

USING YOUR WITS:
Strategies to Stop
Bullying

CREDITS

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TEACHER'S RESOURCE BOOK
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Every school has its bullies—children who taunt, tease, shove, and beat up other kids. But now more than ever, responsible adults must help children to develop conflict resolution skills in their formative years. From a very young age, children must be reminded that violence is never the answer to any problem.

Is bullying a form of violence? Absolutely. Childhood bullying and anti-social behavior in young students can grow into more difficult problems in later years. Research indicates that children who are victimized by bullies tend to have lower self-esteem and greater social problems than their peers. Children who bully others are often burdened with poor social skills, do not fit in, and desperately need help learning to feel competent and worthy of positive attention. Sadly, these same children often are afraid to reach out to the adults who might help them.

The word ‘bullying’ is used to describe many different types of behavior, ranging from teasing or deliberately excluding or ignoring an individual, to serious assaults and abuse. Sometimes it is an individual who is doing the bullying, and sometimes it is a group. Bullying is a reality in the lives of all children, whether they are bullies, victims, or witnesses.

Whether it’s physical, emotional, verbal (or a combination of the three), the fact is that childhood bullying is a significant concern. Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center, claims that bullying is “one of the most underrated but enduring problems in schools today.” In the United States, surveys show that as many as one in four kids say they’ve been bullied recently in school.

Bullying at school can leave scars throughout childhood, impairing performance and preventing young people from achieving their potential. The goal of *Using Your WITS: Strategies to Stop Bullying* is to help students gain workable strategies for handling conflicts—whether they are being bullied by someone else, or even if they are the one doing the bullying.

After watching the video *Using Your WITS: Strategies to Stop Bullying* and participating in the class discussion and activities described in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- recognize the importance of getting along with others
- understand that there is no excuse for bullying or teasing another person
- learn new skills for confronting bullies or avoiding situations where they might be bullied
- realize that there are effective techniques that they can use if they are being bullied
- describe simple conflict resolution strategies that they can adopt
- recognize why it's important to help others when they are being picked on by bullies
- accept that violence is never an appropriate way to resolve a conflict

Courtney, the narrator for *Using Your WITS: Strategies to Stop Bullying*, introduces the program by telling viewers, “The role plays you are about to see are designed to help students gain a sense of how to handle teasing or harassment from their peers without provoking retaliation. This video is designed to generate discussion.”

In the opening scenario, Karl is a big kid who likes to bully the smaller boys in his class. He has been picking on Matt. In this first scene, Karl and a friend are in the hallway of their school when they spot Matt. They plot ways to annoy Matt—such as stuffing him into a garbage can for laughs. Matt sees them and decides to avoid them by walking away. “Don’t worry,” Karl says, “We’ll get him next time.”

Courtney tells viewers, “What’s happening to Matt happens to a lot of kids. They become the target of teasing that is more serious than the kinds of harmless teasing that friends sometimes do to each other. If teasing gets out of hand, it can become harassment. Karl isn’t just teasing Matt—he’s harassing him.”

In the second dramatization, Karl shoves Matt. When Matt doesn’t respond, Karl gets bolder. He taunts Matt, “Get lost or I’ll beat you up.” The pushing continues until Matt finally walks away, frustrated and embarrassed.

On-screen graphics present these questions, and invite the teacher to pause the tape for discussion:

*Why did Karl bully Matt?
What can Matt do about it?*

As the video resumes, Courtney says, “If teasing gets out of hand, like what’s happening to Matt, it’s hard to just ignore it. Matt needs to find allies and use them for support.”

In the next scene, Karl confronts Matt and his friend Nathan outside of school. Karl blocks Matt’s path. Each time Matt tries to leave, Karl steps in front of him. “Didn’t I tell you to get lost?” Matt dodges around Karl and walks quickly away. He tells Nathan that he’s tired of walking around during recess being bullied, and would rather find other things to do. Matt makes some suggestions, and rehearses his ideas aloud: “I’m going to the library tomorrow, and the next day, I’m going to the computer lab. If that doesn’t work, I’m going to the gym.” Matt seems to feel better as he begins to formulate a plan for avoiding Karl. “I just want to stay away from kids who bully. There’s lots to do at recess. We don’t have to hang around where the bullies are.” Nathan agrees to try Matt’s plan.

