



NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC TELEVISION

Bullying Discussion Guide

Introduction

With the passage of HB 1523, New Hampshire schools now have a greater responsibility for reporting and dealing with bullying.

The passage of HB 1523 presents new challenges to schools, but it also provides an opportunity for working with parents, students, and staff to reduce incidents of bullying.

The guide provides an overview of some of the topics addressed during the show and some suggested topics for further discussion.

Questions Raised During the Show

School counselor Maxine Mosely talked about the importance of adult supervision in reducing bullying in schools. Are there particular areas in your school where students might be more vulnerable to bullies? What can be done to make those areas more secure for students?

Dr. Malcolm Smith talked about some of the myths around bullying, in particular that bullies have low self-esteem. What are some other common myths about bullies and bullying that need to be addressed?

Bully Free NH founder Carol Croteau talked about her initial reaction to her daughter reporting being the victim of a bully. Do you think her reaction is common in parents and adults when children report being the victims of bullies?

HB 1523 Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Act

(a) Occurs on, or is delivered to, school property or a school-sponsored activity or event on or off school property; or

(b) Occurs off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity or event, if the conduct interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operations of the school or school-sponsored activity or event.

School boards must adopt a written policy prohibiting bullying and cyberbullying. The policies must contain a procedure for reporting bullying and a procedure for investigation.

Each school district must provide training on policies and educational programs for pupils and parents in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying or cyberbullying.

Key Questions for Discussion on HB 1523

What exactly will schools have to do to be in compliance with HB 1523?

What is the school's responsibility for monitoring off-site cyberbullying?

Where does the school's responsibility end and the parent's responsibility begin?

What policies are currently in place to deal with bullying incidents?

What training is needed to help teachers, administrators, and staff deal with bullying?

Strategies for Dealing with Bullying - Adapted from Massachusetts Office of Health and Human Services

Effective

1. School-wide initiatives that make the entire school safe.
2. Educating all staff and parents on bullying prevention.
3. Providing adult supervision in outdoor areas, hallways, and other areas where bullying is likely to take place.
4. Educating staff on how to intervene quickly in bullying situations.

Ineffective

1. **Peer mediation**
Bullying involves powerful youth harassing less powerful youth. Mediation assumes a level of power equality and too narrowly puts the responsibility on the victim and the bully.
2. **Zero Tolerance Policies**
Suspensions without the bully taking responsibility and understanding how their behavior needs to be and can be changed is not effective.
3. **Advising targets of bullying to "stand" up or confront the bullies.**
Such advice is dangerous and unproductive. The school is responsible for ensuring the safety of students and youth need the support of the adults.
4. **Ignoring Bullying**
Staff inaction allows circumstances to escalate and sends a signal to everyone that the staff condones the behavior. Students are also less likely to trust the staff's power or competency to address incidents of bullying.