

Chaffey Joint Union High School District

# **Bullying Intervention Handbook**

A guide to promoting a district-wide  
intervention in Bullying Behavior grounded in evidence-based practices.



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## CHAFFEY JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD POLICY

The Chaffey Joint Union High School District believes that all pupils have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The District, schools, and the community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

The Chaffey Joint Union High School District will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any pupil. A pupil shall not intimidate or harass another pupil through words or actions. Such behavior includes direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving, verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling, social isolation or manipulation, and verbal, written, or electronic off-campus expression.

The Chaffey Joint Union High School District expects pupils and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the Assistant Principal of Discipline and/or the pupil's counselor. Staff is expected to intervene when they become aware of a bullying incident immediately. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to pupils on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch period, whether on or off-campus, and during a school-sponsored activity. This may also include, but is not limited to, inappropriate use of technology while off-campus.

Staff will discuss this policy with their pupils to assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Pupils who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

### WHAT ALL PUPILS NEED TO KNOW:

- Any pupil who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Pupils are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the Assistant Principal of Discipline and/or to his/her counselor.
- Pupils can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying thoroughly and confidentially.
- If the complainant pupil or the parent/guardian of the pupil feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the pupil or the parent/guardian of the pupil should contact the principal of the school or the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel at the District office. The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

### THE PROCEDURES FOR INTERVENING IN BULLYING BEHAVIOR INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED, TO THE FOLLOWING:

- All staff, pupils, and their parents/guardians will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying: at the beginning of the school year in an information packet as part of the new/returning pupil orientation and the district website.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of the investigation confidential.
- Staff is expected to intervene when they become aware of a bullying incident immediately.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the victim or witnesses in any way.

## FACTS ABOUT BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation, and/or coercion means one or more acts by a pupil or a group of pupils directed against another pupil that constitutes sexual harassment, hate violence, or severe or pervasive intentional harassment, threats, intimidation, or coercion that is disruptive, causes disorder, and/or invades the rights of others by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment, substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being, and is motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic such as race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or disability, or is threatening or seriously intimidating. These acts are committed personally or by electronic means.



**To be considered bullying, the behavior must be unwanted and aggressive and include an imbalance of power.** Students who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same person.

**Repetition.** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, excluding someone from a group on purpose, and attacking someone physically, verbally, or by electronic means.

**Source:** [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

## TYPES OF BULLYING

There are four types of bullying:

- 1. Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:**
  - Teasing
  - Name-calling
  - Inappropriate sexual comments
  - Taunting
  - Threatening to cause harm
- 2. Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relations. Social bullying includes:**
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other students not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors about someone
  - Embarrassing someone in public
- 3. Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:**
  - Hitting, kicking, or pinching
  - Spitting
  - Tripping or pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone's things
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures
- 4. Cyberbullying involves the use of e-mail, social network sites, cell phones, webcams, text messages, Internet sites, etc. Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, be posted anonymously, distributed quickly to a broad audience, and be extremely difficult to delete at times challenging to prove who participated in the cyberbullying. Cyberbullying includes:**
  - Sending mean messages
  - Spreading rumors
  - Posting embarrassing pictures or videos on fake websites or profiles

## WHERE AND WHEN BULLYING HAPPENS

Bullying can occur during, before, or after school hours. Although most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places such as the school campus or the school bus. It can even happen traveling to or from school, in the student's neighborhood, or on the internet.

## FREQUENCY OF BULLYING

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) reports:

- Nationwide, 16 percent of students in Grades 9-12 experienced bullying.
- Nationwide, 1 in 5 high school students reported being bullied on school property.
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- Bullying is among the most commonly reported discipline problems in public schools. Nearly 14% of public schools report that bullying happens at least once a week. Reports of bullying are highest for middle schools (28%) followed by high schools (16%), combined schools (12%), and primary schools (9%).

