



BULLY FREE IN DISTRICT **3**

PARENT UPDATE

OCTOBER, 2011



Olweus Bullying Prevention Programs at PES and MSP

Our school began using the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* beginning October 14, 2011. This research based program reduces bullying in schools and helps schools to create a safe and more positive place where students can learn. Although this program takes place at school, we need your help too. You can talk about bullying and our school's anti-bullying expectations at home with your child. We want to work with you to prevent and stop bullying from happening in our school. In this document, you will find detailed information for parents about bullying. However, if you have any questions or concerns about bullying, please contact your child's principal or school counselor.

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending him or herself. Bullying can take many forms, such as hitting, verbal harassment, spreading false rumors, not letting someone be part of the group and sending nasty messages on a cell phone or over the internet.

How do I know if my child is being bullied?

There are some warning signs that to look for if you think your child is being bullied. Be concerned if your child:

- ◆ comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings
- ◆ has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches
- ◆ has few, if any, friends with whom he or she spends time
- ◆ seems afraid of going to school or walking to and from school
- ◆ seems afraid to ride the school bus or take part in activities with peers (such as clubs)
- ◆ takes a long, "illogical" route when walking to or from school or the bus stop
- ◆ has lost interest in schoolwork or suddenly begins to do poorly in school
- ◆ appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he or she comes home
- ◆ talks frequently about headaches, stomachaches, or other physical problems
- ◆ has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- ◆ has a loss of appetite
- ◆ appears anxious and/or suffers from low self-esteem

If your child shows any of these signs, it does not necessarily mean that he or she is being bullied, but it is worth checking out. (These could also be signs of other problems, such as depression, lack of friendships, or lack of interest in school.)

The power of this program lies in staff, students, and parents using a common language and common expectations to address bullying situations.

What can I do if I think my child is being bullied?

- ◆ Share your concerns with your child's teacher.
- ◆ Talk with your child.
- ◆ Try to find out more about your child's school life.
- ◆ Talk to the school counselor and the principal.
- ◆ Encourage your child to spend time with friendly students in his or her class.
- ◆ Help your child meet new friends outside of school.
- ◆ Teach your child safety strategies, such as how to seek help from an adult.

How do I talk to my child about bullying?

Use these conversation starters to begin a discussion about bullying.

- ◆ I am interested in your thoughts and feelings about bullying.
- ◆ What does the word "bullying" mean to you?
- ◆ Do you ever see students at your school being bullied by other students? How does it make you feel?
- ◆ What do you usually do when you see bullying going on?
- ◆ Have you ever tried to help someone who was being bullied?
- ◆ What happened? What do you think you can do if it happens again?
- ◆ Would you feel like a "tattletale" if you told an adult that someone was bullying?
- ◆ Have you ever called another person names? Do you think that is bullying?
- ◆ Do you or your friends ever leave other students out of activities?
- ◆ Is your school doing special things to try to prevent bullying?
- ◆ Tell me about your school's rules and programs against bullying.
- ◆ What things do you think parents could/should do when children are being bullied?

Bully Free in District 3 Anti-Bullying Expectations

Expectation 1: We will not bully others.

Expectation 2: We will help students who are bullied.

Expectation 3: We will include students who are left out.

Expectation 4: If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

Statement of Non-Discrimination: Spartanburg School District Three does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person(s) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Director of Personnel and Pupil Services, 3535 Clifton Glendale Road, Glendale, SC 29346 (864)279-6000 rgoode@spartanburg3.org