman in high school I failed Algebra I. I went home and told my father that it was no big deal, and that I would take it again in my sophomore year. He said to me, "No you won't, you failed because you didn't apply yourself." I ended up in summer school. My father told me that he would give me all the help that he could give me, but if I failed, I did it on my own, and of course, if I passed I did that on my own too. Summer school was the best thing that ever happened to me because the following year I got straight A's in Algebra II. It was a breeze. My father had taught me an invaluable lesson. He made me responsible for my own successes or failures in my education, and would not hear any excuses.

I have a friend who has a son who I have known since he was 11 years old. I never once heard him complain about homework assignments, not having enough time to study, poor teachers, or that he didn't understand something. He took responsibility for every aspect of his education. I looked at his high school transcript when he graduated, and there wasn't one A on it, there were only A+'s. He was the valedictorian of his high school class, and he is now a freshman at Dartmouth College.

Schools have the responsibility of giving their students the tools they will need to succeed academically. But like my father told me, a person passes or fails on his own. We need to make students understand that they are not only responsible for their successes, but for their failures as well. Success will come when they are prepared to learn and when they put forth their best effort. Those high standardized test scores will come when responsibility for success or failure is placed back where it belongs - on the individual student.

# Teaching Respect

Disrespect is really a symptom of a deeper problem going on within the mind of a child. Anger or guilt is at the root. Often teachers are not even aware that the child is angry but notice a change in their attitude, and are not sure where it is coming from.

Rules and regulations and compassion and understanding are critical for a successful classroom to run as well as for a successful relationship to develop between students and teachers. Anytime there is an imbalance between the two, disrespect will occur. We may think that we are doing a student a favor by letting him get away with certain behavior, too much mercy however will result in a disrespectful attitude. Autocracy will also result in a problem because the student will constantly be wrestling with what he has to do to please you. It is critical to balance the two and use as much authority and influence as needed.

Some suggestions for developing a classroom of respect and kindness are listed below. They are all relationship based and encourage positive interaction between students and teachers.

**PRAISE** – Begin a praise day and have all students write down something they like about another person in the class. It could start, “The nicest thing about you is” and have the students finish the paragraph. This encourages respect amongst students and makes it the norm in your classroom. One student gets a turn everyday. The teacher becomes quality control and filters out any negative comments. One student a day leaves with a folder of nice comments made about them. Of course teachers should use praise as a tool for motivation. Remember to praise character not achievement.

**KEEP PROMISES** – Students will wrap their life around promises you make to them. Make them very sparingly and very carefully. Consider all the variables and make sure you can control them. Don’t tell students they can bring candy to school for Halloween and then find out administration doesn’t allow it. Make promises and keep them.

**SINCERITY AND HONESTY** – Students can pick out a phony a mile away. Be sincere with your concerns and student abilities.

## **Teaching Respect- 2**

**SAY HELLO** – Say hello to all students. This encourages communication and helps to break down any walls between you and the student and helps build a positive relationship.

**CALL BY NAME – NO NICKNAMES OR DEROGATORY REMARKS**

Don't fall into the trap of calling students a name that their friends call them. Remember "Leave it to Beaver" his teacher did not call him Beaver she called him Theodore.

**AFFECTION** – Because of the fear of touching teachers have shied away from touching their students. We are not talking here about inappropriateness but rather a hand on the shoulder, a high five, or a pat on the back. This not only affirms but also makes the student feel that you recognize and are aware of them.

**LISTENING** – There are five types of listening, ignoring, pretend listening, selective listening, attentive listening and finally empathic listening. We all want to be empathic listeners. This is when we listen with our body posture and our eyes. We reflect back content and feeling. We don't offer any advice but rather use listening as a means of strengthening the relationship. We want avoid reading our own autobiography into the conversation.

**2-3-4-5 X 10** – Every day for ten days straight have a 2-3-4 or 5 minute conversation with one of your students just like you would with a good friend. Have several of these going on everyday. Around day eight the students will look to you for the conversation and develop a greater sense for you as a person.

**LITTLE COURTESIES** – The little things are the big things. Model.

## Encouraging Responsibility

Teachers must avoid the victimization mentality. It is toxically disempowering. Empowerment is so much more effective. And even if it were not, you would still be happier in an empowerment mode than a victimization mode.

One recent staff discussion demonstrated that a paradigm shift would be required for some teachers to leave the victimization realm. Believing that learning is prohibited because some students come from unstructured homes, from poverty, or have some other situation that cannot be changed is a mindset of victimized thinking – ON THE PART OF THE TEACHER. Certainly some home situations diminish optimum learning, but they do not prevent learning. Too often educators believe genetics, family, or environment determines a student's behavior or academic ability. Students are affected by these factors, but the question is do these factors influence them or determine them. If they are influenced they can always change their response to the influence.

Regardless of the situation, students can always be taught that they can be masters of their own fate, that they can be victors rather than victims. Students can be taught that when they enter the classroom, they have the power to choose to learn or not to learn. The choice is theirs.

Realizing that students choose their behavior keeps us from believing that students are victims and allowing them to absolve themselves of responsibility in the name of circumstances. If we believe that students are **not** capable of responsible behavior they will provide us with the evidence to support our belief.



## **Personal Responsibility - Why It's So Important**

It is very important to hold students accountable for bullying behavior. Have you ever been pulled over for speeding? If you have, you'll probably remember the anxiety you felt when you saw those flashing lights in your rear view mirror. You knew you were speeding, and you probably felt sick thinking about the fine you'd be paying, and the points you'd be getting that would drive your insurance rates even higher. You probably were getting ready to give the officer an excuse as he walked over to your car. Maybe you told him you were late for an appointment or to work. Maybe your excuse was that your kid was sick and you had to get home. After the ticket was issued you drove away shaking your head in disgust, and you reduced your speed. You inevitably vowed that from then on you would leave yourself more time to get where you needed to go so that it wouldn't happen ever again.

My question is, were you more upset that you were speeding or more upset that you got caught? I think the answer is obvious; you were more upset that you got caught in the act of doing something illegal. There was no real remorse for your actions.

The missing piece is that we need to follow rules or laws all the time, not just when we think someone is watching. Bullying is a behavior that is often done very covertly; it is done when no one is looking. Bullies are cowards and they need to be held accountable for their actions, but in many instances they're not, largely because teachers don't observe the bullying behavior. On the occasion that a bully is caught, and the parents of the bully are contacted regarding their child's behavior, the parent asks the teacher if they observed what their child did or if the teacher is relying on the information that was received from other students. The parents then become very defensive and confrontational and in their own way begin to bully the teacher, and leave the teacher feeling intimidated and fearful of them (the parents). But even worse, the result is that the teacher may even be left feeling of the student who is the bully. The teacher then becomes very reluctant to hold this student responsible for bullying actions in the future. The problem is that holding a bully responsible using relevant and consistent consequences is the only thing that will stop him from terrorizing other students. If the bully is not held accountable, then all we are doing is preparing him for a lifetime of irresponsible behavior. He will never have remorse for his actions and he will only be concerned about whether or not he is going to be caught.

## **Learn the Following:** Guidelines to Effectively Teach These Very Important Values

### **BE PROACTIVE NOT REACTIVE**

It is critical to understand what values you are trying to teach you students. If respect, responsibility, compliance, and truthfulness are qualities you want to build into your students teach them as a matter of structured lesson rather than react when students fail to exhibit these qualities. Keep character as a key component in your classroom and use it to promote positive relationships and behavior.

### **AWARENESS**

Get students to focus on their attention on their own behavior and how it affects others. Never, Never ask, Why did you do that? Always ask, what did you do? Too often when a student is asked why they did something it gives them an opportunity to alibi their actions and use circumstance or another person as a reason for their behavior. Asking what forces the student to focus on is own actions.

### **CLIMATE / INFLUENCE**

The two most important items in improving school and classroom climate are rules and regulations and compassion and understanding. If any one of these is out of balance behavior problems will occur. Influencing the choices students make can be accomplished when there is a balance between the two. Students develop greater respect and a sense of fairness when the behavior is dealt with in an objective manner and the teacher works to prevent the behavior from occurring again.

### **ASSUME NOTHING**

Assume nothing – Teach everything. When we give instructions we should never assume that all students heard or understood us. Teach and re-teach procedures, behaviors, and courtesies we want students to exhibit in our classrooms. The instruction, warning, and correction model should be used.

### **MAKE A PLAN**

Come up with a plan that encourages responsibility. Present the problem to the student and ask him if he has a solution. Usually students are aware of problems they have with their behavior and have problems with self-control. Assist the student in dealing with the problem and help him self-generate positive behavior.

## COMPLIANCE

**INSTRUCTION** — There are two basic methods of instructing a child by example or by teaching specific information. An adult who abruptly corrects a child assumes he always effectively communicated the correct information.

**WARNING** — Should be used to develop effective communication. It allows us to see life from the child's point of view. It should not be used as a threat; rather it should be used to determine if we communicated the correct information.

**CORRECTION** —If we do not correct inappropriate behavior by default we communicate agreement. We need to evaluate our motives for correction considering the three basic objectives: respect, responsibility, and compliance.

## GUIDELINES FOR CORRECTION

- Before correcting a student, again evaluate the goals and objectives consider compliance, respect, and responsibility.
- Don't correct the child in front of others
- Establish responsibility for the offense
- Visualize the ultimate benefit of correction
- Communicate sincere grief for the offense
- Use the least amount of correction needed to make your point making sure the correction fits the misconduct.
- Console the child after correction
- Assist in further restitution if necessary
- Evaluate your attitude and the child's response after the correction
- Keep in mind, a person relates to life on the basis of two motivations: what will I gain or what will I lose.

# COMPLIANCE THROUGH THE WARNING

The intent of the warning is not a prelude to punishment.

It is the final step of instruction to determine whether the instruction was clear or the non-compliance was willful.

- Does the student understand the three levels of discipline? Instruction, Warning and Correction.
- If non-compliance continues after the consequences:
  - Do not go back to the instructional or warning level, rather evaluate the consequences.
  - Consistency will motivate the child to comply when warned.
  - When the child understands you mean what you say and you will deal with the non-compliance as stated, the behavior will change.
- Questions to Ask:
  - What did you do?
  - What should you have done?
  - Were you right in what you did?
  - Were you disrespectful or irresponsible?
- If you are convinced that the child was not aware of any wrong doing, you can conclude one or more of the following:
  - My instructions was not clear,
  - He was being childish rather than non-compliant,
  - He was reacting to me personally-
  - I have been inconsistent,
  - I may have violated his sense of fairness.
  -

