



Milliken Middle School

Creating a Culture of Honor

Definition of a bully: “A blustering, quarrelsome, overbearing person who habitually badgers and intimidates smaller or weaker people.”

Dictionary.com

Key elements of bullying:

1. Imbalance of power- this is physical (size), psychological, or intellectual and hinders the victim from defending him/herself.
2. Repeated actions- this happens when negative actions usually occur repetitively over a period of time.
3. Intentional actions- when bullies purposely choose actions that will hurt or intimidate the targeted victim. Bullies seldom show empathy or concern for the victim.
4. Unequal levels of affect- the victim may display high levels of emotional distress (yelling, crying, withdrawal, anxiousness) where the bully will show very little remorse or anguish. The bully will often blame the victim, “they deserved it”. The bullies commonly feel justified in their actions.

Why Middle School?



1. The belief that bullying is “just a normal part of adolescence”, is ignorant and dangerous.
2. Bullying patterns can be firmly entrenched by the time students reach middle school with bullies continuing to gain and abuse their power.
3. The average preadolescent and adolescent child entering middle school today has witnessed 100,000 acts of simulated violence on TV, in the movies and more recently via video games. (1995 statistic)
4. The repeated witnessing of violent acts can result in desensitization to violence in general and a subtle acceptance of mean-spiritedness towards others.

Why Middle School continued...

5. It can often seem that this “mean-spiritedness” is the “popular” way to behave.
6. Our culture often embraces the belief of survival of the fittest and rewards the risk-taker.
7. The bully can often feel justified in using his or her power to dominate and intimidate others.
8. Our culture often also encourages others to solve our own problems without asking for help from others.

Why Middle School continued...

9. Cultural factors can combine to create a fertile ground for bullying behaviors.

10. The adolescent has very specific developmental needs and with students experimenting with several important developmental tasks, several factors are at play.

11. Some of these tasks include finding a sense of identity, the power of the group-”group think” or herd mentality, sorting out issues of adult authority and their search for power and identity can cause the child to take a negative direction.



Normal Conflict

Conflict is a normal part of interpersonal relationships and an important part of childhood learning. Teens need to learn when to ask for help with a problem and if it is one they can handle on their own.

As children progress through middle school, they become increasingly reliant on themselves or look to peers for help.



Recognizing the difference between normal conflict and bullying.

Normal Conflict-

Equal power among friends

Happens occasionally

Accidental

Not serious

Equal emotional reaction

Not seeking power or attention

Not trying to get something

Remorse-take responsibility

Effort to solve the problem

Bullying-

Imbalance of power

Repeated negative actions

Purposeful

Serious-threat of physical harm or emotional or psychological hurt

Strong emotional reaction by victim

Seeking power, control

Trying to gain material things or power

No remorse, blames victim

No effort to solve problem

Bullying behavior CAN include the following:

Physical aggression-destroy property, threatening

Social aggression-spreading rumors, exclusion

Verbal aggression-name-calling, teasing, threatening, intimidating, phone calls, texts, social media

Intimidation-graffitti, taking belongings, coercion

Written aggression-note-passing, graffitti, “slam book”

Sexual harassment-any comments or actions of a sexual nature, unwelcome and make the recipient uncomfortable

Racial/Cultural/Ethnic harassment-comment or actions containing racial or ethnic content (direct or indirect) which are unwelcome and make the recipient uncomfortable

How can you help as a parent?



1. Coach your child to handle teasing and bullying.
2. How the “victim” responds to the first verbal aggression determines whether the bully continues to target this child.
3. Role play with your child is a great way to prepare them to stand up to a bully. How he/she responds may exaggerate the situation or defuse it. Practice until your child feels confident in handling difficult situations.
4. The best strategy is to respond evenly and firmly, maintaining the dignity of all children involved. Use some simple phrases such as “I’m just going to ignore that comment.” “Don’t do that”. “No.” Then walk away.
5. Teach your child to act brave, look the bully in the eye, and say one of these phrases. Practice until your child has a strong, self-assured tone.

Parent tips continued...

6. Assert by standing tall and using a strong voice.
7. Consider helping your child create a statement agreeing with the teaser. “Hey, four eyes.” Child: “yep, my eyesight is poor.” (maybe throw in a shrug!)
8. Ignore it. Bullies love it when their teasing upsets their victims, so help your child find a way to not let his tormentor get to him.
9. When students intervene correctly, research shows they can cut bullying by more than half the time and within ten seconds. Teach your child how to:
 - Partner with the victim and remove them from danger. Go physically stand with them, turn them away from the bully and walk off in the direction of help.
 - Tell your student to call for other kids to come and help
 - Shout for a teacher or send someone to get a teacher
 - Call 911 if an emergency

Cyberbullying

The Challenge of technology and Social Media



What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices such as cell phone and tablets.