Courtney says, “Seeking help and talking it out with someone is using your WITS. At first, Matt felt powerless. But after he started to think about it, he realized there was something he could do to help himself. Matt used his WITS.”

The on-screen graphic identifies the four WITS steps:

Walk away
Ignore the bully
Talk or tell someone
Seek help

In the next vignette, viewers are introduced to Stacey, a shy new girl, as she enters a classroom and approaches a group of girls sitting together. Brianna, the leader of the group, begins to taunt Stacey and the other girls soon join in. “Who are you, anyway?” one girl says. Another one scowls, “Who said you can stay on this side of the room?” They taunt her with remarks like “crybaby” and “moo” until Stacey finds a seat far away from them. Sarah, another student who has witnessed the whole exchange, invites Stacey to join her.

Courtney says, “People who tease want to see the other person react. The best way to get them to stop is to act as if nothing was said. When you ignore and walk away, you send the message that it just isn’t worth responding to. Walking away and ignoring the bully—that’s using your WITS.”

The next vignette begins as Stacey walks into a stall in the girls’ bathroom. Brianna and her group enter the bathroom next. They take turns using lipstick to write graffiti on the bathroom mirror such as, “Stacey is a cow. Got milk?” When the girls leave, Stacey comes out of the stall and sadly faces the mirror.

On-screen graphics present these questions, and invite the teacher to pause the tape for discussion:

Why did the group of girls treat Stacey that way?
What would you do if you were Stacey?

The video resumes. Courtney says, “Bullying really sucks. I know because it happened to me. You can’t fight these guys. Besides, they just want to see you react. The best thing to do is use your WITS. Walk away and ignore the bully. Seeking help by talking to a friend really helps, too. Telling someone and being able to talk it out is using your WITS.”

The last vignette begins in the school hallway. Stacey is standing at her locker when Brianna approaches her, saying, “Hey, four eyes, nice glasses.” Stacey tries to shrug off the remark, but Brianna continues to insult her. Finally, Stacey tells, “Look, you can talk to me, but please do it without taunting me.” Undaunted, Brianna pushes Stacey. At this point, Sarah and another girl step forward and tell Brianna to stop bothering Stacey. Flustered, Brianna says, “What are you going to do about it?” The answer she receives—“Be friends with her

instead”—turns the tables on Brianna and her bullying. The scene ends with Stacey walking off with two new friends, while Brianna is left standing alone.

Courtney tells viewers, “Remember, if you are being harassed, use your WITS.”

Walk away

Ignore the bully

Talk it out if you can or tell someone

Seek help

“Kids can’t always solve their own problems. So when they come forward to ask you for help or advice, they need to be reassured that they’re doing the right thing, and that together you can work through the problem.”

The class activities described below can be used to further your students' appreciation of how important it is to stop bullying others. If class time permits, these activities allow for open-ended discussions and possible follow-up homework assignments.

ACTIVITY 1: Understanding the Bully

Put an empty chair in the center of the classroom. Ask students to imagine that someone is sitting on the chair. The person sitting there has often been involved in bullying others. Invite students to build up a description of the person: age, physical traits, personality, childhood, friends, family background, interests, strengths and weaknesses. Discussion questions include:

- Why does this person bully others?
- When did he/she start?
- Has he or she ever been bullied by others?

ACTIVITY 2: The No-Bullying Contract

Work with class to develop a class contract that will make your class “bully-free.” All students should participate in creating a formal document that will outline what bullying is, and what the penalties will be for those who are caught bullying other students. A sample contract is offered in Activity 13 (*No-Bullying Pledge*) on page 22.

