



# Imagine Newsletter

## A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

### Information for School Staff

Issue 2

#### Social Bullying & Bystanders

##### Facts about Bullying

- **Physical bullying** occurs more often between boys. It is usually dealt with as it is seen.
- **Verbal bullying**, like teasing and name calling, is the most common form of bullying, experienced by both boys and girls.
- **Emotional and social bullying** can easily occur without being noticed by adults. Some examples are spreading rumours, using threatening gestures, excluding or purposely embarrassing someone.
- Social bullying occurs most often between girls, who tend to target their friends. Boys tend to target their acquaintances.
- Compared with boys, girls who socially bully tend to have higher levels of social status among their peers.
- Girls report social bullying is more hurtful than being hit or shoved.
- The child who bullies gains power from those who are supporting the behaviour - the bystanders.



##### Bystander Facts

- 85 percent of bullying takes place in front of others. When this audience "goes along" with bullying they reinforce it.
- When bystanders intervene, they can stop bullying within 10 seconds over half the time.
- Even though most bystanders don't like to watch bullying, less than 20 percent try to stop it. This happens frequently because they don't know what to do.
- Bullying is often not reported to adults as bystanders may fear being bullied themselves and don't want to be a "tattler".
- When a child reports bullying, they need someone to listen to them. If nothing is done, they will start to accept bullying as normal. They may even start to think the child being bullied "deserves it".
- Bystanders become desensitized to the suffering of another when no intervention takes place. This can lead to a sense of powerlessness similar to that experienced by the child who was bullied. Thus the bystander can become a secondary victim in the bullying process.





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#### Why Kids May Not Help

- They're afraid of getting hurt themselves
- They don't know what to do and fear they may make matters worse
- They make excuses like: "It's not my problem", "She deserved it", "I don't want to be called a rat", "I'd rather be on the side of the bully" or "It's none of my business"

#### Becoming Helpful Bystanders

As school staff, we must not ignore the potential contribution of the bystander in bullying situations.

Children need to learn how their actions affect others:

- How being kind, accepting and empathetic can build another child's sense of belonging and self-esteem.
- By working together, solutions can be found to a conflict or a frustrating situation.
- Recognizing that all types of bullying - both words and actions can hurt!



#### Becoming Helpful Bystanders, continued...

Children can help stop bullying by:

- Not being in the "audience" watching or taking part in bullying
- Ignoring the person who is bullying or telling them you do not agree with what they are doing
- Telling the person who is bullying to stop. This can stop bullying within ten seconds! Taking this step can be challenging as a child has to believe in themselves and have assertiveness skills. It will require time and practice to develop these skills, best done by role-playing and discussion in the classroom.
- Supporting the child being bullied by saying "it's not your fault" and suggest "let's go play somewhere else".
- Finding an adult to help!

NOTE: Adults are not children's first choice for sharing information about bullying - they tend to speak to friends first - so if they seek your help, it is because it's needed!

**LET'S BLOW  
THE WHISTLE ON  
BULLYING!**



#### Resources you can use...

**The Imagine Manual** - Available online at [www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying) Check out the lesson plans and activities for your grade and the convenient "Teacher's Handbook".

While you're online, check out **Imagine Newsletter #9 for staff**, which lists all the bullying related resources available from Public Health. Call 519-883-2256 to reserve and arrange pick up.

**More Websites:** [www.canadiansafeschools.com](http://www.canadiansafeschools.com) The Canadian Safe School Network  
[www.prevnet.ca](http://www.prevnet.ca) Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH

For more information, contact Region of Waterloo Public Health 519-883-2003 ext. 5356

[www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying)