Schools Where Everyone Belongs: Practical Strategies For Reducing Bullying

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Seventy-one percent of students report that teachers and other adults in the classroom ignored bullying incidents. When asked, students uniformly expressed the desire that teachers intervene rather than ignore teasing and bullying.

Christine Gregoire (2001)
Chapter 4: What Doesn’t Work?

- Little input into rule development
  - Purchased system
  - Teacher enforce only the rule they care about
  - Students challenge which causes lower enforcement

- Time commitment
  - Time to deal with behavior can take teacher away from teaching or prep time
  - Already over burdened

- Specificity of Rules
  - Poorly defined rule are hard to enforce
  - “We will respect each other and be kind”
  - Vague rule leave interpretation to user
Inconsistency
- Inaction tells bullies that behavior is acceptable
- Life is unfair and the problem is not in student behavior

Myths
- Intervening will encourage further harassment and weaken target
- Bullying is a normal and inevitable part of growing up
- Punishing bullies hurts their already weakened self-esteem and causes more aggression

What doesn’t work
- Speaking to students at large about kindness without specific disciplinary action
- Peer mediation (not equal status peers)
- Bystander training (some effect)
- Training for targets of bullying
Ways we make bullying more likely

- Asking students to choose their own groups/teams
- Leaving students unsupervised
- Attitudes and opinions of staff members
- When we show we value

“When we show by our actions and positive attention that we value every student, we encourage our students to do the same”
Chapter 5: The Olweus Research

Bullying Prevention

Help aggressive youth change
Support targets
Empower bystanders

Safe and Affirming School Climate

Consequences for aggression:
- inevitable
- predictable
- escalating

Positive feedback to students; positive feeling tone

Staff spend time with students, especially students at risk
“In my view, there is nothing wrong with helping students and others to take pride in accomplishments and good deeds. But there is plenty of reason to worry about encouraging people to think highly of themselves when they haven’t earned it. Praise should be tied to performance (including improvement) rather than dispensed freely as if everyone had a right to it simply for being oneself.”.

Roy Baumeister (2001)
Chapter 6: Acknowledging Positive Behavior

Which of the following statements are trait praise? Which focus primarily on how the adult feels about the student’s actions? Which are descriptive feedback?

A. “You started work right away.”
B. “You’re working hard today.”
C. “Thanks for doing a great job in class.”
D. “You have stayed out of trouble all week.”
E. “I noticed you played without fighting today.”
F. “You are so considerate.”
G. “I saw you stay in the game without fighting when Tim yelled at you.”
H. “I am so happy that you have been kind to people this week.”
I. “You kept working until you were done.”
J. “You have gone four weeks without teasing anyone. I’m proud of you.”
K. “You’re a good citizen.”
L. “Good work!”
Chapter 6: Acknowledging Positive Behavior

Determine which of the following three techniques the staff member is using to acknowledge positive behavior:

A. Giving the student permission for pride.
B. Seeing the student’s behavior as part of a conscious effort to change.
C. Pointing out a natural consequence of the student’s actions.

Jay often teases younger and less popular students. Afterward, he didn’t do it or that the other student harassed him first. School staff want him to stop teasing and be honest about his behavior. A teacher sees him sitting with less popular students at lunch and talking with them in a polite way. The teacher says, “Jay, I noticed you talking and sitting with Annie and Dylan. That tells me you are working on being kind.”
Questions