ACTIVITY 3: Create Your Own Action Plan

The video is intended to stimulate discussion among youth and to facilitate the development of an action plan—a written, practical proposal that could create a safer community for young people. An example of an Action Plan might be to ask your students to create a violence-free school policy. Students should be encouraged to be creative as they develop their Action Plan. Possible suggestions include:

- post a list of tips to follow when faced with a violent act
- develop a buddy system pairing older students with younger ones
- hold a one-day bullying awareness conference
- create a peer mediation group to settle individual problems

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Name: _____

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think that some kids tease more than others?

2. Why do you think some kids are targets of teasing more than others?

3. Have you ever been teased? How did it feel?

4. Have you ever been bullied? How did it feel?

5. Have you ever been a bully? How did it feel?

6. How would you handle a bully on the playground?

7. What do you think should happen to people who are bullies?

Name: _____

KARL AND MATT

1. Why do bullies like Karl need to humiliate kids like Matt?

2. Why do you think Karl needs to feel in control of others?

3. Why did Karl bully Matt? How did Matt react?

4. Did Matt use his WITS? Which strategies did Matt use?

5. Have you ever been treated like Matt?

6. What would you have done in Matt's situation?

7. What else could Matt's friend Nathan have done to help the situation?

Name: _____

STACEY AND BRIANNA

1. Why do some people resent newcomers, or people who are different from themselves? What do you think they are afraid of?

2. What would you have done in Stacey's situation?

3. How did Brianna and the other girls act toward Stacey?

4. What did Sarah do? How did that make Stacey feel?

5. Why did the group of girls treat Stacey that way?

6. Have you ever been treated like Stacey? What could have been done?

7. Did Stacey use her WITS? Which strategies did she use?

Name: _____

Remember, it's important to have allies who can help you if you are being bullied. Some examples of allies might be:

a parent or relative

friends

a teacher

a trusted adult

a brother or a sister

school principal or counselor

Who are your allies? Who can you count on? Fill out the chart below with your own personal reminders of the people who you can turn to if you are being harassed by a bully. You can cut this card out and keep it in your wallet or your notebook.



Ally 1			Ally 2			Ally 3			
Name:	_____	Name:	_____	Name:	_____	Name:	_____	Name:	_____
Phone:	_____	Phone:	_____	Phone:	_____	Phone:	_____	Phone:	_____
Ally 4			Ally 5			Ally 6			
Name:	_____	Name:	_____	Name:	_____	Name:	_____	Name:	_____
Phone:	_____	Phone:	_____	Phone:	_____	Phone:	_____	Phone:	_____

It's easy to use your WITS. The next time someone is bullying you:

- Walk away—leave the situation**
- Ignore the person doing the teasing**
- Talk it out if you can**
- Seek help, tell an adult, find allies**

Name: _____

In the video, you saw Matt and Stacey dealing with different kinds of bullying situations. Sometimes it's not easy to know how to react when you are being bullied. Talking to his friend Nathan helped Matt to come up with an action plan—a list of things that he could do to stay away from bullies like Karl. Matt felt better knowing that he had options.

What would you do if you were being bullied by someone? Do you have an action plan? Use the space below to start developing your own action plan. If you need help coming up with ideas on how to respond, ask your teacher for a copy of the *HA-HA-SO Skills* fact sheet on page 24.

If someone called me a name, I would:

If someone shoved me, I would:

If someone spread a rumor about me, I would:

If someone threatened to hit me, I would:

If I found myself in a bullying situation, I would:

Name: _____

Find as many of the words as you can in the letter jumble below. You will have to look up, down, diagonally and backwards for these words:

- | | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-------|
| feeling | friend | walk away | ignore | talk |
| seek help | bully | harass | teacher | ally |
| control | witness | teasing | uncool | rumor |

C H E K R S J L M D P U G
W A L K A W A Y I L K T K
M R L R S L O O C N U V L
Q A U T R A V S J E I M A
V S B M O T P R I M T P T
P S R S E E K H E L P V O
D U O G E U Z P T M X G I
M F R A N K C O N T R O L
B I E O S P I E R Q U H S
U R T E A S I N G N M R F
L O R T L O N G K A O T R
L R E S L I R H N Q R E I
Y V U O Y E N B O O M I E
U P T C M L D G A B R I N
J O S S E N T I W U G E D
H R E A T E A C H E R M I

After you have finished, please consult the next page for the Answer Key.

