

Bullying Prevention in Forest Lake Area Schools

Bullying is a serious issue that impacts all school districts. As part of Forest Lake Area Schools' ongoing commitment to creating safe and supportive learning environments for all students, the district has taken several steps to strengthen its work to prevent and reduce bullying behavior.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

In the spring of 2005, the Forest Lake Area School District began a collaboration with Hazelden to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). Since then, the Olweus Program has become a district-wide initiative with the expansion of the program to all elementary and junior high schools. Olweus bullying prevention strategies have also been incorporated into several Community Education programs. This district-wide approach to bullying prevention is designed to enhance the long-term success of the program by substantially increasing the level of consistency and coordination.

What is Bullying

An important part of this work is clearly defining bullying. Bullying means behavior by an individual student or group of students that is:

- 1) intimidating, threatening, abusive or harmful;
- 2) involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power in which the student being bullied has difficulty defending him or herself; and
- 3) the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern.

Bullying is also behavior that materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities, or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges.

How to Report Bullying

Forest Lake Area Schools has recently launched a new district-wide procedure for identifying and reporting bullying behavior. If believe that your child, or a student you know is being bullied, please fill out this Bullying report form

<https://www.flaschools.org/cms/lib/MN01909115/Centricity/Domain/129/Bullying%20Reporting%20Form21517.pdf>.

The form can be filled out online, but must be printed and signed before it is turned in. Paper copies of the form are also available at each school building and Community Education office. Bullying reporting forms can be turned into staff at any school office or the Community Education office.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying through e-mail, instant messaging, in a chat room, on a website or through digital messages or images sent to a cell phone. A recent study of 3,767 middle school students showed that 18% had been cyber bullied at least once in the last 2 months (girls twice as many times than boys) and that 11% had cyber bullied others at least once (girls somewhat more than boys).

The following websites offer tips and other useful information for students, parents and educators on how to respond to this increasingly common form of bullying.

- [Cyberbullying](#)□
- [A Parent's Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats](#)□
- [An Educator's Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats](#)

Increasing access to bullying prevention resources for staff, students, families and community members is a continuing part of the district's bullying prevention work. The following links provide additional information about bullying, bullying prevention and the district's response to bullying.

- [Forest Lake Area Schools Anti-Bullying Policy](#)□

- [Minnesota Department of Education: Bullying Concerns and Ways to Help](#)
- [The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program](#)□
- Stop Bullying Now!
- [PACER's National Center for Bullying Prevention](#)□
- [Bullies and Victims: Information for Parents](#)□
- [Name-Calling and Teasing: Strategies for Parents and Teachers](#)□

Peaceful School Bus Program

In the fall of 2008, the district began implementing the Peaceful School Bus Program in its 8 elementary schools to enhance the work already being done through the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The Peaceful School Bus Program aims to change the social dynamics on the school bus by building strong, positive relationships among students (and the bus driver) and teaching students to take responsibility for their "bus route group" and what happens on the bus.

The Peaceful School Bus Program consists of a series of meetings for each bus route group which include the bus driver for the route. These meetings teach concepts and skills, and also foster a sense of identity and community among bus route group members.