Preventing Bullying and Youth Violence

What is bullying? Bullying is a widespread and serious problem that can happen anywhere. It is not a phase children have to go through, it is not “just messing around”, and it is not something to grow out of. Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying involves:

Imbalance of Power: people who bully use their power to control or harm and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves. Intent to Cause Harm: actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm. Repetition: incidents of bullying happen to the same the person over and over by the same person or group

What Does Bullying Look Like? There are many warning signs that could indicate that someone is involved in bullying. If you suspect that someone you know is being bullied or is bullying others, please contact your school counselor.

- Comes home with damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- Reports losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry
- Has unexplained injuries
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- Has changes in eating habits
- Hurts themselves
- Are very hungry after school from not eating their lunch
- Loses interest in visiting or talking with friends
- Is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers
- Loses interest in school work or begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed when they come home
- Talks about suicide
- Feels helpless
- Often feels like they are not good enough
- Blames themselves for their problems
- Suddenly has fewer friends

Prevention

The ultimate goal is to stop bullying before it starts. Research on preventing and addressing bullying is still developing. School-based bullying prevention programs are widely implemented, but infrequently evaluated. Based on a review of the limited research on school-based bullying prevention, the following program elements are promising:

• Improving supervision of students • Using school rules and behavior management techniques in the classroom and throughout the school to detect and address bullying by providing consequences for bullying • Having a whole school anti-bullying policy, and enforcing that policy consistently • Promoting cooperation among different professionals and between school staff and parents

Bullying/Cyber Bullying Policy

The Wilkes-Barre Area School District Board of Education strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the schools. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the District to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and cyber bullying in any form are not tolerated.

The School Board prohibits all forms of bullying and cyber bullying on school property, in school vehicles, at school-sponsored events, or during travel to and from school. Any violation of this policy shall be considered an infraction of the Student Code of Conduct, with discipline implemented accordingly. All bullying behavior that is a violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to law with enforcement.

Look for these topics in the upcoming issues of our FACES newsletter:

November
Community and Family Outreach

December
Suicide Prevention

January
Eating and Nutrition
#GOODTHINGSHAPPENING

Follow @WB_FACES on Twitter!

Are you tired of only hearing/seeing the negative things going on in your schools and community? We are too!

Tweet us the #GOODTHINGSHAPPENING at your school and neighborhoods throughout the year for your chance to win!!

Prizes include gift cards, school supplies, and a chance to be featured in an upcoming FACES bulletin!!

Tweet out what makes you proud to be a Wilkes-Barre Area student!

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**Community Agencies for Preventing Youth Violence and Bullying/Cyber Bullying**

**Domestic Violence Service Center** - (570)823-7312 or (800)424-5600. Providing help to abuse victims, including emergency shelter and support groups for battered women and their children, 24-hour hotline counseling, safety planning, information and referrals, advocacy, seeking police intervention, obtaining a Protection from Abuse order, and community education.

**Victims Resource Center** - (570) 823-0765. Providing comprehensive victim services agency, sexual assault program, specialized services for victims of juvenile offenders.

**Luzerne County-Community Service Division** - (570)825-1674 or (570)706-8431. Providing victim witness program, and specialized services for victims of juvenile offenders.

**Department of Probation** - (570)408-8210

**College Misericordia Diversity Institute** - (570) 674-6195) e-mail: mhinton@misericordia.edu

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**On-Line Resources for Bullying and Bully Prevention**

**Stop Bullying Now**! [http://stopbullyingnow.com/](http://stopbullyingnow.com/)


**Olweus Bullying Prevention Program** [www.olweus.org](http://www.olweus.org)

**The 411 Bullying** [http://www.hamfish.org/newsroom/bullying411.pdf](http://www.hamfish.org/newsroom/bullying411.pdf)

Helpful Tips for Parents:

An important reminder:
Please forward the dates of your child's second varicella to the school nurse. The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires every student in Pennsylvania to receive 2 doses of varicella or have had the chickenpox disease, also, children attending 7th grade need a Tdap and meningococcal vaccine.

*This is important for your child's health and well being.*

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How can parents help to prevent bullying at their child's school?

Talk with and listen to your kids every day. Children are often too ashamed of themselves to tell anyone; sometimes they feel that no one can help, not even their parents.

Be a good example of kindness and leadership. Your kids learn a lot about power relationships from watching you. Any time you speak to another person in a hurtful or abusive way, you're teaching your child that bullying is ok.

Learn the signs. If you suspect that your child might be bullied, talk with your child’s teacher to determine whether or not your suspicions might be correct.

Create healthy anti-bullying habits early. Help develop anti-bullying and anti-victimization habits early in your children, as early as kindergarten.

Coach your children what not to do - hitting, pushing, teasing, being mean to others. Equally if not more importantly, teach your children what to do - kindness, empathy, fair play, and turn-taking are critical skills for good peer relations.

Help your child's school address bullying effectively. Whether your children have been bullied or not, you should know what their school is doing to address bullying.

Establish household rules about bullying. Your children need to hear from you explicitly that it's not normal, okay, or tolerable for them to bully, to be bullied, or to stand by and watch other kids be bullied. If your child is bullying, you can help him or her find other ways to exert their personal power, status, and leadership at school.

Teach your child how to be a good witness. Children can often effectively diffuse a bullying situation by yelling “Stop! You're bullying!” Most bullies stop within 10 seconds when someone tells him or her to stop.

Spread the word that bullying should not be a normal part of childhood. Some adults hesitate to act when they observe or hear about bullying because they think of bullying as a typical phase of childhood that must be endured.

Finally, it is important for everyone to understand that all forms of bullying - physical, verbal, social (gossip, rumors, exclusion from the group), and cyber bullying are NOT a normal part of childhood.

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**English as a Second Language??**

Free ESL (English as a Second Language) beginner level classes at the Osterhout Free Library. Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m.

Call 821-1959 to register.
When: Wednesday, November 9th, 2016

Where: Kistler Elementary School

Time: 4-7pm

This is a completely FREE event!!!

Turkey dinners for the first 300 people through the door!!!

Food, games, prizes, auction, and DJ!!!

Many representatives from Local Community Agencies will be in attendance to provide information on their services to help better serve our students, families, and community!