Minnewashta Belief Statement

Respect yourself and others.   Be safe and have fun.   Do your best.

Bullying, Logical Consequences and at times other consequences

We believe that all staff and students should feel safe at Minnewashta. The definition of bullying we use is from the OLWEUS Bully Prevention Program. Bullying is when someone repeatedly _and_ on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending themselves.

To create a bully-free environment, we must teach our students to stand up for themselves and each other. This only happens when they feel a true sense of community with their classmates. We believe it is essential to teach the bully circle and help students understand where they are on the bully circle.

Policy 514 Bully Prohibition Policy

Bully Prevention

We identify the following types of bullying:
- verbal bullying
- social exclusion or isolation
- physical bullying
- bullying through lies and false rumors
- having money or other things taken or damaged

- threats or being forced to do things
- racial bullying
- sexual bullying
- cyberbullying (via cell phone or the Internet)

We understand that it is possible to categorize bullying into direct and indirect forms. In direct forms, bullying involves relatively open attacks, usually in a face-to-face confrontation.

- Verbal bullying with derogatory comments and name-calling, and
- physical bullying with hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting.

In indirect bullying, the aggressive acts are more concealed and subtle, and it may be more difficult for the bullied student to know who is responsible for the bullying.

- Social isolation—that is, intentionally excluding someone from a group or activity—and
- spreading lies and rumors.

Bullying can be distinguished from other kinds of aggression between students in several ways, but most obviously by the following:

1. the negative behaviors are intentionally targeted at a specific individual (it isn't an accident that this incident happened);
2. the repetitive nature of bullying (it isn't usually a one-time event); and
3. the power imbalance between the students.

One of the main characteristics of bullying is an imbalance of power; therefore, it cannot be considered a "normal" relational conflict between two students. Bullying is a form of peer abuse. The student who is being bullied needs to be protected from such victimization. The student or students who bully others must be helped to stop their destructive behavior.

Conflict resolution and peer mediation strategies can serve a positive role in building a safe school climate when used with conflict situations. Conflict resolution or peer mediation strategies, however, *should not be used to address bullying problems* because:

- Peer mediation/conflict resolution programs assume there is a bit of right and wrong on both sides. Such programs may blame the student who is being bullied and free the student or students who are bullying from some responsibility. These programs work toward a compromise that could mean further victimization of the student who has been bullied in the case of bullying.
- Another common assumption in such programs is that both parties have about the same negotiating power. This is usually not the case in bullying situations where

there is an imbalance in power favoring the student or students who bully. Chances are, the bullied student will be the loser in such negotiations.
- In peer mediation/conflict resolution programs, the mediator is told not to take a moral stand on the issue at hand. In bullying, the adults must take a moral stand and communicate that bullying is unacceptable.
- Conflict resolution/peer mediation programs leave most of the responsibility for solving bullying problems to the students. However, bullying problems are often complex and challenging to handle, even for trained school staff. To defer these problems to the students is giving them too much responsibility. By using peer mediators, staff may also think that bullying is not their problem to solve.

Our adults must also stand up and not allow bullying in our community. When it occurs, we need to be ready to use our logical consequences and other Responsive Classroom techniques to best problem-solve the situation with all involved. Depending on the case, the result of students or bullying students might be a time-out, losing the privilege of participating in the activity or being at recess that day to begin to fix the situation. It might be completing an apology of action to the student and family. It might mean removal from the classroom or school. It might be reported to the police if it is a difficult situation. It might involve assigning more staff to monitor and engage students—perhaps if the act of bullying is occurring at recess.

Research suggests there are several partly interrelated motives for bullying:
- Students who bully have vital needs for power and (negative) dominance; they seem to enjoy being "in control" and subduing others.
- Students who bully find satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to other students. This may be partly due to the environment at home, which may have caused hostility within the student.
- Students who bully are often rewarded in some way for their behavior. This could be material or psychological rewards, such as forcing the bullied student to give them money or enjoying the attention, status, and prestige they are granted from other students because of their behavior.
- Students who bully others may have some common family characteristics, such as parents who are not very involved in their children's lives, who lack warmth and positive involvement. Some parents may not have set clear limits on their children's aggressive behavior and may have allowed them to act aggressively toward their siblings and other children.
- Parents of children who bully sometimes use physical punishments and other "power-assertive" methods of child-rearing.
- In addition, students who bully others are more likely than other students to have

seen or been involved in domestic violence. In all probability, they have also been exposed to violence in the media and maybe through participation in "power sports" like boxing, kickboxing, and wrestling.