For additional information on bullying and supportive classroom climate,

Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/fastfact.html>

Source: [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

## WARNING SIGNS OF STUDENTS WHO BULLY AND THOSE WHO ARE BEING BULLIED

Many warning signs may indicate that someone is affected by bullying – either being bullied or bullying others. Recognizing the warning signs is an essential first step in taking action against bullying. It is vital to talk with students who show signs of being bullied or bullying others. These warning signs can also point to other issues or problems, such as depression or substance abuse. Talking to the student can help identify the root of the problem.

### SIGNS THAT A STUDENT IS BULLYING OTHERS

Students May Be Bullying Others if They:

- Get into physical or verbal fights.
- Are increasingly aggressive.
- Get sent to the discipline office frequently.
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings.
- Have friends who bully others.
- Blame others for their problems.
- Do not accept responsibility for their actions.
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity.

### SIGNS THAT A STUDENT IS BEING BULLIED

Look for changes in the student. However, be aware that not all students who are bullied exhibit warning signs or will ask for help. Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries.
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or other personal items.
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness.
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating, or may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Feeling of helplessness or decreased self-esteem.
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.

If you know someone in serious distress or danger, do not ignore the problem. Get help right away.

### WHO MAY BE INVOLVED IN BULLYING?

- **Bully** – one or more students who intentionally intimidate or harm another student  
*A bully has power or social support. The harm caused by the bully can be physical or emotional or both.*
- **Victim** – the student who is being bullied  
*The victim has less power or social support and often blames themselves for the abuse.*



- **Bystander** – one or more students who stand on the sidelines and witness acts of bullying and might actively provide encouragement and support to the bully  
*Bystanders might not intervene or seek help because they fear for their safety; they think that they will lose friends; they might become a bully's target, or they could be labeled a snitch.*

## WHY STUDENTS DO NOT ASK FOR HELP

Statistics from the School Crime Supplement show that an adult was notified in only about one-third of bullying cases. Students do not tell adults for many reasons:

- Bullying can make a student feel helpless. Students may want to handle it on their own to feel in control again. They may fear being seen as weak or a rat (tattletale).
- Students may fear backlash from the student or students who bullied them.
- Bullying can be a humiliating experience. Students may not want adults to know what is being said about them, whether true or false. They may also fear that adults will judge them or punish them for being weak.
- Student who are bullied may already feel socially isolated. They may feel like no one cares or understands.
- Student may fear being rejected by their peers. Friends can help protect children from bullying, and students can fear losing this support.

Parents, school staff, and other adults have a role to play in preventing bullying. Tips for how to talk with young people about bullying can be found at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/talking-about-it/index.html>. Source: [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov) and *Right to Be Safe* (Meehan)

## STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING BULLYING BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL

How you respond can make an impact on bullying behavior immediately and over time. When responding to bullying, it is important to use the most effective strategies.

## WHAT DOES WORK?

There are simple steps that adults can take to keep students safe.

### STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT:

- Intervene immediately. It is okay to get another adult to help.
- Separate the students involved.
- Make sure that everyone is safe.
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm. Reassure the students involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

### AVOID THESE COMMON MISTAKES:

- Do not ignore it. Do not think students can work it out without adult help.
- Do not immediately try to sort out the facts.
- Do not force other students to say publicly what they saw.
- Do not question the students involved in front of other students.
- Do not talk to the students involved together-talk to them only separately.
- Do not make the students involved apologize or patch up relations on the spot.

### GET POLICE HELP OR MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY IF:

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



- There is sexual abuse.
- Anyone is accused of an illegal act, such as robbery or extortion-using force to get money, property, or services.

## **FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED**

### **GET THE FACTS:**

- Separate all students involved.
- Get the story from several sources, both adults and students.
- Listen without blaming.
- Do not call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.

### **DETERMINE IF IT IS BULLYING:**

- What is the history between the students involved? Have there been past conflicts?
- Is there a power imbalance? Remember that imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted student feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
- Has this happened before? Is the student worried that it will happen again?
- Have the students dated?
- Are any of the students involved in a gang?

