

Sims Elementary Bullying Prevention Program

Inspired by the Olweus Bully Prevention Program



What is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)?

The Olweus (OI-VAY-us) Bullying Prevention Program is a comprehensive framework for educating staff, students and parents about bullying behaviors and implementing concrete, measurable action plans for reducing bullying behaviors in schools and improving school climate.

As a result of implementation across the elementary program, all Sims Elementary students (K - 5) will participate in a weekly meeting with their classroom teacher (Every Wednesday during DEAR Time...startup date: 10/16/13). These adults facilitate a classroom meeting with students that addresses student concerns around bullying behaviors at school. Classroom meetings will take place at the same time each week as decided upon by respective building staffs. These meetings help students to build relationships in the classroom among themselves and with educational professionals. During the initial nine weeks, significant time will be spent defining bullying behaviors with students:

- Bullying is purposeful words or actions that are mean or hurtful
- Bullying happens repeatedly
- Bullying happens when there is an imbalance of power

This definition is reflected within Sims Elementary revised Bullying Policy (see attached document). Our elementary school has adopted OBPP rules most typically used:

1. We will not bully
2. We will try to help students who are bullied
3. We will include students who are left out of games or activities

8/9/2013

4. We will tell an adult about bullying behavior when we know a student is being bullied

After defining bullying behaviors and sharing rules, classroom meetings begin to focus on building empathic relationships - friends taking care of friends. Teachers may share books from the library, related quotes and other team building activities with students. There are commonly discussions about being a good friend, including others and intervening to help others who are being bullied. Discussion topics are flexible and are adapted to proactively resolve emerging issues within a given building or classroom and meet students' individual needs as they share them. The OBPP is only possible through a strong collaborative effort between students, parents, teachers, staff and administration. It is a team approach to support children in our schools, to teach students skills necessary for future successes and to assist in providing the best education possible for each and every student by improving our learning environment.

Who has been/will be trained?

Training will be provided to a Core Team at Sims Elementary consisting of teachers, counselors, principals, and parents who will then assist with training all Sims Elementary School staff including:

Classroom teachers
Special subject teachers
Special education teachers
Paraprofessionals
Building aides (cafeteria aides, custodians, bus drivers, etc.)

How will the bullying prevention program efficacy be measured?

Baseline data will be collected from d by surveying students in grades K-5 about bullying behaviors at Sims Elementary. The data will be analyzed and the results will be shared with the Core Team and school staff. Based on the findings, the Core Team and school personnel will make positive changes to the program for future years. Data showing the prevalence of bullying in any school building is a powerful tool toward action. Students will be assessed again towards the end of the year to make a post comparison.

Additionally, qualitative feedback, both positive and negative, from our students, parents, teachers, staff and principals about the OBPP will continue to be used to gauge the program's strengths/weaknesses.

8/9/2013

SES Timeline of Implementation 2013-14

August:

- **Core Team Meeting 14th or 21st 2:30-3:30**
- **Planning Bullying Prevention Kickoff Program**
- **Training w/ teachers and staff**

September:

- **Disseminate Bullying Survey to Students K-5 (week of August 12th- 16th)**
- **Kickoff September 10th with Ronald McDonald (School-wide Assembly on Friendship & Bullying)**

October (National Bullying Prevention Month)

- **Training w/ teachers and staff**
- **Stomp Out Bullying Day (Blue Shirt Day)**
- **Red Ribbon Week (Promote: Be a Buddy, Not a Bully)**
- **Classroom Weekly Meetings School-wide begins 10/16/13.
Students will participate in weekly meetings during DEAR time every Wednesday.**
- **Weekly News Show announcement**
- **Poster Contest**

November

- **Weekly Class Meetings**
- **Kindergarten Role Play/Skit**
- **Weekly News Show Announcement**

December

- **Weekly Class Meetings**
- **First Grade Role Play**
- **Weekly News Show Announcement**

January

- **Weekly Class Meetings**
- **Core Committee Meeting**
- **Stand Up and Speak Out**
- **Second Grade Role Play**
- **Weekly News Show Announcement**

February

- **Weekly Class Meetings**

8/9/2013

- **Third Grade Role Play**
- **Weekly News Show Announcement**

March

- **Weekly Class Meetings**
- **Fourth Grade Role Play**
- **Weekly News Show Announcement**
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April

- **Weekly Class Meetings**
- **Weekly News Show Announcement**

May

- **Bullying Year-End Assessment**
- **Fifth Grade Role Play**

8/9/2013

Submitted by: Sadie Searcy, School Counselor August 9, 2013



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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Sims Elementary School prohibits acts of harassment or bullying. The stakeholders have determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

"Harassment or bullying" is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand held device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle.