It is important to emphasize once more that these are the main trends. Not all students who come from families with these characteristics will bully others and not all students who bully come from these family environments. The peer group may also play an essential role in motivating and encouraging bullying behavior in children and youth.

At times, it might become necessary to use punitive techniques if the bullying behaviors do not cease. We will engage families and students in this way when necessary.

<u>Is bullying behavior harmful?</u>

Yes. Students who are bullied may develop physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach pains, or sleeping problems. They may be afraid to go to school, the bathroom, play on the playground, or ride the school bus. They may also lose interest in school, have trouble concentrating, and do poorly academically.

Bullied students often lose confidence in themselves and start to think of themselves as stupid, a failure, or unattractive. They may even develop feelings of guilt for being bullied ("there must be something wrong with me since I am the one being bullied"). Although relatively rare, some students who have been bullied repeatedly attempt and die by suicide.

Bullying can also affect students who are bystanders. Students who observe bullying may feel anxious (perhaps they will be targeted next) or guilty (not intervening to stop bullying). Over time, students who observe frequent bullying may feel less and less empathy for the student who is being bullied.

Students who bully others are more likely to become involved in other problem behaviors, such as criminality and substance abuse. One study found that by the age of twenty-four, boys who were identified as bullying others in junior high school were four times more likely to have been convicted of three or more criminal acts than boys who did not bully others.

We believe a bullying prevention program benefits all students in our school—not just the students who are being bullied.

What can educators do to intervene in bullying situations?

First, make sure all adults are involved—that they know about any bullying going on and accept responsibility and authority for stopping it.

Second, explicitly teach and give children plenty of opportunities to practice kind and respectful behavior and language. We believe engaging in RC practices and teaching the OLWEUS curriculum is vital.

Third, do the teaching in the classroom, school-wide, and, as needed, with individual children. As OLWEUS points out, any anti-bullying method will be more effective if implemented at all three of those levels. Involving parents is important, too.

Not to be overlooked is empowering the children who see bullying happening. These bystanders have power, primarily if they're taught to say, "Stop. We don't like what you're doing." And they can speak to the bullied child, "Come and play with us," which defeats the bully's attempt to isolate the victim.

Q: What practical Responsive Classroom techniques help educators prevent bullying?

Although not designed to deter bullying specifically, A: Many Responsive Classroom practices are consistent with those that anti-bullying experts have found effective. It's imperative, for example, that children gather together regularly as a class to get to know each other and appreciate both similarities and differences. Morning Meeting, a critical *Responsive Classroom* component, provides just this kind of regular class gathering.

Setting clear expectations is essential, too. The *Responsive Classroom* approach to discipline does that through having students share their hopes for learning and then guiding them to create rules that enable everyone to fulfill their hopes.

Teachers then introduce logical consequences when children don't observe the rules the class has made together. Those logical consequences would come into play when, for example, one child criticizes others' clumsiness on the playground. Such behavior violates any rules about respecting or taking care of each other, so a logical consequence is appropriate. Depending on the situation, the result might be a time-out, losing the privilege of participating in the activity, or losing the benefit of being at recess that day.

The *Responsive Classroom* approach also gives children plenty of opportunities to practice positive behaviors and language. Teachers use modeling and role-playing to teach positive social behaviors, and they strengthen social learning by connecting it with academic studies. They actively teach problem-solving, independence, assertion, and self-control. Teachers also encourage reflective discussion about what behaviors children think is working well and where they could improve.

What about recess, lunch and the bus?

A: The *Responsive Classroom* approach and our OLWEUS curriculum gives the adults at school strategies for structuring recess and being out there on the playground, involved with the children. Not only does this help prevent bullying, but if any bullying happens, adults can see it and stop it immediately.

As for the bus, the *Responsive Classroom* approach teaches students expectations for bus behavior and encourages adults to debrief with students about their bus rides. Bus drivers and school staff are encouraged to talk together about what's happening on buses. Then the whole school community problem-solves together.

Key Anti-Bullying Resources

Davis, Stan. 2005. *Schools Where Everyone Belongs: Practical Strategies for Reducing Bullying*. Champaign, Illinois: Research Press.

Olweus, Dan. 1993. *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.

Wessler, Stephen L. 2003. *The Respectful School: How Educators and Students Can Conquer Hate and Harassment.* Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.