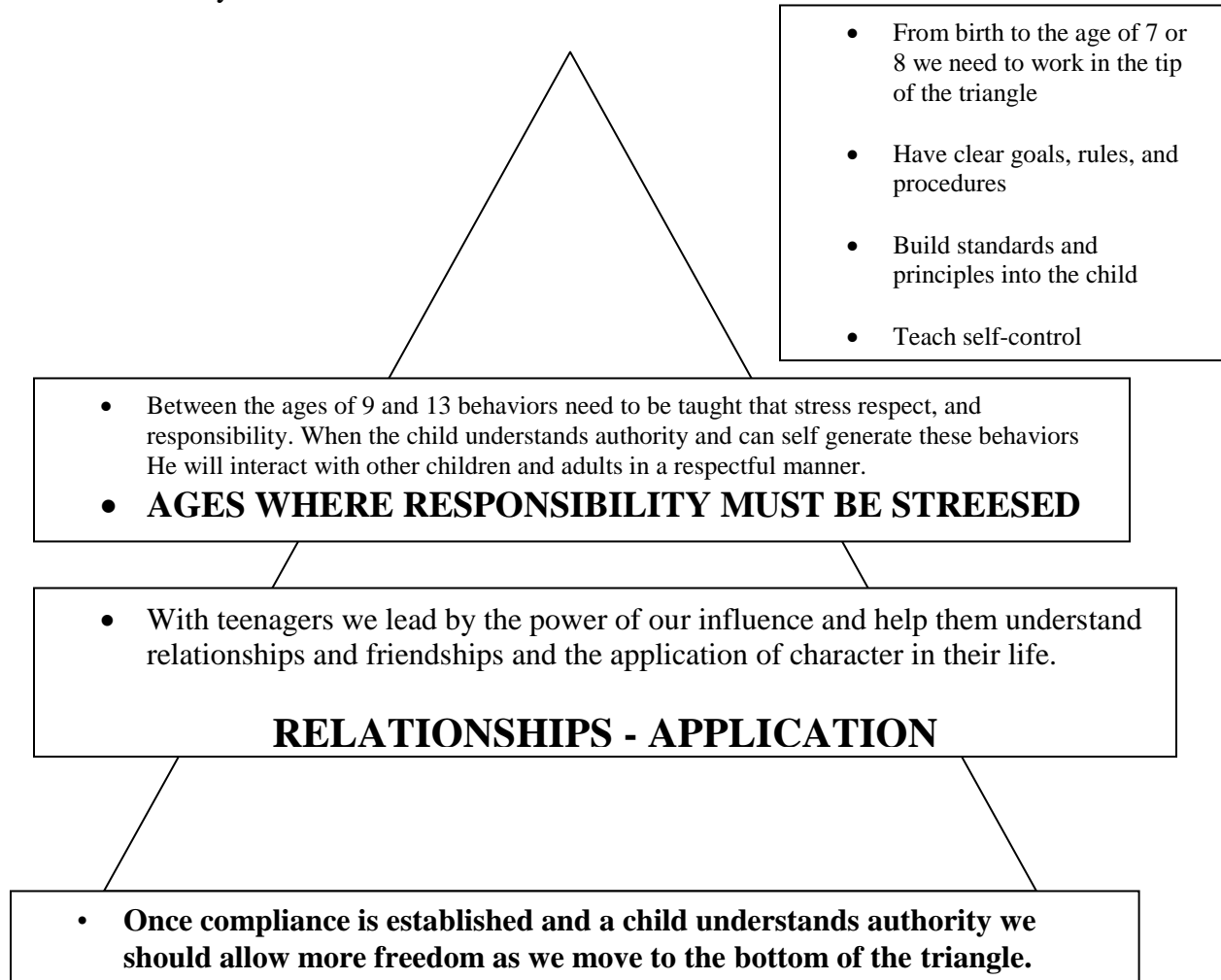
## ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF

What am I going to do if the child does not behave?

Pick your no's.

## Keys to the Foundation of Character

- **COMPLIANCE/RESPECT**-At a young age adults need to restrain inappropriate behavior and insist on compliance. We should lead by the power of our authority. Children enter mental puberty around 9-10 years old. This is when about 3% of their brain starts to think like an adult



Most children believe the way to get more freedom is to get out from under authority, e.g... Move out of their house, or do what they want in school. True freedom is a result of trust. Trust is built through compliance. The more compliant a child, is the greater the trust, and the more freedom he will have. There is a clear difference between freedom and liberty. Liberty is a condition of the environment; Freedom is a condition of the mind and soul. Children who exhibit non-compliant behavior are doing what they want in terms of the environment. Once this happens the child begins to experience guilt. The more guilt they experience the more angry and non-compliant they become. Is it any wonder that we are now experiencing a bullying epidemic and school shootings?

## **If We Think Kids Have a Choice, They Don't**

I have heard teachers and parents give their students and children ultimatums all the time: John, you either stop picking on Tim or else, the choice is yours, John.

Why does John have a choice?

Should we be giving John a choice?

There are some choices that children shouldn't be allowed to make because there is only one acceptable response. When it comes to respect and kindness, there should be no choice.

These are necessary character qualities that need to be expected by parents and teachers from children in the home and in school. If respect and kindness are not required kids will believe that they have a choice. Bullies, in particular, are always looking for a reason why they can bully their victims. Bullies need to be confronted about their behavior, and held accountable immediately. If not, the bully will come to the conclusion that he or she can say and do anything he or she wants, including the verbal, physical, and emotional bullying of others.

It is vital for parents and educators to realize that they need to have clear expectations that they enforce. In terms of bullying, consistent consequences must be imposed on children who bully other children.

Only when consequences are imposed will children learn that bullying will not be tolerated. There are certain behaviors and attitudes that everyone must exhibit which are non-optional; respect and kindness for others are two of them.

## Why Must We Bully Proof Our Schools?

- Every individual has the right to be spared oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation, in school and in society at large.
- Bullying is a precursor to greater and more dangerous violence, and it fosters intense misery among students.

### Highest Ranked Reasons for Being Bullied:

<b>Fourth through Eighth Grades</b>			
<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>Males</u></b>	<b><u>Females</u></b>	
<u>1</u>	didn't fit in	didn't fit in	
<u>2</u>	who friends were	who friends were	
<u>3</u>	physical weakness	clothes worn	
<u>4</u>	short- tempered	facial appearance	
<u>5</u>	clothing	overweight	
<b>Eighth through Twelfth Grades</b>			
<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>Males</u></b>	<b><u>Females</u></b>	
<u>1</u>	didn't fit in	didn't fit in	
<u>2</u>	physical weakness	facial appearances	
<u>3</u>	shorts- tempered	cried/emotional	
<u>4</u>	who friends were	overweight	
<u>5</u>	clothing	good grades	

## **Bullying: The Numbers Just Don't Add Up**

National statistics have revealed that 75% of teachers believe that they intervened in a bullying incident, but only 25% of students believe that their teachers have intervened to stop bullying from occurring. Why is the perception between students and teachers so different? In order to answer this question I think we have to understand the interventions that are used to stop bullying.

A typical bullying scenario goes like this. One child bullies another child. The child that was bullied reports the incident to his or her teacher. The teacher then speaks with the bully. The teacher now believes that the problem is taken care of and it won't happen again. The bully becomes angrier at the person who reported the bullying and continues to bully the same child, probably even worse than before. The child who was bullied believes that the teacher didn't do anything about the problem. It is irrelevant to the victim that the teacher is talking to the bully about the problem because the bullying continues.