"Harassment" is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- is directed at one or more pupils;
- substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils;
- adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district's educational programs or activities because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the pupil, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive as to have this effect; and,
- is based on a pupil's actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

“Bullying” is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- **is directed at one or more pupils;**
- **substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils;**
- **adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district’s educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing emotional distress; and,**
- **is based on a pupil’s actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.**

The stakeholders of D.L. Sims Elementary School expects students to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers, and contractors.

The Rockdale County Board of education believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents and guardians, staff, and community members of the school district, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members.

The stakeholders of D.L. Sims Elementary School believes that the best discipline is self-imposed, and that it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities for helping students learn to assume responsibility and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to *prevent* discipline problems and encourage students’ abilities to develop self-discipline.

Since bystander support of harassment or bullying can support these

8/9/2013

behaviors, the district prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying. The staff should encourage students to support students who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, or report them to the designated authority.

The stakeholders of Sims Elementary School requires its school administrators to develop and implement procedures that ensure *both* the appropriate consequences *and* remedial responses to a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment or bullying. The following factors, at a minimum, shall be given full consideration by school administrators in the development of the procedures for determining appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each act of harassment or bullying.

Factors for Determining Consequences

- Age, development, and maturity levels of the parties involved
- Degree of harm
- Surrounding circumstances
- Nature and severity of the behavior(s)
- Incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
- Relationship between the parties involved
- Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred

Factors for Determining Remedial Measures

Personal

- Life skill competencies
- Experiential deficiencies
- Social relationships
- Strengths
- Talents
- Traits
- Interests
- Hobbies
- Extra-curricular activities
- Classroom participation
- Academic performance

Environmental

- School culture
- School climate
- Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student
- General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments

8/9/2013

- Staff ability to prevent and de-escalate difficult or inflammatory situations
- Social-emotional and behavioral supports
- Social relationships
- Community activities
- Neighborhood culture
- Family situation

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, in the case of a student, or suspension or termination in the case of an employee, as set forth in the board of education's approved code of student conduct or employee handbook.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment or bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance, and must be consistent with the board of education's approved code of student conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to: *correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence* of the behavior; and *protect the victim* of the act.

Effective discipline should employ a school-wide approach to adopt a rubric of bullying offenses and the associated consequences. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

Examples of Consequences

- Admonishment
- Temporary removal from the classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Classroom or administrative detention
- Referral to disciplinarian
- In-school suspension during the school week or the weekend, for students
- Out-of-school suspension
- Legal action
- Expulsion or termination

Examples of Remedial Measures

Personal

- Framing the aggressive behavior as a failed attempt to solve a real

8/9/2013

problem or reach a goal. The adult assists the misbehaving student to find a better way to solve the problem or meet the goal.

- Restitution and restoration
- Transformative conferencing/restorative justice
- Peer support group
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- Supportive discipline to increase accountability for the bullying offense
- Supportive interventions, including participation of an Intervention and Referral Services team, peer mediation, etc.
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation, including, but not limited to, a referral to a Child Study Team, as appropriate
- Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored
- Involvement of school disciplinarian
- Student counseling
- Parent conferences
- Student treatment
- Student therapy

Environmental (Classroom, School Building, or School District)

- Set a time, place, and person to help the bully reflect on the offending behavior, maintaining an emotionally-neutral and strength-based approach
- School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- School culture change
- School climate improvement
- Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs
- Modifications of schedules
- Adjustments in hallway traffic
- Modifications in student routes or patterns traveling to and from school
- Targeted use of monitors (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, bus)
- General professional development programs for certificated and non-certificated staff
- Professional development plans for involved staff
- Disciplinary action for school staff who contributed to the problem
- Parent conferences
- Referral to Family counseling
- Involvement of parent-teacher organizations
- Involvement of community-based organizations
- Development of a general bullying response plan

8/9/2013

- Peer support groups
- Law enforcement involvement (e.g., school resource officer, juvenile officer)

The stakeholders of D.L. Sims Elementary School require the principal and/or the principal's designee at each school to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or the principal's designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action *may not* be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The stakeholders of Sims Elementary School require the principal and/or the principal's designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the principal and/or the principal's designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The investigation is to be completed within three school days after a report or complaint is made.

The stakeholders of Sims Elementary School prohibit reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

The Rockdale County Board of Education prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a *person* found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a *school employee* found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with district policies, procedures, and agreements.

The stakeholders of Sims Elementary School require school officials to annually disseminate the policy to all school staff, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all

8/9/2013

applicable acts of harassment and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or on a school bus. The chief school administrator shall develop an annual process for discussing the school district policy on harassment and bullying with students and staff.

The school community shall incorporate information regarding the policy against harassment or bullying into each school employee training program and handbook.