## **SUPPORT THE STUDENTS INVOLVED**

### **SUPPORT THE STUDENTS WHO ARE BULLIED:**

- Listen to and focus on the student.
- Assure the student that bullying is not his or her fault.
- Know that students who are bullied may struggle with talking about it.
- Give advice about what to do.
- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied student.
- Be persistent.
- Follow up.

### **AVOID THESE COMMON MISTAKES:**

- Never tell the student to ignore the bullying.
- Do not blame the student for being bullied. Even if he or she provoked the bullying, no one deserves to be bullied.
- Do not tell the student to fight back against the student who is bullying physically. It could get the student hurt, suspended, or expelled.
- Parents should resist the urge to contact the other parents involved. It may make matters worse.

### **ADDRESS BULLYING BEHAVIOR:**

- Make sure the student knows what the problem behavior is.
- Show students that bullying is taken seriously.
- Work with the student to understand some of the reasons why he or she is bullied.
- Use consequences to teach.
- Involve the student who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation.
- Avoid strategies that do not work or have negative consequences.
- Follow up.



### **SUPPORT BYSTANDERS WHO WITNESS BULLYING:**

- Spend time with the students being bullied at school. Talk with them, sit with them at lunch, or check-in with them as needed.
- Listen to them.
- Call the student that is being bullied when they are home to offer encouragement and give advice.
- Tell an adult who you trust, like your teacher or coach. You can tell them in person or leave a note.
- Set a good example. Do not bully others.
- Send a text message or, at a later time, go up to the student who was being bullied and say, "Are you okay?" and "I'm here for you."
- Help the student being bullied get away from the situation.
- Help the student being bullied tell an adult.
- Take away the audience by choosing not to watch and walk away.
- Be kind at another time to the student being bullied.

### **RESPOND TO THE STUDENT DOING THE BULLYING:**

- Tell the student doing the bullying that you do not like it and to stop doing it (but only if it feels safe to do so).
- Distract the student doing the bullying or offer an escape for the student being bullied by saying something like, "Mr. Smith needs to see you right now" or "Come on, we need you for our game" (but only if it feels safe to do so).
- Do not combat violence with violence. It takes a lot of courage for someone to step up on behalf of a bullied student. Do not, however, use insults or physical violence to defend the student being bullied. Now is not the time to show off. You will most likely only make it more difficult for the student.
- Do not get discouraged if you have already talked to the teachers, and nothing happened. Keep trying. Teachers and other school authorities will respond if they find out that bullying is becoming a recurring problem. Try talking to other teachers, counselors, campus officers, or administrators so that you can get more people involved in trying to stop the situation.
- If you feel that this is none of your business, put yourself in the shoes of the student being bullied. Bullying can cause severe anxiety, depression, anger, and frustration and can turn the bullied student's life into a nightmare. You would not want to feel that way.
- Look for opportunities to contribute to the anti-bullying culture of your school through creating posters, stories, or films.

## **WHAT DOES NOT WORK**

Four commonly used strategies to reduce or prevent bullying have been proved to be ineffective against bullying behavior.

### **GROUP TREATMENT FOR STUDENTS WHO BULLY DOES NOT WORK BECAUSE:**

- The group becomes an audience for students who bully to brag about their exploits.
- Other group members can serve as negative role models for one another, in some cases, even learning from one another to bully.

### **SIMPLE, SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN PROVED INEFFECTIVE BECAUSE:**

- Bullying is a long-term, often-repeated problem.
- A workshop or assembly can help identify what bullying looks like and ways to respond, but teachers and students also need support and time to practice and master these skills.
- Bullying is primarily a relationship problem, and longer-term strategies are needed to help students and teachers experience supportive and affirming relationships within a caring school climate.



## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEER MEDIATION STRATEGIES SEND THE WRONG MESSAGE BECAUSE:**

- Bullying is a form of peer abuse-not conflict between peers of equal power and control.
- Such strategies may further victimize the student who has been bullied.
- Such strategies incorrectly expect the student who has been bullied or abused to solve his or her own abuse.
- Sessions and meetings become other opportunities for bullying behavior to be repeated.

## **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES DO NOT HELP SOLVE BULLYING BECAUSE:**

- Although bullying behavior is never tolerated, this strategy fails to recognize that bullying behavior is not a permanent characteristic of the student who did the bullying.
- Bullying is a behavior that can be changed and replaced with more positive prosocial behavior.
- Nearly 20 percent of students are involved in bullying other students, so it is not realistic to suspend or expel 20 percent of any student body.
- Students who are involved in bullying behavior are suspended or expelled when they may benefit most from continued exposure to positive prosocial role models and a caring school climate.

For additional information on bullying and supportive classroom climate, visit:

<https://search.usa.gov/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&affiliate=ed.gov&query=bullying>

## **TECHNIQUES FOR DE-ESCALATING STUDENT BEHAVIOR\***

Verbal de-escalation techniques are appropriate when no weapon is present. Reasoning with an enraged person is not possible. The first and only objective in de-escalation is to reduce the level of arousal so that discussion becomes possible. It is important to be centered and calm, even when we do not feel that way. It will help to practice these techniques before they are needed, so they become "second nature."

### **MAINTAIN CONTROL OF YOURSELF AND YOUR EMOTIONS:**

- Appear calm, centered, and self-assured. This will help everyone stay calmer, too.
- Use a modulated, low tone of voice.
- Do not be defensive-even if the comments or insults are directed at you; in most cases, the insults are not about you. Do not defend yourself or anyone else from insults, curses, or misconceptions about their roles.
- Call on a colleague, an administrator, security, or the police if you need more help.
- Be very respectful, even when firmly setting limits or calling for help. The agitated student is very sensitive to feeling shamed and disrespected. We want the student to know that it is not necessary to show us that he or she should be respected. We automatically treat the student with dignity and respect.

### **COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY NONVERBALLY:**

- Allow extra physical space between you and the student-about four times your usual distance. Anger and agitation can fill the extra space between you and the student.
- Get at the same eye level (kneel, sit, or stoop as needed) and maintain constant eye contact. Allow the student to break his or her gaze and look away if need be.
- Do not point or shake your finger.
- Do not touch the student-even if some touching is generally culturally appropriate and usual in your setting. Physical contact could easily be misinterpreted as hostile or threatening.



- Keep your hands out of your pockets, up and available to protect yourself, and stand at an angle to the student.

#### **THE DE-ESCALATION DISCUSSION:**

- Remember that there is no content except trying to calmly bring the level of arousal down to a safer place.
- Do not get loud or try to yell over a screaming student. Wait until the student takes a breath; then talk. Speak calmly at an average volume.
- Respond selectively; answer only informational questions no matter how rudely asked (e.g., "Why do I have to do what you say?"). Do not answer abusive questions (e.g., "Why are all teachers jerks?"). This question should get no response whatsoever.
- Explain limits and rules in an authoritative, firm, but always respectful tone. Give choices where possible in which both alternatives are safe ones (e.g., "Would you like to continue our meeting calmly or would you prefer to stop now and come back tomorrow when things can be more relaxed?").
- Empathize with feelings but not with the behavior (e.g., "I understand that you have every right to feel angry, but it is not okay for you to threaten other students or me.").
- Do not solicit how the student is feeling or analytically interpret feelings.
- Do not argue or try to convince.
- Suggest alternative behaviors where appropriate (e.g., "Would you like to change seats?").
- Give the consequences of inappropriate behavior without threats or anger.
- Represent external controls as institutional rather than personal.

