



# Owning Up: Creating a Culture of Dignity in Your School and Classroom

Maryland Department of Education

Dignity is not negotiable

Connection makes life meaningful

You matter in a child's life



# Happiness

- Satisfying work (curiosity)
- Hope of being successful
- Social connection
- Meaning beyond oneself

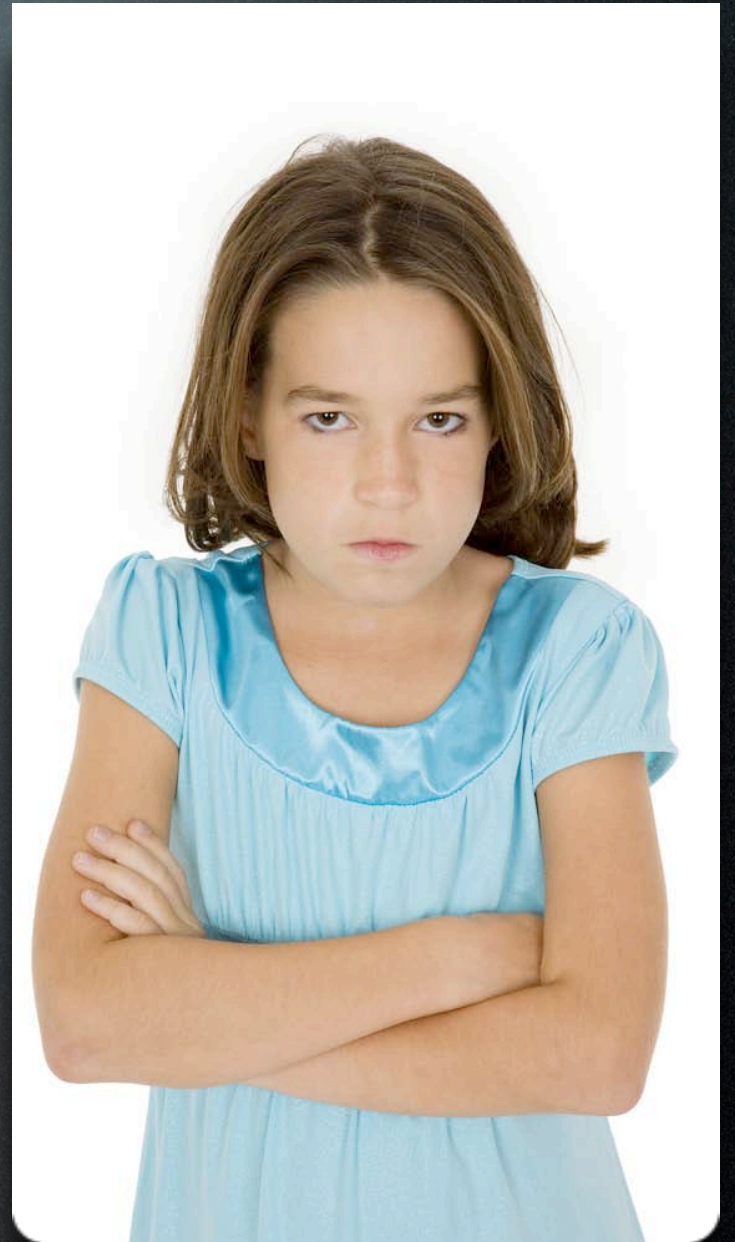
Your students “happiness” is based on three  
fundamental concepts:

The right to be treated with dignity by others

The responsibility to treat others with dignity

Valuing the development of social  
competence as a critical academic skill

But conflict  
is inevitable



What are your colleagues  
thinking?



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thinking?

*I'd like a solid definition of bullying so  
we're not "crying bully" when we  
should be helping kids work through  
average teen drama.*

# What are your colleagues thinking?

*I think the word "bullying" is overused. I believe it exists, but I think some parents and students use it to label everything, and it's as overused as "ADD." Kids have a right to choose who their friends are.*



# What are your colleagues thinking?

*We, the PTO and principal, are all wary of "bullying" becoming such a litigiously-charged buzzword that it bypasses more nuanced issues of painful and hurtful social dynamics. There's also concern that there will be an anti-bullying backlash. I've already heard a parent say something like "My kid says there's nothing at all like bullying going on. It's the parents that shove this down our throats."*

*I do not advocate ignoring bullying but I can tell you that while I am sure it goes on, I am not aware of it. I am busy teaching. I don't mean to sound unkind but wading into the abyss of teenaged social cruelty is just not on my agenda. I am a foreign language teacher, not a psychologist or counselor. So please stop asking me to assume roles for which I am unprepared and frankly, uninterested. Stop wanting teachers to do every job that come down the pike, and then be all surprised that instruction suffers. You raise your children, I will teach them French... that's it.*

# What are your colleagues thinking?

*Students participate in class based on their comfort level with the class and teacher and in a way they want to project to their peers and teacher. Social dynamics majorly impact group work, as students often have strong opinions of who they want and do not want to work with.*

# Bullying

Bullying is an abuse of power in a  
conflict

# Discipline

The practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior.

