

BULLYING PREVENTION

The Issue

While awareness about the impacts of bullying has grown in the education community, there is still work to be done; schools will benefit from additional focus on prevention and upstream interventions to prevent bullying from occurring in the first place. Additionally, trainings for school staff and other adults could be bolstered by incorporating youth experience, voice, and recommendations.

Scope of the Problem

- ✓ Bullying and harassment are commonly experienced by Solano County public school students. A recent report found that 42% of 7th graders, 36% of 9th graders, and 30% of 11th graders had suffered from these experiences in the past 12 months.¹
- ✓ At the same time, 41% of 7th graders, 38% of 9th graders, and 35% of 11th graders reported having mean rumors or lies spread about them at school in the past year.²
- ✓ Perhaps unsurprisingly, only about half of students across these three grades feel safe at school.³
- ✓ Research compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)⁴ demonstrates the ripple effect of bullying on children:
 - Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, attempt suicide, skip school, and struggle academically.
 - Kids who bully others are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, get into fights, drop out of school, engage in early sexual activity, and be involved with the criminal justice system as adults.
 - Kids who witness bullying are more likely to use drugs and alcohol, miss or skip school, and experience mental health problems including depression and anxiety.

“When I went to middle school, I was overwhelmed with how different it was compared to what I was used to. That’s when I became an outcast for a time and was harassed, beat up, and more. Although it was a chaotic time, I know that if there were systems in place, run by students, like those we are recommending, the bullying and eventual psychiatric hospital visits I experienced could have been avoided.”

—Spencer, SYV Council Member (age 19)

Recommendation

Equip and empower the school community, including staff, students, and parents to recognize, address, and prevent in-person and cyber-bullying.

Steps for Consideration

1. Develop a student group focused on raising awareness about bullying and promoting strategies to improve peer to peer respect and increase student safety.
2. Youth and adults co-lead trainings about social emotional well-being and bullying prevention, including in-person and cyber-bullying to be offered to students, school staff, and parents.



Solano Youth Voices

A partner of the Children’s
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¹ Solano County. *California Healthy Kids Survey, 2015–2017: Main Report*. San Francisco: West Ed Health and Justice Program for the California Department of Education. Pg. 3.

² Ibid

³ Hospitalizations for Mental Health Issues, by Age Group (2006–2016). As cited on www.kidsdata.org, a program of the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health. Retrieved on April 2, 2019.

⁴ “Effects of Bullying.” stopbullying.gov, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/effects/index.html. Accessed April 2, 2019.