



Dear Principals, Vice Principals and Teachers,

October is National Anti-Bullying Month. The **Anti-Bullying Program** presented here will help your school address this difficult problem.

We know that bullying is a learned behavior, and yet most anti-bullying programs address the older child. Instead, why not prevent bullying before it begins by instituting an Anti-Bullying Code of Conduct in our elementary schools?

Children may act in a bullying manner without knowing it, while others may need to learn when “having fun” exceeds playful boundaries and becomes bullying. Others feel threatened and hurt when called unkind names, yet may be afraid to report these incidences—after all, “Sticks and stones will break your bones, but names will never hurt you,” and being called a tattler could be worse. Those too young or too frightened by the aggressive behavior of perhaps an older child do not know what to do if they feel threatened, and often resist attending school or riding the bus.

The Civil Rights Office of the Department of Education (USDOECR) and the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice (USJCRD) define bullying as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. No matter what label is used (e.g., bullying, hazing, teasing) it includes making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Using this sample material, an Anti-Bullying Program can be introduced in a positive rather than punitive way to students, parents, office administration staff, cafeteria personnel, bus drivers, and crossing guards. This step-by-step guidebook is to help create an environment where students understand what bullying behavior is; that bullying will not be accepted in school, on school grounds, at the bus stops, or on buses; what to do and where to go if/when they feel threatened; and most important—that they are safe. The Pledge is to help a child feel personally responsible for following the Code of Conduct, with the understanding that if the code is not followed there will be consequences.

With everyone working together toward this common goal, I believe your elementary school can be a leader in stopping bullying. Please let me know if I can assist you in developing this program.

Sincerely,

MaryAnn M. Butterfield
(Author, You Are Too a Bully!)