Name: _____

Find as many of the words as you can in the letter jumble below. You will have to look up, down, diagonally and backwards for these words:

- | | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-------|
| feeling | friend | walk away | ignore | talk |
| seek help | bully | harass | teacher | ally |
| control | witness | teasing | uncool | rumor |

C	H	E	K	R	S	J	L	M	D	P	U	G
W	A	L	K	A	W	A	Y	I	L	K	T	K
M	R	L	R	S	L	O	O	C	N	U	V	L
Q	A	U	T	R	A	V	S	J	E	I	M	A
V	S	B	M	O	T	P	R	I	M	T	P	T
P	S	R	S	E	E	K	H	E	L	P	V	O
D	U	O	G	E	U	Z	P	T	M	X	G	I
M	F	R	A	N	K	C	O	N	T	R	O	L
B	I	E	O	S	P	I	E	R	Q	U	H	S
U	R	T	E	A	S	I	N	G	N	M	R	F
L	O	R	T	L	O	N	G	K	A	O	T	R
L	R	E	S	L	I	R	H	N	Q	R	E	I
Y	V	U	O	Y	E	N	B	O	O	M	I	E
U	P	T	C	M	L	D	G	A	B	R	I	N
J	O	S	S	E	N	T	I	W	U	G	E	D
H	R	E	A	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	M	I

Name: _____

For this activity, your class will design and publish a young people's magazine about bullying and ways of stopping it in your school. Your magazine could include any of the following:

- Stories about bullying
- Interviews with students who have been bullied, their families, teachers, etc.
- Photo-stories
- Cartoons
- Bullying survey results
- Letters to the editor
- Advice column on bullying
- Questionnaire
- Book review
- Video/movie review

Name: _____

Choose one of the writing assignments from the list below:

- Think about a time when you were hurt by someone calling you a name, leaving you out of a group, or making you do things you didn't want to do. Write a poem or short story describing what happened and how you felt.
 - Thinking about your own experience of bullying—as someone directly involved, or as a bystander—draw a series of pictures that show a bullying incident unfolding. Try to show what is happening and how the people involved are feeling.
- Prepare an advice pamphlet for other students at your school who are being bullied by a person or a group.
 - Write a story about the leader of a bullying gang. You could either write it as if you were this person, giving his/her point of view, or you could write it from the point of view of someone who knows the bully.
- Imagine you are friends with someone who keeps picking on kids in your class. You are concerned about your friend's behavior, but you're worried about saying anything about it to your friend. What comments and suggestions can you make to your friend? Write a script of the conversation that you would like to have.
 - Imagine that one of your friends is being bullied. Write a helpful letter to your friend, encouraging your friend to use his or her WITS. Your letter should offer specific advice on how to overcome the problem.

Name: _____

Working with your classmates in small groups (4-6 students apiece), spend some time discussing how each person deals with bullies. What works for each person? Are there any common methods that seem to help all members? In the space below, put together a list of your group's top ten healthy ways to deal with bullies.

Top Ten Healthy Ways to Deal with Bullies

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

And the number one healthy way of dealing with a bully is...

1

Name: _____

PART 1:

Being bullied or teased can make you feel...

angry

afraid

ashamed

In the spaces below, write down other emotions that a person who is being bullied might feel.

✓ or ✕		✓ or ✕	
✓ or ✕		✓ or ✕	
✓ or ✕		✓ or ✕	

PART 2:

For each of the words you wrote down above, circle the check mark (✓) next to all the feelings that you would consider good or positive—emotions that you enjoy.

