



Creating a **Safe and Respectful Environment** on Our Nation's **School Buses**

See Something. Do Something: Intervening in Bullying Behavior



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Introductions



Your name.

The school(s) for which you drive a bus.

How long have you been doing school transportation?

What do you consider to be your primary responsibility as a school bus driver?

What do you **like most** about your job, and what **causes you the greatest degree of stress** as a school bus driver?



Workshop Opportunities



This workshop will include:

- A **definition** of bullying: what it is and isn't
- **Clarification** of what bullying looks like on the school bus
- **Ideas** for minimizing the occurrence of bullying
- **Strategies** for addressing and reporting bullying when it occurs



What Is Bullying?



“A problem behavior based on power relationships in which a student or a group of students uses power aggressively to cause emotional or physical pain and distress to another student.”

Bullying experiences include not only physical aggression but also verbal aggression, including teasing and taunting, spreading rumors, or socially rejecting and isolating another student.

Citations: 5, 7



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Student Bullying



Of students ages 12 through 18 surveyed in the 2006–07 school year:

- A total of 31.7 percent report being bullied
- Of those, 8 percent say they were bullied on the bus



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Impact of Bullying on Students



Students being bullied tend to report:

- Feelings of depression, anxiety, and isolation
- Low self-esteem
- Poor school performance
- Thoughts of suicide and suicide attempts

Students who bully tend to:

- Exhibit defiant and delinquent behavior
- Have poor school performance
- Be more likely to drop out of school
- Be more likely to bring weapons to school

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Students Being Bullied



- Report losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry.
- Have unexplained injuries.
- Complain frequently of headaches, stomach aches, or feeling sick.
- Hurt themselves.
- Lose interest in visiting or talking with friends.
- Are afraid of going to/from school or other activities with peers.
- Appear sad, moody, angry, anxious, or depressed.
- Talk about suicide.
- Suddenly have fewer friends.
- Avoid certain places.
- Act differently than usual.
- Want to sit near the driver.
- Want to sit with the same “safe” student or group of students all of the time (behind them, in front of them, or surrounded by them).
- Want to sit on the inside seat—not the aisle seat.

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Students Who Bully



- Become violent with others.
- Get into physical or verbal fights with others.
- Get in trouble a lot, including being sent to the principal's office or detention.
- Have extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained.
- Are quick to blame others.
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions.
- Have friends who bully others.
- Need to win or be best at everything.
- Try to move near enough to the student being bullied to continue bullying—for example, the bullying student may move near enough so the student being bullied can hear remarks, be touched, or be bothered.
- Vie for attention, talk loudly, wave at the driver in the mirror, or move from seat to seat.
- Watch the driver and change seats to be near the student being bullied when the driver is at an intersection or watching the road.

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Creating a Positive Bus Climate



Clearly establish with students your expectations for their behavior, what the specific rules are for riding the bus, and the reasons why those rules are in place.

Be firm with students but not tough.

Be courteous and not sarcastic.

Treat all students equally and fairly.

Be consistent.

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Continuum of Response



Assertive



Passive _____ Aggressive

Assertive means being confident and positive as well as consistent, fair, and responsible.



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Before getting on the bus:

- **Anticipate**—Time of day, time of year; keep a short, clear set of rules visible and talk about them once in awhile.
- **Understand**—Ages and stages of children in your bus.
- **Learn**—What to ignore and what to pay attention to.

Citations: 4, 11



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Responding to Bullying Behaviors



While the bus is in motion:

- Give verbal warnings, using students' names whenever possible.
- Call your school or supervisor.
- Avoid “stare downs” using the rear view mirror.

When the bus is stopped:

- Have students change seats.
- Talk with students who bully and/or are bullied. This should be done individually to avoid potentially re-igniting the bullying situation.
- Implement seat assignments based on district policy.
- Request assistance from school or teachers as appropriate.

Citations: 4, 11



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Responding to Bullying Behaviors



If student or driver safety becomes a concern:

1. Always follow district policies.
2. Stop the bus in a safe place out of traffic.
3. Secure the bus.
4. Stand up and speak clearly and calmly to the student(s) who are bullying another student or students.
5. Change the seat of the student who was bullying and/or the student being bullied, if needed, to a safe seat.
6. Never put a student off the bus except at school or at his or her residence or school bus stop.
7. When intervening, use caution not to challenge or provoke a student who is bullying because it may initiate further negative behavior.

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Guidelines



Hands off. Don't place your hands on students except to protect them in an immediate emergency.

Don't try to "assist" a student into the seat by forcing him or her down.

Any physical contact between bus driver or attendant and student must be an absolute last resort in an emergency situation.

Citation: 4



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De-escalation Techniques



Maintain Control of Your Emotions

DO—Appear calm, centered, and self-assured; use a modulated low tone of voice. Be aware of options. You can leave, tell them to leave, or call for security or the police. Be very respectful even when firmly setting limits or calling for help.

DON'T—Be defensive even if the comments or insults are directed at you.

Communicate Effectively Nonverbally

DO—Allow extra physical space between you and the aggressor, get to the same eye level, keep your hands out of your pockets to protect yourself, and stand at an angle to the student.

DON'T—Turn your back, stand full front to the student, maintain constant eye contact, point or shake your finger, smile, or argue.

De-escalate the Discussion

DO—Trust your instincts, empathize with feelings but not with the behavior, suggest alternatives, and explain limits in a firm but respectful tone.

DON'T—Get loud, yell, scream, argue, or analyze.

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Good Advice?/Bad Advice?



One way to get the attention of students on the bus and their willingness to address bullying among their peers is to write up the whole bus when serious bullying occurs.

FALSE



Good Advice?/Bad Advice?



If a student swears, it is best to write down the actual curse words a student uses (unless your school policy forbids it).

TRUE



Good Advice?/Bad Advice?



When writing a good report or referral, it is important to include your own personal perspective about the student's motivation or comparisons to his or her siblings.

FALSE



Good Advice?/Bad Advice?



A high-quality report or referral includes details about what you, as the bus driver, said and did in response to student bullying behavior.

TRUE



Reflections



What is something you learned in this workshop that **affirmed** what you are already doing as a school bus driver?

What is one idea, strategy, or learning that you feel you **can apply** to improve your skills and/or experience as a school bus driver?

Thanks for Participating!