In the mind of the teacher he or she intervened, by speaking to the bully. The teacher assumed that the bully would be compliant and actually stop the bullying. What's missed here is the fact that bullies are non-compliant; they are also disrespectful, and irresponsible. Speaking to a bully will never stop him. The only thing that stops a bully is a well thought out consequence that hits the bully right between the eyes.

Teachers and administrators who soft pedal and who believe that talking to a bully will stop the bullying are actually perpetuating the problem, and are in fact making it worse. If all bullies have to worry about is a talking to from their teacher or principal they will gladly take the chance and continue with their behavior. Until teachers and administrators stop talking and start acting there will always be a 50% discrepancy in the statistics between the perception of students and teachers.



## **Do We Really Understand the Bullying Epidemic?**

Often bullying can be viewed as child's play and just a normal part of growing up. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact teachers and adults in general who think about bullying in these terms really don't have a clue about this epidemic that is affecting children today in schools and in the communities in which they live. In order to fully understand this nationwide epidemic parents and teachers need to be better informed about the problem, then take steps to create an environment in school, in the home and in the community where bullying is not tolerated.

First and foremost everyone must view bullying a nationwide epidemic. According to the National Educational Association, more than 160,000 children stay home from school everyday due to bullying. 20% of all children say they have been bullied. A staggering 60% of middle school students say that they have been bullied, while only 16% of teachers and administrators believe students are bullied. These statistics are clear evidence that bullying is not a problem that can be ignored.

To understand this bullying epidemic further, we can look at each one of the parties involved in bullying. First and foremost is the bully. The bully is the perpetrator, the person who commits the offense. The victim or target is the person who is on the receiving end of the bully's hurtful actions or words. The bystander is anyone who stands by, watches silently, and does nothing, allowing the injustice to occur.

This nationwide bullying epidemic is exacerbated because often good lines of communication between parents and children are nonexistent. Children who are victims of bullies often do not feel comfortable reporting to their parents the bullying they are experiencing at school, including while they are on the school bus, the school playground, in the cafeteria during the lunch period, while walking to school or on their way home. Bullying unfortunately is not a topic that parents discuss openly with their children, and this only worsens the problem.

Often the bully comes from a home where there are serious problems. Bullies often come from homes where violence or abuse is present, where there is poor parental supervision or very little parental supervision, where neglect is apparent, or where parents or siblings exhibit bullying behaviors to each other. Home environments such as these can create anger and rage in a child that can transform him/her into the school yard bully.

Studies have shown that personality factors also play a role. Children who have an impulsive temperament are more likely to turn into a bully (Olweus, 1993). Bullies like to be in charge, dominate and assert their power. They like to win at any cost. Bullies crave attention, so they show off and act tough in order to get it from their peers. Bullies lack empathy for their victims and have difficulty showing compassion.

Bullies also believe that their victims provoked the attack and deserved the consequences. If these negative attitudes are not addressed during early childhood, society ends up paying the price when the bully leaves school moves on to adulthood...

Bullying is a problem of epidemic proportions. It is not to be taken lightly. Bullies who are allowed to get away with their behavior as children develop into bullying adults.

# Mission Statement

*Our goal is to make the school environment safe for children- both physically and psychologically.*

**1. Stop the behavior:**

There will be “no-bullying rules” enforced by staff members.

**2. What the students will do:**

The students will help others by speaking out and getting adult help.

**3. How students will be expected to treat one another:**

The students will use extra effort to include everyone.

## **A Bullying Intervention Model**

The following elements must be present in some form for a school to be even potentially safe:

- **Bullying is Unacceptable.** School personnel must set and enforce behavioral standards regarding the unacceptability of bullying.
- **The Empathetic School-** The notion of being “my brother’s keeper” must permeate a school. Teaching about interdependence and the worth of individuals must fill a school.
- **The Anti-Bullying Information Campaign-** Schools should kick off their anti-bullying campaign in a big way. A school could have a “No More Bullying Day,” with a special assembly including speakers.
- **Referral Mechanism-** A mechanism must be in place for bringing bullies and victims of bullies to the attention of helping professionals inside and outside the school.
- **Interventions and Strategies-** Schools must have various methods in place for dealing with bullies and their victims.

## **A Step-By Step Approach to Your School-Wide Anti-Bullying Campaign**

This system will be most effective if your Board of Education approves of it in advance. Inevitably when you try to impose consequences, parents will object. If your board of Education stands behind your program and everyone is on the same page, you will find that the efficacy of this program will be much greater.

- Kick off your anti-bullying campaign with an administrator or designated facilitator visiting each classroom or with an informational assembly with the purpose of introducing the concept of bullying, including what a bully, victim or target, bystander, or rescuer is, and that your school will be embarking on a campaign to “create a bully-free school.”
- Hold a staff meeting to explain various elements of the program to your staff, including any surveys you wish to use, referral forms, rules, consequences, etc.
- Distribute a set of anti-bullying rules (in manual) to each classroom, and go over them with the students in detail. Explain the consequences of breaking one of the rules in detail. You will have to decide on a set of consequences. Rules and consequences should be uniform throughout the school. Post the rules and consequences in each classroom.

