

News From Your School Counselor

Gale-Bailey Elementary School

Bullying Issue

November 2007

Dear Parents and Families,

I would like to bring your attention to a problem that is occurring more frequently among school-aged children everywhere and has been identified as a major concern across U.S. schools - **Bullying**. Unfortunately, this is becoming an increasing problem at Gale-Bailey that needs to be addressed. This is an issue that takes a whole school and community effort to address and resolve. Often times, adults are unaware of bullying problems. Because of this, it is important that parents, families, teachers, and administrators are all aware of the warning signs of bullying. Please join me in learning about the problem and what you can do to help. Together, we can make Gale-Bailey a safe place for our children to learn, grow, and play.

Sincerely,

Nina Ogasawara

Nina Ogasawara (Miss. O.)
School Counselor



What is Bullying?

Bullying occurs when a student or a group of students is intentionally hurtful to another student, either verbally, physically, or emotionally. The behavior is usually repeated and shows an overt imbalance of power between the students involved.

Who Is Involved?

There are three types of people who are involved in a bullying situation:

- **The Bully** - He or she is the aggressor in the situation. This student or group of students possess greater power than the victim and uses that power negatively.
- **The Victim** - He or she is the child directly receiving the verbal, physical, or emotional acts of bullying. This student is usually helpless in the bullying situation.
- **The Bystander** - The bystander(s) may be one or more students who witness or observe the bullying. They may be active bystanders, who join in or laugh at the situation, or passive bystanders who watch and let the bullying occur. Surprisingly, these students have a large amount of power in controlling the bullying situation. What they say or do can very much influence the actions of the bully.

Myths about Bullying

- **Bullying is just teasing** - Bullying is more than just teasing. Bullying is considered a form of abuse.
- **Only boys bully** - Both boys and girls bully, and both boys and girls can be victims of bullying. Direct and physical bullying tends to be a greater problem among boys, while bullying among girls is often more indirect or subtle such as exclusion, manipulation, or spreading rumors. All forms of bullying are equally hurtful.
- **Bullies have low self-esteem** - Research shows that most children who bully have average or above-average self-esteem. In fact, some children bully because they think that they are better than others.
- **Bullies are loners** - Most children who bully have no problems making friends and often have a group of friends who support or encourage the bullying behaviors.
- **People who are bullied will get over it** - Bullying hurts for a long time. The effects of bullying include depression, loneliness, anxiousness, sleeplessness, and low self-esteem. As a result of bullying, some children drop out of school, commit suicide, or lash out violently against others.
- **Bullying is a part of growing up and some children deserve to be bullied** - No one ever asks to be bullied, and no one deserves it. Being teased, pushed around, picked on, threatened, insulted, harassed, hurt or abused is not normal; it's wrong.

What To Do If Your Child Is Being Bullied

- **Don't ignore it!** - In these situations, it is often very difficult for a child to report bullying because they are embarrassed, ashamed, or frightened. Be supportive, and praise your child for having the courage to talk to you.
- **Don't blame your child** - Don't assume that he or she has done anything to provoke the bully.
- **Don't encourage physical retaliation or trying to get even** - This may get the bully angry, and he or she may try to do even more hurtful things.
- **Report the bullying to the school** - Contact your child's teacher, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Mooring, and/or Miss O. The collaboration of the school and parents will help to stop the bullying.
- **Do not contact the parents of the student(s) who is/are bullying** - Though this sometimes seems like a natural response, it sometimes makes matters worse. Rely on the school to contact the parent(s) of the child(ren) who is/are bullying.
- **Help your child develop his or her self-esteem** - Encourage your child to join activities that will help build confidence and develop talents and positive attributes.
- **Teach your child safety strategies** - Encourage him or her to get help from an adult when he or she is bullied. Talk about safe people to turn to and what he or she should say. Remind your child that reporting bullying is not tattling.
- **Spend quality time with your child** - Let your child know that he or she has a safe and loving home and that he or she can trust you and talk to you.

If you know of a bullying problem occurring at school, please do not hesitate to call your child's teacher, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Mooring, or Miss O. Together we can make Gale-Bailey a safe place for our children to learn, grow, and play.



What To Do If Your Child Is Bullying

- **Make it clear that the behavior is not acceptable** - Provide non-physical negative consequences for negative behaviors and praise and reward your child when he or she displays positive behaviors.
- **Spend quality time with your child** - Studies show that children tend to be less aggressive if they feel well liked and understood by adults in their lives.
- **Encourage a positive outlet for his or her energy** - Joining a sport or club can be a healthy way to provide opportunities for him or her to release built-up energy and interact with others.
- **Provide careful supervision and monitor his or her activities** - Take time to ask your child about his or her day and learn about where your child is and what your child does when you are not around.
- **Share your concerns with your child's teacher** - Work together to send a clear message to your child that the bullying behavior must stop.

What To Do If Your Child Is a Bystander

- Have frequent conversations with your child about what goes on at school.
- Remind him or her that everyone needs to do his or her part to make Gale-Bailey a safe place. If your child sees bullying taking place, he or she should try to help the victim. Laughing or joining in makes the bullying worse and also makes the bystander part of the problem.
- Encourage your child to tell an adult about what is happening. It's not tattling when you are reporting bullying behavior.
- Promote empathy by talking to your child about how the bullied child may be feeling. Ask your child what the bullied child might want others to do.
- Remind your child that someone who is bullied could use a good friend.

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