Trust your instincts. There is nothing magic about talking someone down. You are transferring your sense of calm, respectful, clear limit setting to the agitated student in the hope that he or she wishes to respond positively to your respectful attention. Do not be a hero, and do not try de-escalation if a student has a weapon. In that case, simply cooperate.

Adapted from Skolnik-Acker, E. (2008). *Verbal de-escalation techniques for defusing or talking down an explosive situation*. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers, Massachusetts Chapter, Committee for the Study and Prevention of Violence Against Social Workers.

## **CJUHSD STUDENT BULLY BEHAVIOR REPORT PROCEDURES**

THE PROCEDURES FOR INTERVENING IN BULLYING BEHAVIOR INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

- All staff, pupils, and their parents/guardians will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying: at the beginning of the school year in an information packet as part of the new/returning pupil orientation and the District website.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of the investigation confidential.
- Staff is expected to intervene when they become aware of a bullying incident immediately.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the victim or witnesses in any way.

## **RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING BULLYING BEHAVIOR**

School staff is bound ethically and, in many cases, legally to respond to reports of bullying behavior. It is important to respond to reports of bullying whether you witness the action, or a student reports it to you. It is also important to respond appropriately to a situation. In some cases, it is possible that what occurred is not bullying, but to respond appropriately, you need to carefully research and document allegations.



To help ensure a safe and orderly environment while responding to and then following up on incidents, your school's Student Code of Conduct should always guide you. Whether a bullying incident is witnessed or reported by a student, you can follow these simple guidelines called The Five Rs.

## THE FIVE Rs:

### **RESPOND**

#### **STEP 1:**

When bullying is reported to you or witnessed by you, you must respond and intervene immediately, making sure that everyone is safe. You want to model respectful behavior when you intervene and reassure the student who has been bullied that what has happened is not their fault. Always ask the student, "What do you need from me?" This may help you determine some of your next steps, including what kind of follow-up is needed.

### **RESEARCH:**

#### **STEP 2:**

It is important to document what the allegations are and to try to capture information from as many sources as possible, including bystanders, about what happened. Using their exact language, write down precisely what students say happened. It may also be helpful to try to find out whether anything happened that might have led to the incident. An important part of your research is to determine whether the incident was bullying or another negative or aggressive interaction.

### **RECORD:**

#### **STEP 3:**

Good documentation will provide what is needed to write a thorough, accurate, and helpful report. Collect and save everything in a folder at your site. In some cases, like cyberbullying, there may be things like text messages, pictures, videos, or e-mails that should be copied and saved for attachment to a report.

### **REPORT:**

#### **STEP 4:**

Just like responding to the incident itself, writing and filling a summary report of a bullying incident should always be documented and shared with key individuals.

### **REVISIT:**

#### **STEP 5:**

After a plan has been developed for both the student who was bullied and the student who engaged in bullying behavior, it will be important for you to follow up with each student to check and see how things are going. You want to find out if anything has changed, if the plans put into place are working (or not), and if anything, else needs to be done. Follow-up gives you a chance to gather more information, and it lets all the students involved know that there is continued adult support for them.

## GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD INVESTIGATION/REPORT

When developing your reports, here are some general guidelines:

- If you witness an incident, report what occurred along with what else you learned in your investigation.
- Report what you observed as accurately and specifically as possible.
- If you did not witness the incident, in your investigation, report on what all of the witnesses told you they saw and heard. Include students and adults if available.
- It is best to write down the actual language a student said (including curse words) so that administrators, parents, and others who may be involved understand exactly what was said and what happened.



- Avoid editorial comments (e.g., "Suzy is just like her brother? In fact, the whole family is a problem.").
- If relevant, briefly explain how a student's behavior was dangerous to themselves or other students – stress the "S-word" (safety).

The Five Rs are adapted from Barbara-Jane Paris, former principal at Canyon Vista Middle School, Round Rock Independent School District, Austin, Texas ([www.bjparis.org](http://www.bjparis.org)). Some of this material has been combined with content from [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov).