



SPECIAL EDITION:

October is National Bullying Prevention Month!

Your GCS PTO want you as parents to have all the information you need to be knowledgeable about bullying, the different types of bullying, and how to handle these situations effectively. In this newsletter, you will find the tools you need to help you be a part of prevention and learn how to properly respond. "When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time." All it takes are a few simple steps from you to stop bullying and keep kids safe.

What is Bullying???

Bullying is a blanket term that can define as "unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time." This can come in many forms such as **verbal**, **physical** and even **social** bullying. The act of teasing or name calling, leaving someone out, or even taking/breaking someone's things are all examples of bullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices such as cell phones, computers, or tablets. Using social media and other platforms such as email where children are able to participate/comment or share negative or false content about someone else causing embarrassment and humiliation. "Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone involved – not just the person being bullied, but those doing the bullying or participating in it."

TAKING ACTION:

What TO DO when you see

bullying: Whether it is your child or someone else's, if you are witness to bullying it is our responsibility as adults to put a stop to the behavior.

- Intervene immediately.
- Separate the kids involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Stay calm.
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

What NOT to do:

- **Don't ignore it.** Don't think kids can work it out without adult help.
- Don't immediately try to sort out the facts, force other kids to say publicly what they saw, or question the children involved in front of other kids.
- Don't talk to the kids involved together, only separately.
- Don't make the kids involved apologize or patch up relations on the spot.

Get police help or medical attention immediately if:

- A weapon is involved, threats of serious physical injury or, hate-motivated violence, such as racism or homophobia.
- There is serious bodily harm or sexual abuse.

What to do NEXT:

Whether it's your child that is being bullied or a child has reached out to you for help, involving the 2 closest parties to the situation is key in developing strategies to stop the behavior moving forward.

Here at GCS we encourage parents to follow the following guidelines when your student is involved.

1st: Parents/ caregivers on both sides of the situation shall be responsible for establishing initial conversation. Showing our children how to handle a difficult conversation respectfully is the first step in stopping bullying. It is easy to become defensive, and get angry especially when your child is involved. I encourage all of us to "Remember that it may not matter 'who started it.' Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior."

2nd: Involve teachers or administration if the bullying is happening on school grounds/school events, or is affecting the learning environment in the classroom. This means that if 2 children have a confrontation at the park after school, and either of the students is uncomfortable at school, it is time to get the school involved.

NOTES FOR PARENTS:

If your child is being bullied or you need to address bullying behavior from your child, here are some tips to help.

Get the Facts: It can be difficult to get the whole story, and it can be scary for students to talk about a bullying situation for fear that it could just make it worse. But it is important that we are able to collect all available information," listen without blaming, and don't label the situation as "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened."

Determine if it's Bullying: There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else so you can make the best choice as to how you proceed.

Support:

For the kid who is bullied: It is very important that all children feel that they are being heard. Listen to the child's concerns and realize that it may be difficult for them to talk about the situation. Ask the child what could be done to help them feel safe and develop a game plan with the other responsible parties involved.

Addressing bullying behavior: Nobody wants to think that their child would intentionally want to hurt someone else. Teaching our children what specifically the inappropriate behavior is, that it will not be tolerated and there are agreed upon consequences to the behavior if it continues will help the child understand that bullying is taken seriously.

*www.stopbullying.gov

