

# FAMILY NOTE 1: Family Letter

Dear Family Members,

During the next few weeks, our class will be working on a curriculum called *The Bully Proof Kit*. The purpose is to teach students about various forms of bullying and how to them to deal with them in positive, healthy ways.



Informational posters, videos, card games and a variety of activities will help our class learn more about bullying and apply what they have learned to everyday situations.

Some of the activities will require work outside the classroom. Students will be asked to complete assignments dealing with their own lives and experiences with bullying. You are encouraged to help with these assignments. Your participation and guidance with this program will add greatly to its success.

*The Bully Proof Kit* includes parent sheets on how to determine if your child is being bullied, how to help your child deal with bullies, and what to do if your child is bullying others. I would be happy to share this information with you. Please let me know if you would like to receive these parent sheets.

If you have any questions about *The Bully Proof Kit*, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

## **FAMILY NOTE 2: Spotting the Problem**

The best thing parents and family members can do about bullying is to pay attention to the child's concerns and fears. Children who are bullied often say nothing because of embarrassment, fear of retaliation or feelings of hopelessness. But bullying can leave classic symptoms that can be recognized through observation and communication.

**Here are some common signs that your child is being bullied:**

- ✓ Subtle changes in behavior (withdrawal, anxiety, absentmindedness, loss of interest in school and favorite activities)
- ✓ Bruises and scratches, torn or dirtied clothing
- ✓ Missing or damaged property
- ✓ Loss of appetite
- ✓ Excessive trips to the school nurse
- ✓ Inability to sleep, bad dreams, crying during sleep
- ✓ Repeatedly losing clothing, money or other valuables
- ✓ Fear or reluctance to go to school in the morning
- ✓ Repeated headaches or stomachaches—particularly in the morning
- ✓ Taking the long way to and from school
- ✓ Talking about feelings of loneliness or having no friends
- ✓ Sensitivity, overreaction or withdrawal when asked how school was
- ✓ Strong appetite after school, perhaps because lunch was taken or because student was too stressed to eat at school
- ✓ Reluctance to take the school bus

## **FAMILY NOTE 3: If Your Child Is Being Bullied..**

**If you learn that your child is being bullied, follow the positive steps below:**

- ✓ Talk to your child. Get as much information as you can about what happened.
- ✓ Let your child know that you understand that verbal bullying can be just as harmful as physical bullying.
- ✓ Don't blame anyone, including the bully or your child.
- ✓ Be a part of the solution, but also let your child contribute. Give your child healthy ways to deal with a bully, such as telling the bully to stop.
- ✓ Contact school officials to let them know what is happening.
- ✓ Role play different situations with your child. Help her learn to use assertive body language and respectful words to solve problems.
- ✓ Remind your child that the bully's problems are causing the situation, not your child.
- ✓ Avoid giving advice such as "Don't worry about it," "Don't let it get to you," or "Give her a taste of her own medicine."
- ✓ Talk about your own experiences with bullying, both as a child and as an adult. This de-stigmatizes the subject and assures your child that you understand where he's coming from.
- ✓ Talking about bullies isn't a one-time discussion. Once you break the ice, come back to the subject whenever you feel you need to "check in" with your child. Be prepared to review the points you've already made in earlier talks.

## **FAMILY NOTE 4: If Your Child Is A Bully...**

### **If your child is a bully:**

- ✓ Your first response will probably be defensive. Take a deep breath and try to listen to the information instead of defending your child.
- ✓ Ask the person reporting the situation to explain specifically what happened.
- ✓ Ask the person reporting the situation not to label your child.
- ✓ Try to listen carefully to what happened. Get as many facts as you can.
- ✓ Talk to your child about what happened. Do not blame.
- ✓ Make it clear that bullying is not accepted in your family. Give your child consequences for his actions.
- ✓ Look for positive changes in behavior and reward them.
- ✓ Don't hesitate to get professional advice. This can include your school's principal, guidance counselor, a family doctor or mental health therapist.

## **FAMILY NOTE 5: Other Resources**

**If you would like to explore the topic of bullying further, please visit the following websites:**

**BUILDING A BULLY-FREE ZONE:**

[http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/parents/lesson\\_plans/bullies\\_classroom\\_community.html](http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/parents/lesson_plans/bullies_classroom_community.html)

**BULLIES AND VICTIMS: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:**

<http://www.teachersandfamilies.com/open/parent/bully1.cfm>

**BULLYING BEHAVIORS:** <http://www.safechild.org/bullies.htm>

**CHILDREN WHO BULLY:**

[http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/HHS\\_PSA/pdfs/SBN\\_Tip\\_1.pdf](http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/HHS_PSA/pdfs/SBN_Tip_1.pdf)

**MY CHILD HAS A PROBLEM WITH BULLIES:**

<http://childparenting.about.com/cs/behaviorproblems/a/bullies.htm>

**MY CHILD IS A BULLY:** <http://www.4troubledteens.com/childbully.html>

**PTA WEBSITE ON BULLYING:**

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/indexAdult.asp?Area=preventiontips>

**WARNING SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED:**

[http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/HHS\\_PSA/pdfs/SBN\\_Tip\\_7.pdf](http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/HHS_PSA/pdfs/SBN_Tip_7.pdf)

**WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT BULLYING:**

[http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/indexAdult.asp?Area=what\\_we\\_know](http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/indexAdult.asp?Area=what_we_know)