- Send a letter home to parents (sample is in this manual) to introduce the notion that you are committed to creating a bully-free school. You might include the anti-bullying rules and your consequences as attachments to the letter.
- Form an anti-bullying group or club. The club will meet once or twice a week before school, during lunch, or after school. The club should have not more than 20 students in it unless you have two or more people leading it. You may want to require that students bring home permission slips that a parent/guardian must sign to give that child permission to participate in the club. Students can sign up for the club on a first-come, first-serve basis. Make it clear that students do not have to be the “bullies” to join the club. The club will be more successful if it is not solely comprised of “bullies.” You will then naturally achieve a cross-section of bullies, targets or victims, bystanders, and rescuers in your group. All will benefit from participation in the club. The members will decide upon a name for their club (i.e. Bully Busters, No Bullies Allowed Zone).
- Some possible club activities are: teaching strategies and techniques students can use for dealing with a bully, informative sessions that teach about bullying, activities that foster children’s friendship/relationship skills, teacher-led discussions, role-playing, writing and producing role-plays or a relevant play to be performed in an assembly or in individual classrooms, practicing social skills, learning about respect, responsibility, and compliance, participating in activities that increase students’ self confidence and self image, watching relevant documentaries or movies, participating in community projects or service, doing lesson plans from packet (you have the packet with lesson plans).
- Ideally you will have generated great student interest in the club. You can then rotate the whole group of students out after 1 or 2 months, and then start a new group.
- Simultaneously, you will continue to run your school-wide anti-bullying education campaign that all your students are a part of. You have already introduced the concept of bullying to your school, and the anti-bullying rules and your consequences are in effect. The following are suggestions for some activities you can run in your school-wide anti-bullying campaign:
  - Write a press release that you send out to local newspapers (a small, concise article that explains your school’s new anti-bullying campaign). A press release can also be sent for an individual event.
  - Hold your first annual anti-bullying poster contest. Each homeroom or class comes up with an anti-bullying poster. Give the contest a lot of hype. Choose a deadline; collect all the posters. Have all the posters displayed in one place. Invite various individuals to come to judge the poster for first, second, and third place. You might invite the superintendent, another principal in your district, an elected town official, a board member, someone from the police or fire departments, someone from your local newspaper. Display the winning posters prominently, and display all the posters throughout the building. You may want to hold a pizza party for the three classes that come in first, second, and third. You also may want to hook first, second, and third place ribbons onto their respective posters.
  - Run a different contest. Have each class create an anti-bullying pledge that has the chance of being adopted school-wide (sample pledges are in manual). Again, choose your judges. Select the pledge

you wish to be adopted. Then have a special “Adopt Our Anti-Bullying Pledge” day after you have selected the pledge you like. Invite various guests to be present when your entire student body “takes the pledge.”

1. Create a “Hands and Words Are Not For Hurting Wall.” This can be one large bulletin board, or individual bulletin boards displayed outside each classroom. Students will trace their hands on construction paper. On one hand the students will write the school’s pledge, and then sign their name under the pledge. On the other hand, they will write one thing they will commit to doing differently to “stop the bullying.”
2. Have the students create a box (or more than one if you want each classroom to have its own box) where any student can put something in writing on a piece of paper about a problem he or she is having dealing with bullying. Someone then will have to be designated who reads the notes and responds to them. One of the worst things that can happen is if a child reports a bullying incident to someone in authority in your school, and nothing happens as a result of the reporting.
3. Hold parent workshops that deal with bullying that explain the concept of bullying, what your school is doing about the problem, warning signs that may indicate to parents that their child may be a bully or a victim (in the manual), tips for parents on keeping their children bully-free (in the manual), and tips on how parents can bring out the best in their children (in the manual). These workshops can be part of your PTO night, or on a specified night for parents devoted only to this subject.

# Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you may know, bullying has been getting a lot of attention lately, but it is hardly a new problem. Bullies and their victims have been around forever. Attitudes toward bullying have changed and we now know that the consequences of ignoring bullying are potentially very serious.

What's new is our school's commitment to doing something about bullying. We at \_\_\_\_\_ School have recognized bullying as a serious problem and we are aware of the long-term effects it can have on our students and your children. As your child's (teacher, principal, counselor) I am personally committed to prevention and intervention and ask your support as we as a team combat this problem.

From time to time I will be sending home material related to our efforts here to create a bully-free school. I ask that you review them with your child and work with her/him in understanding the devastating effects of this behavior.

We are totally committed to keeping (School Name) bully-free. Thank you in advance for your support in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Teacher/Principal

## **Why is Having Consistent Consequences So Important?**

The consequences must impact the child so that he/she perceives that he/she will definitely lose something of real value or “consequences.” Remember a child looks at life from two points of view – what am I going to gain or what am I going to lose. If the consequence is not perceived in terms of being meaningful there will be no incentive in the future for the child to stop negative behavior.

The consequence must be imposed consistently and fairly to all, no matter who the child is. It is sometimes very difficult to impose consequences when one is dealing with either students who are typically “the good kids” or typically “the really bad kids. We can feel hesitant about imposing consequences on “the good kids” because we may have developed such a positive relationship with them that it becomes difficult to discipline them. We may not want to be seen as “the bad” guy by them. It may be very tough to impose consequences on the bullies because we ourselves can feel intimidated or even “bullied” by them into a form of submission.

Unfortunately, it becomes easier to ignore behaviors that we are cognizant we shouldn’t be ignoring. We may actually be worried about a potential negative reaction from the bully if we call him/her on the behavior, so we look the other way. When we look the other way, it becomes extremely obvious to others including the victim and the bystander. What we are doing in this instance is becoming an unwitting bystander or collaborator ourselves.

By our silence, we are in essence condoning the behavior we know is hurting an innocent person. The hurtful behavior will certainly not change, and it may in fact become worse or potentially more damaging, because we (who are in a position of authority) are in a sense giving the perpetrator permission to continue. In a worst-case scenario we may openly blame the victim rather than the bully.

We must become very aware of our own weaknesses, insure that our own good judgment prevails, and we must be strong enough to be fair.

# Sample Consequence Your School May Adopt for Confirmed Bullying Incidents

The consequences you decide upon must be communicated clearly, posted visibly and sent home to parents

- A letter of apology to be written by the perpetrator to victim.
  - Perpetrator must make a contribution in some positive way to his/her victim.
  - Morning or afternoon school detention, suspension, Saturday school, in-school suspension.
  - Possible reporting of incident to parents (of bully and victim) or police with possible charges filed and police report filed,
  - Removal or suspension from sports teams, band, chorus, forensics, etc. for a minimum of 30 days. For example even if the student is on the football team, and the incident occurs before or during football season, student will be suspended from the team for a minimum of 30 days.
  - Student is barred from going on a planned upcoming field trip.
- 1.
- Student is barred from attending an upcoming classroom party such as a Halloween party, or other holiday party. Instead a student must go to the office or another classroom during party time.
  - Student is barred from prom.
  - If the action is bad enough the student is barred from end of year activities.
  - Mandatory parental supervision of child, in the school everyday for one week.



## **“Why “Character is Everything”**

That which truly distinguishes one person from another is the force that is called character.

Character is more important than achievement.

Character affects thoughts decision, words, attitudes, goals, relationships, and actions. As people build character, the outcomes of their lives become more successful.

Good character is characterized by the constant striving to make the right choice.

A person with true character demonstrates qualities such as: honesty, reliability, diligence, respect and responsibility. In school, a student cooperates in a willing spirit with school regulations concerning attendance, property, and behavior.

Technology advances, information expands, and the world changes, but the building blocks for producing individuals of character do not change.

## **How Do I Build Character?**

**You Build Character** by identifying specific attributes that make a person of character.

You **Build Character** by focusing on one character quality at a time in order to understand its nature, importance, and benefits.

You **Build Character** by recognizing when students demonstrate exemplary behavior and praising them for it.

You **Build Character** by participating in service oriented activities. In short, you build character by doing.

## **Character and Achievement**

Achievement is the positive results of good character. The nature and quality of your character will determine the type of achievement that marks your life. Character is the causative force in a person’s decisions. Accomplishments are the effects of those decisions.

Having a beautiful and productive garden requires the selection, planting, and watering of good seeds; removal of unwanted weeds; and the continuing nourishment of the roots of the “good plants.” Therefore it is useless to motivate accomplishments without first and foremost encouraging good character.

Achievement must always be praised by praising the character traits of the individual that brought it about. Rather than telling a child “I am thrilled you got an ‘A’ on your math test”, it is more meaningful and fruitful to say “I am thrilled with your attentiveness and the diligent study habits you used to earn that ‘A.’

Achievement is the end result of the integrated efforts of everyone in a club, on a team or in a classroom. Achievement is based on skills, abilities, and opportunities, which differ from person to person.

Character however is not based on skill or ability, nor is it limited by opportunity. Character qualities can and should be developed by everyone, regardless of age, training, or position.

## **How to Praise Character**

When an individual is commended for his/her punctuality, he/she will be motivated to continue and even improve in that character quality. That quality becomes part of that person’s worth and identity.

Praise can be communicated through spoken words, in writing, through a timely smile or nod of appreciation, a hearty handshake, or the proverbial pat on the back. The number of ways that character can be identified and commended is limitless, and the more methods you employ, the more meaningful your praise will be.

As you observe students there are many things you can say that will show you have recognized qualities that could go unnoticed. As you walk by a student’s desk and notice that his/her work area is neat and attractive, you might stop and say, “John, you are going to have to share with me some of the ways you keep yourself so orderly. I would like to keep my work area as neat as yours.”

Praising the character of one person to another can also be very meaningful. While working with a student you might mention, “Have you noticed how grateful Jim is? He is so thankful for any little thing you do for him. I admire that.”

## **Praise Publicly to Build Character**

The following steps will help you identify qualities and give you ideas on how to publicly praise your students. The appreciation, which a student feels for a statement made, that recognizes his/her efforts, can be used as a springboard to generate more positive qualities over time. All students do not like public recognition so it is important to understand that prior to praising a student in front of others. For those who don’t, recognize them individually in private and reveal to them how their positive character has been an encouragement to you. The practice of recognizing the character of students in your school on a regular basis has numerous benefits including but not limited to the following:

- The teacher gains a greater understanding of specific character qualities.
- The teacher is reminded to look for positive character and recognize it as the most valuable attribute of the student.

- The teacher becomes more proficient in defining and praising character, which not only benefits the student but also has benefits for the teacher both personally and as a professional.
- The student praised is reminded that character is the most important factor affecting his/her performance positively.
- The student praised recognizes that character is something he or she is responsible for and can control. This helps improve behavior and make for permanent change in school climate.
- The student praised is motivated to continue demonstrating the quality that was recognized.
- Other students learn what qualities are important to a class and the overall school improvement.
- Other students learn what qualities are important and develop reasons to appreciate their fellow students. This is especially important for students who do not get along well with each other.
- Other students learn how character practically applies to life by the living example of someone they attend school with every day.

## **The Role of the Teacher**

Character development must be an on going process, not just a program.

Your school's character development will not be effective if it is simply a system of terminology used to motivate students to be more productive.

Character begins with your own personal commitment to demonstrate and develop character in your own life.

It is out of this discovery of the importance of character building in your own life that you be able to teach character to your students.

It is essential for teachers, administrators and all other support staff in a school to exemplify the character qualities that are being taught. To that end the following program will ensure everyone is moving towards the same goal.

The "Character Is Everything" program is system that never ends because character is always evolving.

Character is the difference between living by the lowest common denominator of human behavior and the best humans can be.

# Program Objectives

The “Character Is Everything” program is designed to provide students with clear definitions of character qualities.

It addresses character education from a behavioral standpoint and helps students practice applying these qualities in their daily lives. It helps teachers incorporate the teaching of these qualities into their lesson plans.

The “Character Is Everything” program will create awareness in students, teachers, administrators and other support staff of the importance of character and its relationship to achievement and honor.

The program is built around 50 different character qualities. A school could work on 10 qualities per year; one per month. The character quality of the month will become the theme for the month, where everyone in the school becomes involved with displaying this quality.

As these qualities are universally developed by the each person a **by-product will be the improvement of school climate**. It is an age old saying that even a child is known by his doings.

The “Character Is Everything” program believes that character is taught through **instruction, example, and by doing**. The program is designed to:

- provide students with opportunities in the areas of service
- assist them in developing leadership qualities centered on helping
- being sensitive to the needs of others.

**SERVICE** - In the routine of daily work, many opportunities arise to help others. Willingness to work without monetary compensation or without recognition for the benefit of those in need helps in the development of character qualities such as compassion, reliability, and sincerity to name a few.

**LEADERSHIP** - In promoting class and school activities the students develop initiative and will strive to train and aid others to attain positive goals. As character becomes stronger in areas such as responsibility, self - control and diligence the student who is working to become a positive role model and leader will go forward when others hesitate. He/She will be willing to make time and sacrifice personal interest for the interest of others.

A comprehensive approach to bullying is necessary. Many children and adults seriously underestimate the effects of bullying and the harm that it causes the victims. Educators, parents, and children concerned with violence prevention should be concerned with the phenomenon of bullying because it is linked to more violent behavior.

## Qualities Developed Through Improved Character

**As students work on specific character qualities they will have to think clearly and develop problem-solving skills. The character qualities that are worked on will develop skills in the following areas:**

**Self-Esteem** - As students are recognized for showing specific character qualities, they will improve in other areas as well, such as achievement, respect, and responsibility.

**Responses to Authority** - As the key people in the building recognize these positive qualities in each student, students will have a more positive response to them. Teachers, administrators, and support staff will then be able to discipline students in a much more positive manner and teach the necessary skills for life long success.

**Relationships** – Because there is so much positive reinforcement for students in the praising of their character, students will begin to see each other in a more positive light. Students will then encourage positive character in each other.

**Priorities** – Because students will begin to feel better about their own character, they will be able to focus on achievement. This will help to reduce anxiety and eliminate bad habits.

**OVERALL BENEFITS as character improves, there will be:**

- *Improved attendance*
- *Improved grades*
- *Improved test scores*
- *Reduction in behavioral referrals*
- *Improved school climate*

# Character Qualities-Definitions

**Honesty vs. Deception** – A refusal to lie, steal, or deceive in any way.

**Compliance vs. Willfulness** – Doing what I am told, when I am told to do it, with a good attitude.

**Sincerity vs. Falseness** – The desire to do what is right with no motives of my own.

**Proactivity vs. Reactivity** – Knowing my responses and acting upon them before I am faced with a problem.

**Boldness vs. Fearfulness** – Confidence that what I do or say is true, right, and just.

**Forgiveness vs. Resentment** – Ceasing to feel bitterness toward one's offender and not holding a grudge against him/her.

**Trustworthiness vs. Unreliability** – The quality of being reliable and deserving of trust.

**Alertness vs. Unawareness** – Being aware of that which is going on around me so I can have the right responses.

**Hospitality vs. Loneliness** – Cheerfully sharing food, shelter, and emotional refreshment with those in need.

**Generosity vs. Stinginess** – Realizing I am a steward of all I have and using it for the best purposes.

**Joyfulness vs. Discontentment** – The spontaneous enthusiasm that is based on the condition of my mind and my emotions and not based on circumstance.

**Flexibility vs. Rigidity** – The ability to adapt to new, different, or changing situations or requirements.

**Availability vs. Self-Centeredness** – Making my own schedule and priorities secondary to the wishes of others.

**Endurance vs. Giving up** – The inward strength to withstand stress to accomplish my goals or the goals of others.

**Self-Control vs. Self-Indulgence** – Exercising restraint over my thoughts, words, actions, attitudes, and motives.

**Respect vs. Disrespect** – Having a high regard for the rights, privileges, or worth of another person.

**Diligence vs. Laziness** – Investing all my energy to complete the tasks that are assigned to me.

**Thoroughness vs. Incompleteness** – Knowing what factors will diminish the effectiveness of my work or words if neglected.

**Dependability vs. Unreliability** – Fulfilling what I consented to do even if it means unexpected sacrifice.

**Security vs. Anxiety** – Structuring my life around that which is not temporal and cannot be taken away.

**Patience vs. Impatience** – The ability to suppress restlessness or annoyance in waiting.

**Wisdom vs. Foolishness** – The ability to discern inner qualities and the ability to use good judgment.

**Discernment vs. Shortsightedness** – The ability to have acute judgment and understanding.

**Faith vs. Presumption** – Picturing what the person in charge wants to do and acting in harmony with it.

**Discretion vs. Simple-mindedness** – The ability to avoid words, actions, and attitudes, which could result in undesirable consequences.

**Caring vs. Selfishness** – Giving to others basic needs without having as my motive personal reward.

**Creativity vs. Underachievement** – Approaching a need, a task, or an idea from an original perspective.

**Enthusiasm vs. Apathy** – Exhibiting a sense of excitement and maintaining a high energy level in my daily activities.

**Resourcefulness vs. Wastefulness** – Finding practical use for that which others would overlook or discard.

**Thriftiness vs. Extravagance** – Not letting others or myself spend that which is not necessary.

**Contentment vs. Envy** – Realizing that I already have everything I need for my present happiness.

**Punctuality vs. Tardiness** – Being ready to begin each task at the appointed time.

**Tolerance vs. Prejudice** – Having an understanding or acceptance of the beliefs or practices differing from one's own.

**Cautiousness vs. Rashness** – Knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing right actions.

**Gratefulness vs. Unthankfulness** – Acknowledge others by my words and actions how they have benefited my life.

**Orderliness vs. Disorganization** – Arranging myself and my surroundings to achieve the greatest efficiency.

**Initiative vs. Unresponsiveness** – Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it.

**Responsibility vs. Unreliability** – Holding myself accountable for my thoughts, words, actions, attitudes, and motives.

**Humility vs. Pride** – Recognizing that others are actually responsible for the achievement in my life.

**Decisiveness vs. Indecisiveness** – The ability to finalize difficult decisions based on what will make me and others successful.

**Determination vs. Faintheartedness** – The inward strength to accomplish my goals regardless of any opposition or adversity that stands in my way.

**Loyalty vs. Unfaithfulness** – Demonstrating commitment to a person, cause, ideal, or custom.

**Attentiveness vs. Unconcern** – Showing the worth of a person by giving my full concentration to his/her words.

**Sensitivity vs. Callousness** – Exercising my senses so I can perceive the true attitudes and emotions of those around me.

**Justice vs. Injustice** – Personal responsibility to all the laws governing my actions.

**Compassion vs. Indifference** – Investing whatever is necessary to help heal the emotional hurts of others.

**Gentleness vs. Harshness** – Showing personal care and concern in meeting the needs of others.

**Deference vs. Rudeness** – Limiting my freedom in order not to offend the tastes of those around me.

**Meekness vs. Anger** – Yielding my rights and utilizing my influence rather than power.

**Maturity vs. Immaturity** – Having the ability to subordinate my impulses to a value.



## **Do Bullies Have Low Self-Esteem?**

Psychologists used to believe that bullies have low self-esteem, and attacked and put down other people to feel better about themselves. While many bullies are themselves bullied at home or at school, new research shows that most bullies actually have excellent self-esteem.

Bullies usually have a sense of entitlement and superiority over others, and lack compassion, impulse control and social skills. They enjoy being cruel to others and sometimes use bullying as an anger management tool, the way a normally angry person would punch a pillow. Research does support the fact that bullies have low empathy, and don't know how it feels to be in someone else's shoes.

A bully is motivated by power. He/she is very clever and can victimize anyone. He likes controlling other students, and sometimes likes controlling his/her parents and teachers as well. As long as the bully is able to manipulate another person or a situation, his/her self-esteem remains high.

Once a bully loses control of their victim, or realizes that they can't manipulate situations to their liking they begin to experience problems with their self esteem and they will then seek out other people to manipulate and control to raise their self-esteem. It almost becomes an emotional fix that they need in order to feel good about themselves.

Intervention programs usually work to help the victim, and rightly so, the victim needs assistance in dealing with the person who is bullying them. In working with the bully we need to help the bully find things that will help him keep a consistent self-esteem index. Everyone has ups and downs in life, and bullies should experience the same ebbs and flows that are associated with becoming an adult. A bully's self esteem cannot be based on how they treat others.

If clear lines are not drawn and the bully is allowed to continue his behavior without consequence we are doing nothing more than prepare him for prison.

## **After Recent School Shootings CNN Reports on the Bullying Epidemic**

After the most recent school shooting at the Success Tech School in Cleveland Ohio the media has chosen once again to focus on the bullying epidemic that plagues the nation.

The shooter, a 14 year old named Asa. Coon was into Goth music and dress, claimed to be an atheist, and worshiped shock rock singer Marilyn Manson. Coon had already had been in a shelter, a detention center, and a mental hospital. He had already attempted suicide and threatened to blow up the school one week before his rampage. A student named Doneisha Le Vert reported said "He threatened to stab everybody, and we didn't think nothing of it."

CNN reported the Coon was a victim of bullies, was a loner, cursed out teachers, and was repeatedly suspended for deviant behavior. Coon was definitely a victim of bullies and as many victims of bullying do responded to the bullying with revenge. The question is: Why does a victim feel that they have to take matters into his own hands, and seek revenge? The answer to that question can be found in CNN report. CNN reported that the biggest problem that victims face is that teachers and administrators both side with the bullies, and don't take bullying behavior as seriously as they should. If those in authority are siding with the bully, victims feel that they are not being taken seriously and no one is hearing their cry for help.

Research has shown that children who are bullies come from an environment where they were bullied by their parents or siblings. They come from angry homes, with angry parents. Their parents cannot accept the fact that their children are bullies just as they are. Teachers and administrators fear the inevitable confrontation

that will occur once they report to the parents that their child has been reported to be involved in bullying behavior.

We want children to report if they have been bullied or if they know someone who is the victim of bullying behavior. Children trust that once they report that they have been bullied the adults in charge will take care of the problem so it doesn't happen again. When the problem doesn't get taken care of children stop reporting and sometimes the victims retaliate.

Teachers and administrators cannot live in fear of the bully's reaction or the reaction of the bully's parents when consequences have been imposed.

## Parents Can Be Bullies Too

Teachers who lose control of their classrooms usually do so because of the behavior of one or two students. Many times the parents of these students have the ability to instill fear and intimidation into the teacher and in their own way bully the teacher. This scenario is all too familiar. A student who is a bully gets reported by the victim to the teacher. The teacher doesn't see the bullying, but is concerned about the report and believes it warrants a phone call home. The teacher calls home and is immediately put on the defensive by the parent.

The parent begins to react to the teacher's phone call and asks the following questions: Did you actually see my child bully someone else? Are you calling my son/daughter a liar? How do you know it was my child? Or, what did the other kid do to my son or daughter? After the teacher catches his/her breath, and tries to respond, then the parent starts with comments such as these: I heard your entire class is out of control.

My son/daughter has told me that you don't like him/her.

My child told me that he was bullied last week, and you did nothing about it.

The parent then ends the conversation by saying, unless you have some proof that my child bullied another student don't call me again, and then, click the parent hangs up. The next day the child comes to school and has more clout than before and continues the bullying behavior. The level of intimidation and fear starts to well up in the teacher who now wonders what to do if there is another report from a victim that bullying is occurring again (by the same bully as before). This is a serious, serious problem.

What usually does happen is the teacher does everything to avoid making that next phone call to the parent of the bully and begins to ignore the student who is the bully, including any bullying behaviors, and starts to surrender the authority in the classroom to the bully. Victims who are in this classroom have to sink or swim on their own and go to school everyday filled with fear.

Amazingly, the teacher starts to see the victim as the problem. If the victim says that he or she is being bullied the teacher says, "Stop being such a tattletale, go back to your seat." What's even worse is that the teacher disciplines everyone else in the classroom but not the bully. The rest of the class begins to see the teacher as siding with the bully, and the teacher in his or her own way appears to be agreeing with the bullying behavior.

Teachers, administrators, and school districts need to stand up to bullying parents. Victims will be left standing alone with no protection if teachers and administrators buckle under the pressure and ultimately ignore the actions of a bully. These behaviors can affect individuals students, a school, and even society.

## About Jim Burns

Since 1977 Jim Burns has been working with students who have learning disabilities and behavioral problems. He has almost 40 years of experience working as an administrator, teacher, college instructor, and a seminar leader. He is committed to helping administrators, parents, and teachers establish standards of excellence and to help them build successful relationships with their staff, students, and children. He has written and designed The Bully Proof Classroom, a graduate course that is offered at The College of New Jersey and La Salle University in Pennsylvania in partnership with The Regional Training Center and is endorsed by the New Jersey Education Association. Jim was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in recognition of his work in the area of anti bullying. He has also written several books on the topic of anti bullying and classroom climate. “Anti Bullying 101” is a great resource for teachers, administrator, support staff, and parents as it provides permanent help in dealing with unruly behavior and can be used as part of any anti-bullying program. He is available for on sight in-services and keynotes and can be reached at [1-732-773-9855](tel:1-732-773-9855) or [jameshburns55@gmail.com](mailto:jameshburns55@gmail.com)

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