



Anti-bullying Program

San Diego City Schools (SDCS) Anti-bullying program was initiated due to an increase in student violence throughout the nation, especially Columbine High in 1999 and locally, Santana High School in Santee, in 2001. Counseling & Guidance, a department under the Student Services, provides on-site responses to bullying in everyday occurrences.

Bullying is not just elementary kids stuff. It escalates in middle school and can continue through high school and into the workplace. Childhood bullies often grow up to be adult bullies. It seems like a vicious cycle but all members of a school community, young and old have a special responsibility to help recognize children in need. Children and teens can be bullies or victims of bullying, but the largest number of children and teens are bystanders who witness bullying and do nothing.

The national anti-bullying program, *Don't Laugh At Me (DLAM)*, is intended to nurture children's emotional, social and ethical development, teach conflict resolution, and foster respect for others.

Understanding Bullying - Bullying is sometimes hard to notice and often considered a "kids will be kids" issue. Most parents find it difficult to determine if their child is involved in such problems as most bullying occurs out of parents' sight. Yet, some adults and children may justify bullying because victims are overly sensitive, cry easily, overweight, be physically disabled, from a different culture or religious faith, or act in ways that set them apart from others.

Bullying is not a normal part of life and by no means a healthy resolution. There are traits of those who are likely to be victimized, and characteristics of the bullies and victims that onlookers can identify. If he or she avoids confrontation, is physically slight, and quiet, the child may be a passive victim. Passive victims turn inward when bullied and are prone to anxiety, health problems, lower test scores and may lose interest in school. However, it's not just victims who are damaged by bullying, but the bullies themselves fail to learn how to cope with their emotions, communicate effectively, and fail to develop compassion for others.

Don't Laugh At Me History - The Race/Human Relations & Advocacy Department was designated to assist elementary schools with the implementation of an anti-bullying program within their curriculum. Peter Yarrow of the legendary folk trio, Peter, Paul and Mary founded *DLAM* in September 2000, to promote social learning principles into school curricula. The centerpiece of the program is the song, "Don't Laugh at Me," sung by Peter, Paul and Mary. The school program consists of two separate curricula; one developed for Grades 2 - 5 and the second developed for Grades 6 - 8. The McGraw-Hill Publishing Company provides all the materials *free* for this program.

Addressing Issues of the Heart and the Mind - The activities encouraged by *DLAM* help encourage students to become important catalysts for change in our schools and community. Since children learn best through practice, the *DLAM* guide focuses on giving children learning through a song, CD, and video. The project helps transform children to respect themselves and those around them while building valuable social skills for their future. The activities are designed to raise awareness, explore feelings, connect children to themselves and one another, provide important tools for adults, and fulfill curriculum standards.

Second Step - Is a program that provides evidence-based curriculum to help improve impulse control, reduce aggression, and increase social competence through a variety of age-appropriate lessons. Parenting classes are provided for families to help parents reinforce these skills at home.

Registration - The website, www.operationrespect.org includes the registration number and the format, which consists of a 5-10 minute questionnaire that will provide access to download lessons. Within two to three weeks, all materials, CD and video should be received.

SUMMARY

- ❖ Bullying can be defined as repeated harassment and attacks on children and adults.
- ❖ 8% of urban middle and high school students miss one day per month because of fear.
- ❖ 1 in 4 childhood bullies will have a criminal record before the age of 30.
- ❖ Girls can be bullies too.
- ❖ Victims suffer from fear, anxiety, and low-self esteem.
- ❖ The serious long-term outcomes for bullies are also important to recognize.
- ❖ All children, including bystanders, are negatively affected when bullying occurs.
- ❖ The most current identified form of bullying is called cyber-bullying, traditionally experienced on the Internet, such as emails, in chat rooms and websites.

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Contact Information: Race/Human Relations & Advocacy: (858) 490-8678
Media inquiries: (619) 725-5578

www.sandi.net

Serving nearly 136,000 students, San Diego City Schools is the second largest school district in California, with 202 educational facilities and more than 14,500 full-time equivalent positions (representing more than 15,800 employees). SDCS is improving student achievement by focusing on challenging instruction in reading, writing and mathematics in pre-kindergarten through Grade 12. The district is committed to supporting schools and enhancing the classroom learning environment through modernized facilities and resources and through parent, teacher and community involvement in the educational process.

The mission of San Diego City Schools is to improve student achievement by supporting teaching and learning in the classroom.