

OCTOBER IS

# BULLY PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

October 2013  
Bullying Prevention  
*Tips of the Month*

With the start of the HCPSS school year, students, staff, parents and community were informed or reminded of Howard County School System's new Strategic Plan-Vision 2018-Fulfilling the Promise of Preparation. The Plan's focus on the whole child continues to include academic rigor, *"but we are broadening our focus to encompass students' social, emotional and physical needs."* Goal one is all about students...*Every student achieves academic excellence in an inspiring, engaging, and supportive environment.*

Preventing bullying and harassing behaviors in our schools would certainly be the outcome of successfully "supporting the social and emotional safety and well-being of all students" (Outcome 1.7) and "supporting student well-being and development of balanced lifestyles." (Outcome 1.8)

*Parents, school staff, and organizations all have a role to play  
in Addressing Bullying Behavior*

## Support Kids Who are Bullied

- Listen and focus on the child.
- Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- Know that kids who are bullied may struggle with talking about it.
- Give advice about what to do.
- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child.
- Be persistent.

## Avoid these mistakes:

- Never tell the child to ignore the bullying.
- Do not blame the child for being bullied. Even if he or she provoked the bullying, no one deserves to be bullied.
- Do not tell the child to physically fight back against the kid who is bullying. It could get the child hurt, suspended, or expelled.
- Parents should resist the urge to contact the other parents involved. It may make matters worse. School or other officials can act as mediators between parents.

**Follow-up.** Show a commitment to making bullying stop. Because bullying is behavior that repeats or has the potential to be repeated, it takes consistent effort to ensure that it stops.

## Address Bullying Behavior

- **Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is.**
- **Show kids that bullying is taken seriously**

- **Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied**
- **Use consequences to teach.**
- **Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation.** The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
  - Write a letter apologizing to the student who was bullied.
  - Do a good deed for the person who was bullied or for others in your community.
  - Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged

### **Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences.**

- Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or expelling students who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Students and teachers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or expulsion is the consequence.
- Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
- Group treatment for students who bully doesn't work. Group members tend to reinforce bullying behavior in each other.

**Follow-up.** After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good friend.

### **Support Bystanders Who Witness Bullying**

Even if kids are not bullied or bullying others they can be affected by bullying. Many times, when they see bullying, they may not know what to do to stop it. They may not feel safe stepping in in the moment, but there are many other

#### **Steps they can take:**

- Be their friend
- Tell a trusted adult
- Don't give bullying an audience
- Set a good example
- Help them get away (if safe)

