

Steps to Respect Program

The Steps to Respect program is taught and integrated into the general curriculum by classroom teachers at the elementary level in grade 5 at the Molin School over the course of the school year. This program covers a wide range of information related to bully prevention including:

- Friendship/respect
- Finding and making friends
- Joining a group
- Defining and recognizing bullying
- Put downs and their impact on others
- How to refuse bullying
- Controlling rumors
- Reporting bullying
- The role of the bystander
- School wide commitment to preventing bullying

Research has shown that when teachers/staff become involved in bullying prevention, they encourage positive behaviors into daily interactions with students and coach those involved in bullying. This results in less aggression, victimization, and encouragement of bullying, according to a study published in the March 2007 issue of School Psychology Review.

A rigorous evaluation of the STEPS TO RESPECT program was also published in the May-June 2005 issue of *Developmental Psychology*. Research found that after 12 weeks of implementation: *there were 25 percent fewer bullying incidents on the playground compared to a control group. Children who were bystanders to bullying were less encouraging of it. The effects of the STEPS TO RESPECT program were most pronounced among students observed to do the most bullying before program implementation.*

This program is top-rated and endorsed by various organizations such as OJJDP, CASEL (Collaboration for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning), and Help America's Youth, for its integration with academics, and sound social/emotional instructional practice.

The Steps to Respect program allows for a common language for parents, staff, and students as to what bullying is, and encourages a building-wide commitment and mode of communication for refusing and reporting bullying when/if it happens. This curriculum teaches students various steps they can take to refuse bullying, which includes dealing with the situation directly and/or involving the help of an adult (i.e. counselor, teacher, principal) depending upon the nature of the situation. Students are encouraged to take responsibility and communicate potential bullying

situations to teachers and staff whether directly or indirectly involved – with an emphasis on the role of the bystander and how students can help one another to solve and/or discourage bullying behaviors.

Bullying report forms are available in all the 5th grade classrooms and at the main office. All forms are voluntary and confidential, and carefully screened and reviewed by the school principal so that appropriate steps can be taken. If the nature of the problem appears to be of a bullying nature (as defined by the program), then parties involved would meet with the school principal, parents would be informed, and various steps of disciplinary action may be taken. If the nature of the problem situation appears to be reciprocal, mutual, and/or balanced in nature (i.e. verbal argument, back/forth fighting, etc.), such disputes may be referred back to the students, teacher, counselor, and/or peer mediation program.

For more information on these programs, please visit their website at cfchildren.org and/or call your building counselor/psychologist and/or principal.