

# Blanchester High School



## Peer Mistreatment Handbook

## **Blanchester High School Building Response to Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing and Bullying Incidents.**

**A Completed Peer Mistreatment Incident Report Form will be submitted to the school office to be given to appropriate administration/program specialist.**



**School Staff will individually interview those allegedly involved in the incident(s) described on the Peer Mistreatment Incident Report Form.**



**Parent/Guardian will be notified of the incident and any action taken for their child.**



**Disciplinary action will be taken when necessary following district policy (see handbook).**



**Counseling and/or skill building for the students involved in peer mistreatment will be implemented when needed to improve school conduct.**

## Peer Mistreatment VS. Bullying

Use of the term *bullying* encourages people to look for “bullies” rather than to look for mean behaviors that anyone may choose and can do harm no matter who uses them. According to Ohio Revised code 3313.66, “Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any of the following:

Any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior causes both mental or physical harm to the other student and/or is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive creating an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student. This includes violence within a dating relationship. In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Department of Education released the first federal uniform definition of bullying for research and surveillance.<sup>1</sup> The core elements of the definition include: unwanted aggressive behavior, observed or perceived power imbalance, and repetition of behaviors or high likelihood of repetition. There are many different modes and types of bullying. The current definition acknowledges two modes and four types by which youth can be bullied or can bully others. The two modes of bullying include direct (e.g., bullying that occurs in the presence of a targeted youth) and indirect (e.g., bullying not directly communicated to a targeted youth such as spreading rumors). In addition to these two modes, the four types of bullying include: broad categories of physical, verbal, relational (e.g., efforts to harm the reputation or relationships of the targeted youth), and damage to property.

### What is Peer Mistreatment?

Peer mistreatment is aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Typically, it is repeated over time. It may take many forms: physical, verbal, emotional, and/or cyber. Peer mistreatment can leave individuals with emotional and physical scars well into adulthood. Students come to school to learn and grow. Peer mistreatment seriously damages that process. Adults have a responsibility to ensure children are protected and schools have an obligation to respond promptly and thoroughly to issues of peer mistreatment.

### National Statistics

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/news/media/facts/index.html#listing>

#### Been Bullied

- 28% of U.S. students in grades 6–12 experienced bullying.<sup>2</sup>
- 20% of U.S. students in grades 9–12 experienced bullying.<sup>15</sup>

#### Bullied Others

- Approximately 30% of young people admit to bullying others in surveys.<sup>3</sup>

#### Seen Bullying

- 70.6% of young people say they have seen bullying in their schools.<sup>3</sup>
- 70.4% of school staff have seen bullying. 62% witnessed bullying two or more times in the last month and 41% witness bullying once a week or more.<sup>3</sup>
  - When bystanders intervene, bullying stops within 10 seconds 57% of the time.<sup>16</sup>

#### Been Cyberbullied

- 9% of students in grades 6–12 experienced cyberbullying.<sup>2</sup>
- 15% of high school students (grades 9–12) were electronically bullied in the past year.<sup>16</sup>
  - However, 55.2% of LGBT students experienced cyberbullying.<sup>17</sup>

#### How Often Bullied

- In one large study, about 49% of children in grades 4–12 reported being bullied by other students at school at least once during the past month, whereas 30.8% reported bullying others during that time.
- Defining "frequent" involvement in bullying as occurring two or more times within the past month, 40.6% of students reported some type of frequent involvement in bullying, with 23.2% being the youth frequently bullied, 8.0% being the youth who frequently bullied others, and 9.4% playing both roles frequently.<sup>3</sup>

#### Types of Bullying

- The most common types of bullying are verbal and social. Physical bullying happens less often. Cyberbullying happens the least frequently.
- According to one large study, the following percentages of middle school students had experienced these various types of bullying: name calling (44.2 %); teasing (43.3 %); spreading rumors or lies (36.3%); pushing or shoving (32.4%); hitting, slapping, or kicking (29.2%); leaving out (28.5%); threatening (27.4%); stealing belongings (27.3%); sexual comments or gestures (23.7%); e-mail or blogging (9.9%).<sup>3</sup>

#### Where Bullying Occurs

- Most bullying takes place in school, outside on school grounds, and on the school bus. Bullying also happens wherever kids gather in the community. And of course, cyberbullying occurs on cell phones and online.
- According to one large study, the following percentages of middle school students had experienced bullying in these various places at school: classroom (29.3%); hallway or lockers (29.0%); cafeteria (23.4%); gym or PE class (19.5%); bathroom (12.2%); playground or recess (6.2%).<sup>3</sup>

#### How Often An Adult Is Notified

- Only about 20 to 30% of students who are bullied notify adults about the bullying.

#### Warning Signs of Being Mistreated by Peers

- Comes home with damaged or missing personal items.
- Has unexplained cuts, bruises and scratches.
- Avoids school and/or other activities associated with school.
- Takes a long “illogical” route when walking to or from school.
- Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school.
- Withdraws from or shows lack of interest in school related activities.
- Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he or she comes home.
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or physical ailments.
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams.
- Experiences loss of appetite.
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem.
- Appears upset after using computer or being online and/or after viewing a text message on a cell phone.

### **How Can You Help Your Child Deal With Peer Mistreatment?**

- Define peer mistreatment for your child.
- Regularly check in with your child and ask them how school is going.
- Encourage your child to ask an adult for help immediately when needed.
- Encourage your child to make friends and be friendly.
- Help your child to understand that being mistreated by peers doesn’t mean there is something wrong with them.
- Instill pride and positive self-esteem.
- Check in with your child after discussing peer mistreatment situations to see if the behavior stopped.
- Discourage fighting.
- Complete a Peer Mistreatment Incident Report Form found in the high school office.
- Do not avoid the situation or blame your child.

### **Student Strategies**

- Walk away from the person who is demonstrating harmful peer mistreatment behaviors.
- Join with other friends. People who mistreat their peers lose power if they are outnumbered.

- Let an adult know what is happening. If the first adult you talk to doesn't help, ask another.
- Don't show the person mistreating their peers it is bothering you. By not reacting to their behavior, it takes away the power they think they have over you.
- If you respond to peer mistreatment, respond in a neutral tone.
- Positive self-talk; remind yourself that the problem is with the other person, not you. Focus on the positive aspects of yourself.
- Complete a Peer Mistreatment Incident Report Form found in the high school office.

### **Helpful Bystanders**

Having helpful bystanders is one of the best defenses schools have against peer mistreatment. A helpful bystander is a person(or group) who sees or hears peer mistreatment happening.

- Become an active bystander against peer mistreatment.
- Take a stand against peer mistreatment and be inclusive by spending time with the person who is being mistreated and listen to them.
- Distract those students who are mistreating other peers.
- Help the student being mistreated remove themselves from the situation.
- Ignore rumors about other people.
- Don't laugh or cheer on when someone mistreats other peers.
- Complete a Peer Mistreatment Incident Report Form found in the high school office.