**An Overview** for Parents of the **M-DCPS Policy** Against **Bullying and Harassment** 

#### **Mental Health and Crisis Management Services**

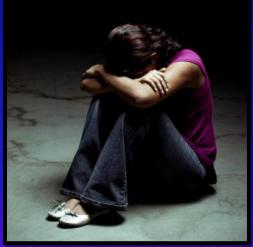
## Welcome

Ms. Suzy Berrios, Director Mental Health & Crisis Management Services

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# "STICKS AND STONES CAN HURT YOUR BONES BUT WORDS CAN NEVER HURT ME."



# Is this true?

# **Objectives**

- Definition of Bullying/Harassment
- Overview of Policy Requirements including reporting and investigative procedures
- What role do parents play in the policy?



## THE ACTUAL POLICY

#### **Bullying and Harassment**

- M-DCPS is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students.
- Bullying and harassment is prohibited in all schools
- Awareness, prevention and education are provided to promote a school atmosphere in which bullying and harassment will not be tolerated by <u>students</u>, <u>school board</u> <u>employees</u>, <u>visitors</u>, or <u>volunteers</u>.

#### **Policy Against Bullying & Harassment**

- A result of a new Florida Law: "Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for All Students" (FL Statute 1006.147, June 2008)
- FDOE requires that all school districts adopt a policy prohibiting Bullying & Harassment of students and staff on school grounds, at schoolsponsored events, and through school computer networks by December 1, 2008.
- School Board Rule 6Gx13-5D-1.101



# Prohibited

- During any education program or activity conducted by M-DCPS;
- During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity; or
- On a M-DCPS school bus;
- Through the use of any electronic device or data while on school grounds or on a M-DCPS school bus, computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer network of M-DCPS.
- This includes threats made outside of school hours, which are intended to be carried out during any schoolrelated or school-sponsored program or activity, or on a M-DCPS school bus.

# Reporting

 Employees are <u>REQUIRED</u> to report incidents

 Others are strongly encouraged to report incidences

## **Critical Components of the Policy**

- Seeks to provide intervention services to both the victim and bully
- The Victim needs protection, advocacy and intervention
- The Bully needs intervention services and consequences for the behavior
- The Policy is applicable to school employees and visitors

# **Bullying Defined**

Bullying means systematically and chronically, inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or school employees. It is further defined as a pattern of unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, dehumanizing gesture by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliations; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation that includes a noted power differential.

#### **Examples of Bullying / Harassment**

- Teasing
- Social exclusion
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence

- Theft
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of Property
- Cyber-stalking and Cyber-bullying



# What is Harassment?



# Harassment is a one time occurrence of bullying.

# Bullying

- Bullying can present itself in sophisticated, organized subtle forms.
- It can create an undercurrent of hostility, exclusion, and often utilizes multiple forms of interactions (i.e. Classroom, Facebook, Texting, etc.)





# **Intention and Impact**

- Example: "Teasing"
- Consider the context of the act to determine if it should be deemed bullying
- What was the intent of the act?
- What was the impact of the act?

## **Possible Warning Signs of Bullying**

- Comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings;
- Has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches;
- Seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus, or avoidant of activities with peers (such as clubs);
- Takes a long, "illogical" route when walking

- Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school;
  Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he or she comes home;
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical ailments (particularly in AM);
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams;
- Loss of appetite; or
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem

# **Secondary Signs**

- Does not bring classmates or other peers home after school and seldom spends time in the homes of other classmates.
- May not have a single close friend to share free time with.
- Are seldom or never invited to parties.
- And may not be interested in arranging parties themselves because they expect that no one will come.

#### The Passive or Submissive Victim

- The typical victim is more anxious and insecure than students in general. They are often cautious, sensitive and quiet.
- They may have a negative view of themselves and low self esteem.
- They may be lonely or abandoned in school; without a single good friend in class.
- They often have a negative view about violence and are reluctant to retaliate.

# **The Provocative Victim**

- Characterized by both anxious and aggressive reaction patterns.
- These students have problems with concentration and behave in ways that cause irritation and tension around them.
- May be characterized as hyperactive.
- Their behavior provokes other students in class and results in negative reactions from peers.

#### **Characteristics of Typical Bullies**

- Aggression towards peers and adults.
- More positive attitude towards violence; characterized by impulsivity and a need to dominate others.
- Very little empathy and a relatively positive view of themselves.
- Aggressive reaction patterns <u>combined</u> with physical strength (in the case of boys).
- 60% of boys who were characterized as bullies in grades 6-9, will have at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24 yrs.

# **Child Rearing Conditions**

- 1. The basic emotional attitude of parents is essential. A negative basic attitude, characterized by a lack of warmth and involvement, clearly increases the risk that a child will become aggressive and hostile toward others.
- 2. The extent to which the primary caregiver has been permissive and allowed aggressive behavior on the part of the child. Without setting clear limits, the child's level of aggression is likely to increase.
- The parents' use of "power assertive" child rearing methods such as physical punishment and violent emotional outbursts raise a child's level of aggression. "Violence begets violence"
- 4. The temperament of the child plays a part in the aggressive reaction pattern.

#### **General Principles for What Parents Can Do?**

#### **Provide Supervision**

 It is essential that parents supervise the child's activities outside of school and to monitor what he/she does and who his/her friends are. Most unwanted activities including bullying tend to take place when the parents do not know what the child is doing or when adults are absent.

#### Modeling

- Respect
- Peaceful Problem Solving
- Appropriate Boundaries
- Effective Communication
  - Frequent conflicts, discord, or open arguments between parents will create insecure relationships for the children and can lead to an aggressive reaction pattern.

#### What the parents of the bully can do?

- Make it clear to their child that they take the bullying seriously and that they will not tolerate any such behavior.
- Praise the child when he/she follows the rules.
- Consequence the child if they break the rules.
- Get to know your child's friends
- Spend time with your child.
- Share common positive experiences that create a trusting relationship.
- Helping channel natural personality tendencies through sports.

#### What can the parents of the victim do?

- Contact the child's teacher and maintain communication.
- Encourage him/her to develop potential talents and positive attributes.
- Have the child undertake some type of physical training to enhance confidence.
- Encourage the child to make contact with a friendly student in class with a similar personality disposition,
- Provide the child with concrete and detailed suggestions about how to make initial contact.
- Avoid being over-protective and encourage the child to create healthy positive peer relationships.
- Contact your school's counseling professional for assistance.
- Outside community resources

## What happens after a report?

- Initiation of investigation within 24 hour period of receipt of report
- Confidential Parent Contact (victim/bully) within 24 hours
- Interview and written statements of alleged bully, victim, and witnesses
- Review of evidence/determination of founded or unfounded
- Services provided to both victim and alleged bully providing at least 2 community resources
- Consequences based on Code of Student Conduct
- Group interventions counter-indicated.
- Documentation on SCM form and in ISIS

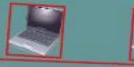
# **Anonymous Reporting**

- Each school is <u>required</u> to have a Bullying/Harassment Reporting Box located in a discrete location determined by the Principal
- Anonymous Bullying Report form provided in manual and on-line
- At each school, the Principal or designee is responsible for receiving complaints
- Reports can be made by students, parents/guardians, volunteers or visitors

BeSafe: Anonymous Reporting System



Submit Tip On-Line! Go To www.dadeschools.net Or Use the Website! http://besafe.dadeschools.net



Call In Your Tip! 305-995-2677 Remain Anonymous!





# Resources



#### MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### Bullying and Harassment Policy and Curriculum Manual



Artwork by: Kris Reig, Arvida Middle School

# **New Manual**

- Artwork on Cover
- District Policy
- Definitions Bullying & Harassment
- Reporting Procedures
- Investigation Procedures
- Helpful Forms
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Curriculum
- Resources

# Website

- Accessed through Students, Parents or Employee Portals
- Under HIGHLIGHTS for students and RESOURCES for parents and employees
- http://mhcms.dadeschools.net/district.asp
- Staff: complete manual, reporting forms, power point presentations, curriculum
- Students: reporting forms, webisodes from the Stop Bullying Now campaign
- Parents: reporting forms, assistance for bully or victim and other helpful resources



**Crisis Management Services** 

Wednesday, June 2, 2010

STUDENTS PARENTS

COMMUNITY EMPLOYEES

Psychological Services Home	:	
NHRCHC Hama	i	

MH&CMS TRUST Home

Crisis Team Home

Safe Schools Programs

Parents

Students

Mental Health Issues

Being Drug Free

Violence Prevention

Training

Contact Us

Bullying

#### Mental Health and Crisis Management Services

Ms. Suzanne Milano-Berrios, Director 305-995-7315

#### Parent Support

Parents are the first teachers of all behaviors - good and bad. Since behavior patterns begin at home, it is important to teach your child good communication and social skills. A child who has bonded well with his/her parents and feels warmth and caring from them is much less likely to resort to bullying behavior with peers. The way a child is disciplined at home will establish a pattern for his/her interaction with other children in school. A parent who disciplines a child with yelling or hitting is teaching a child to react in that manner with other people. Often a child who exhibits bullying behavior in school has been the target of that behavior in the home.

Parents need to be cognizant of their children's behavior, appearance, and mood, both for signs of the child being bullied or engaging in bullying behavior. Torn clothes, bruises, loss of appetite, mood changes, and reluctance to go to school are all signs that something is wrong. These are all signs that a child is probably being bullied. Many children fall deeper and deeper into depression as a result of long term bullying. Signs that a child is engaging in bullying behavior might be impulsiveness, showing no empathy for others, or a desire to be in control. Children who bully are often arrogant and boastful winners and poor losers when they engage in competitive games. Parents should also set adequate limits for a child's behavior at home and not allow aggression toward siblings, other family members and peers. Below are some helpful links to help support you in the most important job you'll ever have - Parenting!

- If Your Child is the Victim
- If Your Child is the Bully
- Reporting Procedures
- Anonymous Reporting Form
- Helpful Web sites
- Helpful Books (Bibliotherapy)



Bullying/Harassment

Anonymous Tip Hotline

#### Everyone has the right to feel safe.



# Safety is everyone's shared responsibility.

# Let's Complete The Puzzle





DESIGNED BY: JIMMY MCDONALD & ALLAN TURNBULL



# **Questions?**

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