



Bullying: What You Can Do About It

Harassment, exclusion and violence are not inevitable. Working together we can end them.

To SCHOOLS ... what you can do

1. **Adopt strong, explicitly protective policies** like the new Washington State model [policy](#) and [procedure](#).
2. **Provide training** for every single adult in a school, from the bus driver to the coach to the teachers' aides to the principal,
 - a. so that they will all consistently and swiftly **enforce the rules** and talk with students about why, and
 - b. so that principals will **do proper investigations** and **levy productive consequences**, and
 - c. so that teachers will **teach** about people of color and about sexual and gender minority people and about prejudice (racism, anti-gay prejudice) and privilege ... because no amount of rules will stop the violence until we have the courage to talk about it. Inclusive, social justice-based curriculum is an essential piece of the puzzle.
3. **Provide supportive social environments** for students of color and sexual and gender minority students – whether they are being harassed or not – like gay-straight alliances (GSAs) & Latina/o clubs. Clubs influence not only *members'* sense of belonging to school, there is even evidence that the presence of a GSA changes bystander behavior and improves connectedness for LGBTQ students who don't attend meetings!
4. **Collect data** (qualitative & quantitative) to track harassment and to measure each teacher's, school's and district's progress & then make reducing harassment a part of every team member's **performance evaluation**.
5. **Call us at the Safe Schools Coalition** if we can help. Our non-emergency # is 206-451-SAFE (7233).

To STUDENTS ... what you can do

6. If you are being harassed, excluded, or assaulted,
 - a. **Know that it is not your fault** and that you are every bit as entitled to be there as any other student.
 - b. **Tell the offender(s) to get a life**. Avoid calling them names in the process, but do speak up and stand strong.
 - c. **Confide in someone** – don't suffer in silence.
 - d. **Find** something you love to do and **where you can belong**. Find a circle of peers who know and like you just the way you are – even if that's outside of school.
7. If you are witnessing harassment, exclusion or assault,
 - a. **Speak up** in the moment.
 - b. **Be supportive** of your classmate in public or, if you just can't, then at least in private.
8. Whether you are a target or a witness,
 - a. **Be an activist**. Making change heals the changer even as it heals the community – so don't put up with it – find other students and adults who will work with you to insist on change.
 - b. **Call us at the Safe Schools Coalition** if we can help – 877-SAFE-SAFE (877-723-3723). Or in Washington State, **call the Office of the Education Ombudsman**: 866-297-2597.
 - c. **If it comes down to a choice of taking your life or dropping out – choose to live**. There are other ways to get your education. We need you to live.



To PARENTS & GUARDIANS ... what you can do

9. **Model compassion and respect** for all kinds of people at home and insist, starting with toddlers, that they treat animals and all people kindly. Comment to your children about disrespect in media when you witness it.
10. **Love and support your child.** Never blame them for bringing the harassment on themselves. Never suggest that they change who they are to reduce the violence.
11. **Be an activist with and for your child**, helping them to record exactly what happens and to talk with adults at school about it and even the police if need be.
12. **Help your children find niches** -- outside school if you have to -- **where they can belong** (a martial arts program, a drama program, whatever).
13. **Call us at the Safe Schools Coalition** if we can help – 877-SAFE-SAFE (877-723-3723). Or if you are in Washington State, **call the Office of the Education Ombudsman**: 866-297-2597.

To LEGISLATORS ... what you can do

14. **Require, [as the Washington State legislature did](#)** in 2010, **that districts adopt very clear, protective policies.**
15. **Make clear that it is school districts' responsibility to respond to cyber-bullying.**
16. **Provide funding for schools to train every employee and contractor.** Be explicit about what the training is for (see 2 a-c, above).
17. **Direct the Professional Education Standards Board to make this training** (see 2 a-c, above) **part of every educators' pre-service degree program.**
18. **Set up a data collection system** that lets districts and the state track harassment and measure schools' and districts' progress.
19. **Call us at the Safe Schools Coalition** if we can help. Our non-emergency # is 206-451-SAFE (7233).

To EVERYBODY ELSE ... what you can do

20. **Write your high school principal.** Here's how: <http://wyp-faq.tumblr.com/post/1576462433/whats-write-a-letter-make-it-better> (or just search for "write a letter make it better").
21. **Find out your local school board's bullying policy.** It's usually on their web site. Look under "school board." Does it explicitly ban bullying based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity? Including bullying by both peers and adults? Does it promise a simple reporting process including an anonymous option? Does it commit the district to train all staff and students? If your answer to any of those questions was "no" then contact every school board member and ask why not. And invite all your friends and family over for tea and ask them if they'll contact board members, too.
22. **Find out your local school board's non-discrimination policy.** Does it protect students' right to a discrimination-free education? How about employees' right to a discrimination-free workplace? Does it explicitly prohibit discrimination based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity & expression? If your answer to any of those questions was "no" then contact every school board member and ask why not. Ask all your friends and family if they'll contact board members, too.
23. **Contact your state legislators** about items 14-18, above. Ask what they are doing about it. Tell them you will check back with them every couple of months. Then do it. Find them here: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/state-legislatures.html>
24. **Donate to or volunteer for the [Safe Schools Coalition](#)** or use our site to find your local safe schools organization and donate to or volunteer with them.