Alpine County Schools Bullying Prevention Programs

May 2024

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is 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.

In order to be considered bullying, the **behavior** must be **aggressive** and **include**:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Types of Bullying

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

Source: https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/what-is-bullying
United States Department of Health and Human Services

Bullying is Not

It is important to [distinguish bullying from other unkind, mean and harmful behavior](). Calling someone a name or pushing someone once, being rude or having an argument with someone is not bullying. Of course, these behaviors should be addressed but may have different consequences and interventions, which is why the distinction is critical.

To be defined as bullying, all three components must be present:

(1) repeated actions or threats,

(2) a power imbalance and

(3) intention to cause harm.

Concerns Staff, Students, and Parents

Bullying at Diamond Valley School is pervasive

Bullying at Diamond Valley School is ignored

Bullying at Diamond Valley School is encouraged

Bullying at Diamond Valley School includes student on student, staff on student, and staff on staff

Bullying at Diamond Valley School includes parents

Reality of Bullying at Diamond Valley School

Bullying at Diamond Valley School is minimal

Bullying at Diamond Valley School is recognized

Bullying at Diamond Valley School is not tolerated and counseled

Bullying at Diamond Valley School includes student on student incidents

Bullying at Diamond Valley School is sometimes promoted by parents and community members who ignore school rules, tolerate negative behaviors at home and in the community, and encourage intolerance of others
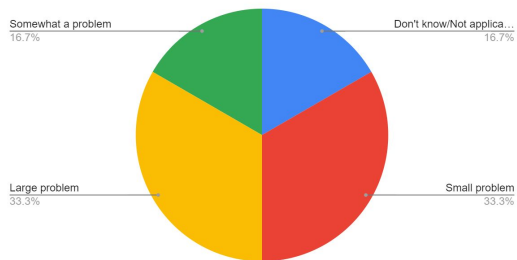
Many behaviors considered bullying behaviors are actually children interacting, albeit negatively, with each other.
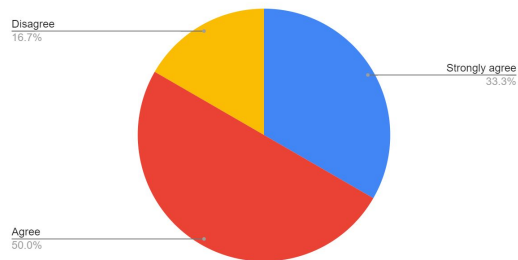
Survey Results

Based on parent surveys received as of 5/9/2024, 6 parents have responded:

Based on your experience, how much of a problem at this school is harassment or bullying of students?

Somewhat a problem
16.7%

Don't know/Not applica…
16.7%

Large problem
33.3%

Small problem
33.3%

This school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn.

Disagree
16.7%

Strongly agree
33.3%

Agree
50.0%

ACUSD Policy 5131.2

The Governing Board recognizes the harmful effects of bullying on student well-being, student learning, and school attendance and desires to provide a safe school environment that protects students from physical and emotional harm. No individual or group shall, through physical, written, verbal, visual, or other means, harass, sexually harass, threaten, intimidate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against any student or school personnel, or retaliate against them for filing a complaint or participating in the complaint resolution process.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies for addressing bullying in district schools with the involvement of students, parents/guardians, and staff. As appropriate, the Superintendent or designee may also collaborate with social services, mental health services, law enforcement, courts, and other agencies and community organizations in the development and implementation of effective strategies to promote safety in schools and the community.

Such strategies shall be incorporated into the comprehensive safety plan and, to the extent possible, into the local control and accountability plan and other applicable district and school plans.

Any complaint of bullying shall be investigated and, if determined to be discriminatory, resolved in accordance with law and the district's uniform complaint procedures specified in AR 1312.3. If, during the investigation, it is determined that a complaint is about nondiscriminatory bullying, the principal or designee shall inform the complainant and shall take all necessary actions to resolve the complaint.

If the Superintendent or designee believes it is in the best interest of a student who has been the victim of an act of bullying, as defined in Education Code 48900, the Superintendent or designee shall advise the student's parents/guardians that the student may transfer to another school. If the parents/guardians of a student who has been the victim of an act of bullying requests a transfer for the student pursuant to Education Code 46600, the Superintendent or designee shall allow the transfer in accordance with law and district policy on intradistrict or interdistrict transfer, as applicable.

Any employee who permits or engages in bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

ACUSD Regulation 5131.2

The ACUSD Bullying Regulation is multiple pages long, extensive, and includes:

- Example of Prohibited Conduct
- Measures to Prevent Bullying
- Staff Development
- Information and Resources
- Student Instruction
- Reporting and Filing Complaints
- Discipline/Corrective Actions
- Support Services

ACUSD Policy & Regulation 5131.2

Both the policy and regulation are extensive, updated in 2020, and come from model/sample policies provided by the California School Boards Association (CSBA). They are designed for much larger school districts and upon review are not necessarily appropriate or relevant to ACUSD's size, operations, culture, community, and values.

An extensive rewrite, after community, staff, and board collaboration, is necessary to adopt policies and regulations that meet ACUSD needs.

A new 2023 model policy from the CSBA has been provided for review and adoption, and will be included with the work mentioned above.

Board Policy and Regulations Compliance

While the ACUSD and Diamond Valley School staffs are working to curb bullying at Diamond Valley School, not all actions have been correctly publicized or documented for the parents and community members. There are several areas of needed improvement to be sure we are adequately addressing these needs, including:

- revamping the district and school website
- rewriting the school's discipline matrix
- and revising Board Policies and Regulations, and Procedures

Strategies Being Implemented to Promote Positive Behaviors

Several programs have been implemented or are being implemented to improve school culture and reduce negative student behaviors, including bullying. Among these programs are:

- MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support)
- SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) lessons weekly in classrooms led by school psychologist
- "Tell me Something Good!"
- Hawk Breakfasts
- Navigate 360 program used for whole class SEL lessons by classroom teachers

Consequences & Interventions

When negative behaviors occur, the following consequences and interventions are applied as warrant and allowed by law

- MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support)
- Calming room
- Navigate 360 individual lessons assigned and SEL intervention and support
- Corrective & restorative conversations
- In-school and out-of-school suspension(s)