It can occur through SMS, text, apps, online in social media, forums, gaming , or anywhere one can view, participate in , or share content.

Cyberbullying includes sending, posting or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else.

It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and Tik Tok.
- SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
- Instant Message (via devices, email, apps, and social media)



Special Concerns

1. Anything posted online and shared with others can often be viewed by strangers as well as friends.
2. Content shared online creates a **PERMANENT PUBLIC RECORD** of their views, activities and behavior.
3. This public record can be thought of as an online reputation.
4. This record may be accessible to schools, employers, colleges, and any others who may be researching an individual now or in the future.
5. Cyberbullying can harm the online reputation of everyone involved, not just the person being bullied , but those doing the bullying or participating in it.

Digital Awareness for Parents

1. The digital world is constantly evolving with new social media platforms, apps, and devices and children and teens are often the first to use them.
2. You may not be able to monitor all of your child's activities, there are things you can do.
 - Monitor a teen's social media sites, apps, and browsing history.
 - Review or re-set your child's phone location and privacy settings.

Parent Awareness continued

5. Follow or friend your teen on social media sites or have another trusted adult do so.
6. Stay up-to-date on the latest apps, social media platforms, and digital slang used by teens.
7. Know your child's user names and passwords for email and social media.
8. Establish rules about appropriate digital behavior, content and apps.

If your child is being cyberbullied...

Some tips to try and help.

1. Assure the child you believe in them and that they are not alone with this problem.
2. Affirm that this is not their fault.
3. Establish that there are things that you can do and develop a plan.
4. Consider access to social media. Remove access to technology.

If your child is being cyberbullied continued...

5. Consider removing certain apps from their technology.
6. Contact your school. Understand that the school can only handle social media that is done at school.
7. If you have an off-campus situation of bullying, contact the police.
8. Don't be vague about bullying. Clarify what constitutes bullying. Pick one activity to work on with your child today.

How Parents Can Stop Cyberbullying

Helping Your Child Could Also Help Others

Suggestions for Parents...



1. Keep the computer in a common area of the home.
2. Learn how various social networking sites work and ask your children to show you their profile pages.
3. Regularly talk with your children and let them know they can come to you for help.
4. Build trust, set time limits, explain reasons for them and discuss rules for online safety. Ask them to help you establish the rules.

Parent suggestions continued...

5. Tell your children not to respond to any cyberbullying threats or comments online. Do not delete the messages but print them out, including the email addresses or social media handles of the cyberbully. This will act as your proof.

6. Don't overreact by blaming your children. Be supportive and understanding if they are being bullied. Reassure them that you will work together to find a solution.

7. Don't underreact by telling them to "shrug it off". The emotional pain of being bullied is very real and can have long-lasting effects.

Parent suggestions continued...

8. Don't threaten to take away your child's computer or phone if they come to you with a problem. This forces them to become more secretive.

9. Talk to your child's school so they can keep an eye out for bullying during the school day.

10. If there are threats of physical violence or the bullying continues to escalate, ***get law enforcement involved.***

Report Cyberbullying

*Steps to Take
Immediately*

1. Don't respond to and don't forward messages.
2. Keep evidence, record dates, times, description of instances, save screenshots, print text messages and emails.
3. Block the person who is cyberbullying.
4. Use your evidence to report the cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.

Report Cyberbullying to Law Enforcement

The following situations are considered a crime and should be reported to law enforcement.

- Threats of violence
- Child pornography or sending sexually explicit messages or photos
- Taking a photo or video of someone in a place they would expect privacy.
- Stalking and hate crimes.

Good news!

Yes, there is GOOD NEWS!



Middle School Kids are Up for the Challenge!

As their developmental stage can intensify bullying, it also provides a perfect context for educating students about how to make themselves and their school safe.

Adolescents are ready and eager to explore more about abstract concepts of power and influence and enthusiastic about learning how to manage and direct their own power for the common good.

Goals: We CAN do this!



1. We want to develop a “culture of honor” at MMS that will involve students, staff, families, and our communities.
2. This will begin with incorporating a Bully-proofing program that will be taught in the classrooms by the MMS staff. Every Friday there will be a thirty minute lesson on different aspects of the topic of bullying.
3. Each week in the parent newsletter there will be information on the topics the classroom lessons will be covering.
4. We will be surveying students interested and willing to act in a leadership role to help create this culture.
5. MMS has a mentoring program and we never have enough mentor volunteers!

GOALS continued...

6. The mentoring program is a way to be involved in the school on a one to one basis. Help us spread the word about this opportunity in our communities.
7. It is a great way to keep an eye on your kids with them not knowing what you are doing!
8. If you know of anyone who may be interested in becoming a mentor, please let us know. Mrs. Smith, our coordinator is here tonight with information.



Creating a Culture of Honor

Let's work together in partnership to help our Mustangs ride with pride!

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

Anne Frank

THANK YOU FOR COMING!