



## **Creating an Action Plan for Teachers to Combat Bullying**

Practicing the love of Jesus in our schools is a goal we can obtain by depending on Christ and creating a vision with our children and youth.

### **What is Bullying or Put-Downs**

When students of any age groups are targeted by an individual or a group for unwanted behavior or verbalizations, they deserve to be protected.

There is a misunderstanding that bullying is a normal part of development. Some adults think bullies grow out of their behavior and may also think that the victim will become tougher by enduring it. Research shows that bullies may grow up to commit more crimes than others, are likely to be involved in hurting people physically, like children, spouses or vulnerable elderly and more likely to practice violence or sexual harassment in the work place. Children who have been bullied have more of a chance of having depression, anxiety, do poorly in school, have low self-esteem that negatively impacts their future outlook, relationships and job, have a higher likelihood of suicide or may even become violent themselves.

In Adventist Education, this impacts a student negatively and impacts impacts their walk with God.

The behaviors of the bully must be stopped, as well as interventions are needed for the bully, the victims and the bystanders. Empowered bystanders are more effective than parents or other adults to stop bullying and must be educated to become a team of helpers in each school.

There is often an imbalance of power between a child who bullies and a child who is victimized. Bullying occurs in big schools, little schools, public schools and Christian schools. Our Adventist Schools are to be where we practice the **Golden Rule**. We are to be kind to one another to increase our love for God and others and to grow and learn to the best of one's ability.

As the breakdown of the family spins out of control, so does the growth of neglectful, aggressive or dysfunctional parents. They may also bully children and their teachers. We must create policies in which parents, children and teachers policies that are understood by parents, teachers and students, there

is more accountability and a lower incidence of this disruptive behavior.

Because bullying behavior and verbalizations are so devastating in our lives, here are some ideas to increase sensitivity.

**Registration:**

A. Each **student** before registration will view a PowerPoint (appropriate for their age) and sign a contract about their intent not to hurt or damage another student. The **parent** would be present and also sign a contract that they will be supportive should the teacher call them to report an incident where their child/student was involved. This information will be presented by a pastor, teacher, school board chairman.

B. Materials distributed and explained are to be:

- Bystander Checklist
- Bullied Checklist
- Bullying Checklist
- The Pledge/Contract
- Discussion on consequences/punishment of bullying issues.

*(Research found that it was more effective if before school, teacher needs to give a clear message that bullying is not acceptable at school and have parents understand the rules, consequences and punishment. Have parents read and understand policy.)*

C. Sponsor special days in the school year where bullying is reviewed. This may include special speakers, a poster contest, view videos, teach some Be Ye Kind Curriculum or have a special role plays.

D. Create a "Suggestion Box" where kids can put ideas or report incidents confidentially.

