

Taking a Stand

A Student's Guide to Stopping Name-Calling and Bullying

Incidents of name-calling and bullying can be complicated. Whenever you are a bystander and feel you want to do something to help, consider the following guidelines:

1. **Decide if you need to respond immediately or if action can wait until later.**

Sometimes immediate involvement is necessary. Other times, waiting to talk with the aggressor can prevent possible embarrassment of all students involved. Consider alternate strategies and take time to calm down. Talk with targeted students about what would be helpful to them. If you wait to take action, make sure that the targeted students know that you support them and tell them what you intend to do.

2. **Assess the potential safety risks if you take action right away.**

When intervening in incidents of name-calling or bullying, never jeopardize your own safety or the safety of others. If you don't feel comfortable or are unsure of the safety of addressing an incident, tell an adult who can intervene either immediately or at a later time. Always consider the impact on the targeted student if you confront students who are engaging in bullying or name-calling their peers. Immediate intervention can attract the attention of those nearby, and may cause embarrassment and a safety risk for targeted students.

3. **Determine if the situation requires adult assistance,**

When a targeted student is in immediate danger or the situation cannot otherwise be resolved

among classmates, seek out the assistance of an adult. A teacher, nurse, guidance counselor, administrator, parent, etc., can assist in taking consistent and appropriate action against aggressors.

4. **Assess the targeted student's needs, including physical and emotional safety.**

Whenever possible, take time to talk privately with students who have been the targets of name-calling and bullying. Determine their feelings and ask what you can do to help and support them. If they feel uncomfortable with the assistance of a classmate, suggest they ask an adult to intervene.

5. **Commit to providing support to targeted student after the incident.**

The effects of repeatedly being the target of name-calling and bullying can last long after the incident is forgotten by other students. Whatever action you choose to take, commit to offering support to students who are the targets of name-calling and bullying. These behaviors have a negative impact on all students. The presence of allies who are willing to provide support is an effective means to promote a more respectful school environment.

Remember that immediate intervention is not always the best course of action. You must assess the safety of the situation and comfort level of the targeted student. Once you have determined the situation is safe, consider the following suggestions for interrupting name-calling and bullying:

Stop the Behavior Immediately

"Cut it out! Using language like that is no joke."
"That's not cool."
"Please keep your hands to yourself."

Ask Questions that Cause Aggressors to Consider their Actions

"What did you mean by what you said?"
"I'm sorry, I don't understand why you would say that."
"That was really mean. Why did you say that?"

Communicate the Impact of the Behavior on You by Sharing Your Feelings

"I'd appreciate it if you didn't say that word around me because I think it's offensive."

Ask an Adult (Teacher, Nurse, Guidance Counselor, Administrator, Parent, etc.) to Intervene by:

- asking the aggressor to stop the behavior and apologize to the targeted student
- communicating and reinforcing the school policies or class ground rules on bullying and harassment
- taking appropriate action and enforcing procedures outlined in school policies or class ground rules
- creating a learning opportunity in which students learn the harmful impact that bullying and harassment has on individuals and the school community