



Bullying Prevention Training and Consultation

Recent highly-publicized tragedies have intensified educators' focus on bullying, and wide support now exists for schools to proactively address this complex issue. Massachusetts' recently passed "anti-bullying" law is just one example of this support.

There are good reasons for concern. For one, a considerable percentage of students report that they either have bullied other students, or they have been the target of a bully. Secondly, research has demonstrated that bullying can have a far-reaching impact upon students' emotional well-being and academic performance. In addition, advances in technology have increased the methods, the incidence, and the impact of bullying behavior.

Many factors make bullying a challenging issue to address. Most incidences of bullying behavior are quick and have a duration of less than one minute. Most bullying takes place out of ear and eye shot of educators. And most young people do not report bullying to their teachers or other adults, in part because they believe that they will not be able to help.

One unique challenge of preventing bullying in schools is that it requires the coordinated efforts of *all* adults in a school: administrators, teachers, counselors and staff. Young people must receive consistent and believable messages that adults will intervene to prevent bullying—and trust that these interventions will be swift and effective—before students will come forward to report it.

School Mediation Associates strives to enable administrators to implement a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention tailored to their unique needs. Our vision is to help create and sustain a school culture in which bullying will not be tolerated, and where students and adults feel safe, supported, and perform to the best of their abilities.





We offer consultation and training in the following research-based strategies:

1. Creation of a system-wide anti-bullying policy

This is an essential first step. SMA helps educators articulate a general bullying prevention policy, and then assists each school to delineate specific consequences for different types of bullying behavior, outline an internal reporting process and parental notification procedures, and determine who will meet with and support students who are bullied and hold students who bully accountable. Ideally the policy should be created by a task force representing diverse interests. Many schools simply need to review and revise existing policy to ensure that it is comprehensive.

2. Training for teachers and staff on bullying (2.5-3 hours)

Every adult who interacts with students needs to understand the dynamics of bullying, be ready to intervene if they observe it, and be comfortable receiving bullying reports. SMA conducts dynamic and engaging workshops for the entire adult community including teachers, cafeteria workers, bus drivers and custodians.

3. Advanced training for bullying coaches (2 hours)

A core component of bullying intervention is the separate, private meetings conducted with students who bully and with those who are targeted. This hands-on workshop teaches adults to conduct effective meetings with students involved in bullying. Participants learn how to meet privately with targets and aggressors and have the opportunity to practice facilitating these meetings.

4. Curricular Consultation

Ideally anti-bullying information should be infused into school curricula. Lessons can be delivered through a variety of avenues (in health classes, in English classes, in advisory, etc.). SMA consults with key stakeholders to develop an approach that will work in each building, and then creates/assembles an appropriate curriculum for the specified approach.





5. Student Leadership (1 full day, 2 half days)

After adults take the lead, students can play an important role in preventing bullying, both by delivering an engaging message to peers and younger students, and by being active bystanders willing to informally intervene when bullying occurs. This program, which is appropriate only after strategies #1-#3 above have been implemented, inspires students to actively promote a positive culture and prevent social cruelty in their schools.

6. Parent Workshop (1.5 hours)

SMA's workshop teaches parents about bullying and its consequences, informs them about what is being done in school to address it, and provides strategies to reinforce bullying prevention at home.

School Mediation Associates can help deliver all of the above strategies or only some. Strategy #1—the creation of an anti-bullying policy—must precede implementation of all other strategies. And strategies #2 and #3—general training for staff and advanced training for coaches—must precede strategies #4 through #6.

Contact us for more information.