How many check marks did you make? _____

For each of the words you wrote down above, circle the ✕ mark next to all the feelings that you would consider bad or negative—emotions that you don't like to feel.

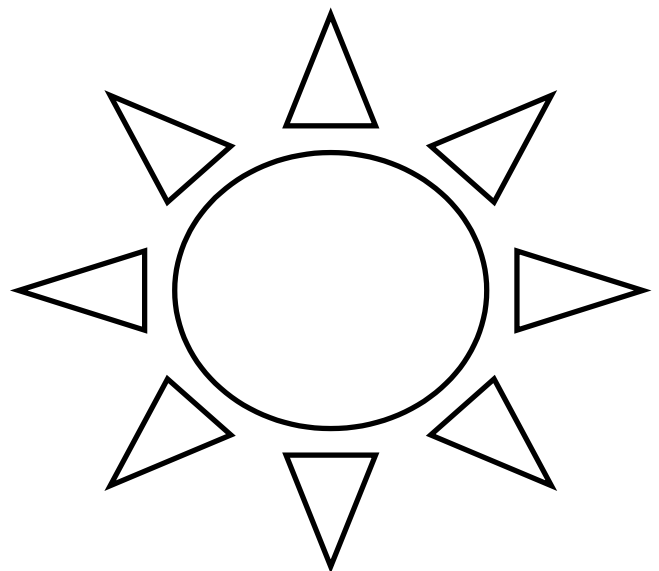
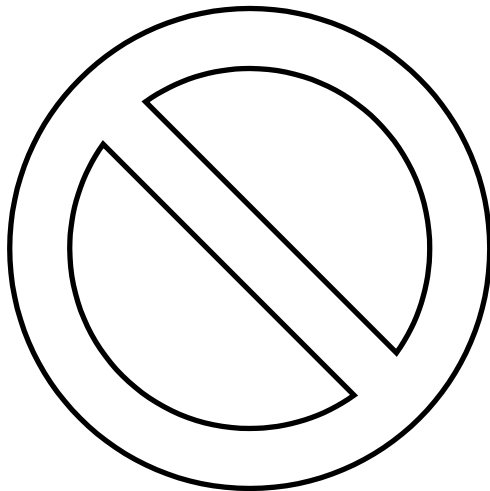
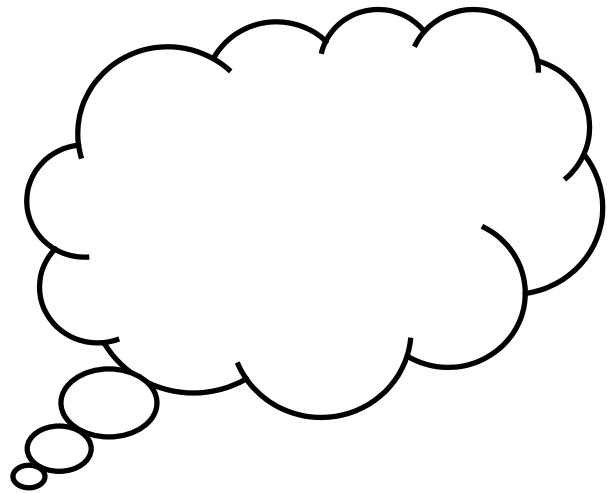
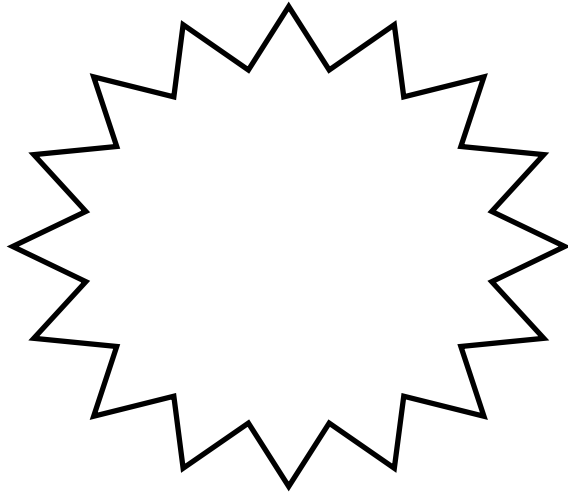
How many ✕ marks did you make? _____

PART 3:

Compare your answers with those of your classmates. What kinds of emotions did other people write on their lists? Do you agree with the words they chose? Did anyone come up with a positive emotion that a person might feel about being bullied by someone else? What can you conclude from this?

Name: _____

Using any of the templates below, design your own No-Bullying button. You can use words, pictures, photographs, slogans... anything you like! Your goal is to make a button that tells the world that you know how to use your WITS if someone tries to bully you.



Name: _____

The questionnaire below is for your own personal use. Nobody will read your responses, and you will not be graded by your teacher. Even if you don't think you are a bully, use this self-assessment as a way to consider whether your attitudes and behaviors are fair to others.

1. Has anyone ever called you a bully?
2. Do you like to tease other people or tell stories about other people?
3. Is it hard for you to say "I'm sorry" when you've done something wrong?
4. Do you resist giving other people compliments?
5. Is it easier for you to laugh at other people than at yourself?
6. Do you make remarks about other kids' clothes or their hair?
7. Do you shove or physically intimidate other kids?
8. Do you often disagree with other people's opinions?
9. Is it hard for you to control your temper?
10. Do you believe that winning is really the most important thing?

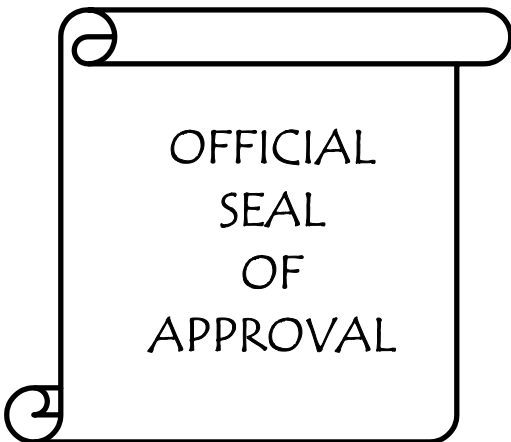
If you answered "yes" to two or more of these questions, you might want to think about whether you are being a bully at times. Do you treat people the way you want to be treated? Are you fair to others? Sometimes kids end up picking on other people as a way to hide their own feelings. It's understandable to want to feel better about yourself—but you shouldn't have to pick on other people in order to feel better.

If you think you might be a bully, there are things you can do to change your behaviors. Talk to your teacher, your parents, or another trusted adult. Tell them that you want their help in making changes to the way that you deal with other kids. And remember, the bravest thing you can do is to try to make yourself into a better person.

Name: _____

I, _____, pledge to never bully others, or allow others to be bullied in my presence. By making this pledge, I agree to help other kids who are the targets of bullies.

I also pledge to help educate others about bullying by doing the following:



(student's signature)

(teacher's signature)

(family member's signature)

FACT SHEETS

Name: _____

It's easy to use your WITS. The next time someone is bullying you, just remember this:

Walk away—leave the situation

Ignore the bully

Talk it out if you can

Seek help, tell an adult, find allies

Name: _____

How do you respond when someone makes fun of you, or your friends? Next time someone puts you down (*“Wow, where did you get those pants? You look like a real loser!”*), try using these “HA-HA-SO” skills:

H = Help

Ask for help from a friend, a classmate, or an ally. *“Can someone help me with this kid? He’s bullying me.”*

Report bullying to your parent, your teacher, or another adult. *“I’m being bullied and I need your help.”*

Find other people to spend time with at recess. *“Can I hang around with you today? The big kids bully me when I’m by myself.”*

A = Assert Yourself

Ask questions. *“Why are you bugging me about my clothes?”*

Repeat back. *“So you don’t think these pants look good.”*

Ask for advice. *“I was wondering how you got such good clothes.”*

Make “I” statements. *“I don’t like being called names.”*

Identify feelings. *“It sounds like you enjoy teasing me about my clothes.”*

Set limits. *“If you want to talk to me, do it without making fun of my clothes.”*

Change the subject. *“Did you study for the math test?”*

H = Humor

Make a joke or laugh it off. Don’t take things too seriously. *“I got them on sale at K-mart. I got a pair for you, too!”*

A = Avoid

Ignore the person.

Walk away or leave.

S = Self-Talk

Stick up for yourself with encouraging thoughts.

Give yourself a pep-talk. *“I’m not going to let this get to me. I can handle this.”*

O = Own It

Agree with some of what the bully says, if you think it is true. *“You’re right, these aren’t the greatest pants. I don’t like them much, either.”*

Name: _____

It's really hard to see someone that you care about being bullied. What can you do if your brother, sister, or best friend is being teased by other kids? Sometimes the person being bullied might ask you not to do anything. Other times, you might decide not to step in because you don't want the bully to start picking on you, too. But remember, if you do nothing, then the bullying will continue, and the bully might start to find even more victims. If you do nothing, the bullies may think that you approve of what they are doing.

Here are some things you can do. Don't give up if some of these ideas don't work for you—just try something else.

- ✓ Persuade the person being bullied to talk to an adult—this can be a teacher or a parent.
- ✓ Encourage the person being bullied to talk to you about what is happening.
- ✓ Offer to speak to an adult on the bullied person's behalf.
- ✓ Raise the issue of bullying with the student council (if your school has one) or in discussions in class subjects like English, drama, religious education, or social education.
- ✓ Involve as many people as possible. Try to make sure that your teachers know what is going on.

Here are some things you should not do:

- ✗ Do not use violence against the bully—it won't work, and you may end up being accused of being a bully yourself.
- ✗ Do not tell the person being bullied to deal with the problem by himself or herself. If they could do it alone, they wouldn't have asked you for help.
- ✗ Do not try to deal with things on your own. Your role is to help the person who is being bullied—but that doesn't mean you should take the responsibility of confronting the bully onto yourself.

Source:

Bullying at School: Advice for Families (1997)

www.scre.ac.uk/bully/bother.html

Name: _____

IF YOUR CHILD IS THE BULLY

What every parent doesn't want to hear—your child is behaving like a bully.

Your first response will probably be defensive. Disarm the situation and buy yourself some time to process what's being said. For example, "Instead of labeling my child, please tell me what happened." Make yourself really listen. Remember that this discussion is ultimately about the well-being of your child, regardless of how its being framed.

Even if your child is behaving aggressively or acting like a bully, remember that this behavior is probably coming from your child's feelings of vulnerability. You need to look for what is going on in your child's interactions with others and what is going on internally, causing your child to behave that way.

In talking with your child, **DO NOT BLAME**. Do not get into a discussion about the "whys" of what happened. Your discussion should focus on several key points:

- ✓ Bullying is not acceptable in our family or in society.
- ✓ If you are feeling frustrated or angry or aggressive, here are some things you can do.
- ✓ Remember to role-play, act out the new behaviors.
- ✓ Ask, how can I help you with this? Who could you go to in school if you see yourself getting into this type of situation again?
- ✓ Specify concretely the consequences if the aggression or bullying continue.
- ✓ You want to stop the behavior, understand your child's feelings, then teach and reward more appropriate behavior.

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Sachar, Louis, and Barbara Sullivan. Why Pick On Me? Random House, 1993.

Smith, Margaret. Words Will Never Hurt Me: Helping Kids Handle Teasing, Bullying and Putdowns. Elton-Wolf Publishing, 2001.

Stolz, Mary. The Bully of Barkham Street. HarperTrophy, 1985.

Name: _____

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

National Center for Assault Prevention
(609) 582-7000

National School Safety Center
(805) 373-9977

BOOKS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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