# Elementary School

- Inside jokes, clubs and languages are common ways younger children use play to exclude and ridicule other children.
- While they tend to talk more than teens, that doesn't mean they aren't selective about what they say.
- As soon as they use technology in any way, they can abuse it. Parents are worried about FB, but younger kids through YouTube, webkinz, stardollz etc. are where cyberbullying begins.

# Why is it starting earlier?

- Maturity = reliable, level headed, wise.
- Children are pushed to be older; not more mature. Being mean in adolescent ways is a by-product.
- Adult response is either the behavior is cute, overwhelmed, or highly judgmental of other parents and children (esp. girls).



*No offense, but those words don't mean the same thing as in your generation. It's just what we say. We're just joking!*

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# Teasing

## Good Teasing

- You feel liked by the person
- You don't feel that the person wants to put you down
- They will stop if you ask.

## Unintentional Bad Teasing

- You don't like it but the teaser either doesn't know how you feel or dismisses your feelings.
- They blow you off with, "I was just joking." "You're so sensitive!"

## Bad Teasing/ Bullying

- You're teased about something you're insecure about.
- If you defend yourself, you're labeled as uptight or threatened with ending the friendship.
- The teasing is relentless and often in front of other people.

## **Snitching**

Telling to get someone  
in trouble.

The goal is to make the  
problem bigger and  
more public.

**VS.**

## **Reporting**

Telling because the  
problem is too big to  
solve on your own.

The goal is to right a  
wrong.

# Listening!

- Affirm her feelings but don't react by asking a million questions.
- Ask if he's just venting or wants advice.
- Don't use her slang.
- Share your own experiences without lecturing and telling him how you would have done it.
- Don't just do something, stand there.

# The Child is the Target

You **Don't** Say:

- Bullies are insecure, jealous, or weak.
- That's just the way the world is
- Punch them in the face

You **Do** Say:

- I'm so sorry
- Thank you for telling me
- Together we are going to work on this.

# SEAL

- **STOP:** Breathe, listen, and think when and where, now or later?
- **EXPLAIN:** What happened that you don't like and what you want.
- **AFFIRM:** Affirm and acknowledge.
- **LOCK:** In the friendship, take a vacation or lock it out.

# Being Mindful of your role

- Be aware of power dynamics
- Be aware of “public space” (Recess, hallways, child who is left behind)
- No sarcasm, jokes, or comments about ability or appearance
- Public vs. Private teaching moments
- Role model apologies

# In the moment

- Assess on the approach
- Don't ask the group who is responsible. State quick SEAL to the group
- Get group on task with promise to follow up individually
- You can use SEAL to help child think through the process
- Code word for aggressor or target to remember

# The Invisible Game

Katie: Did you see Matt trying to guess what we were talking about? He's so annoying!

Amanda: Yeah, I guess.

Katie: During recess, let's pretend he's invisible.

Amanda: I don't know....

Katie: Don't feel bad for him!

Amanda: I do sort of.

Katie: Are you like in love with him? OMG, you are!

Amanda: No! I'm not!

Katie: Yes you are!!!!



# SEALING THE GAME

**Stop:** Put your bad feelings to words. Choose time (before recess).

**Explain:** I don't want to do the secret language now or pretend anyone is invisible. It looks like a game but it's not.

**Affirm:** You don't have to be friends with Matt but we can't be mean. Pretending someone's invisible is mean.

**Lock:** This was really hard but you're my friend and I wanted to tell you.

# The Pick Up Game

Carl: Hey Jason, Too bad, too sad you were picked last!

Jason: Look, I'm not the best player...

Carl: How about the most retarded!

Jason: You think it's funny to be mean to me about being gay or short. I want it to stop.

Carl: We're just joking, relax! You know I love you!

Jason: You're saying just joking so you can get away with being mean.

Carl: (Laughs, rolling his eyes) Fine I won't joke around with you ever again!

Jason: I want to be able to joke around. But when I don't like it, I want you to listen to me.

Carl: Whatever idiot! (Walks away)

# No Offense...

**Glittergrrrl:** OMG u r soooo annoying!!!!

**Popcornisamazing:** what r u talking about?

**Glittergrrrl:** no one can say anything to you cuz you totally freak out.

**Popcornisamazing:** What am I freaking about?

**glittergrrrl:** Like at lunch today, Candace and I were just telling you about that proactive stuff for your own good. I mean, no offense but your skin needs it. Other ppl were saying the same thing and id wanna know if ppl were talking behind my back

**Popcornisamazing:** Whatever. I really don't care. But when ppl say things behind ur back I don't say anything.

Amanda: Can I talk to you for a second?

Megan: Why would I want to talk to you?

Amanda: I get that you think I should take something for my skin but I want you to tell me privately. And if you're mad at me, don't attack me on Face Book. Tell me and we will work it out.

Megan: I only told people the truth. And anyway, Caitlin came over and she wrote most of that stuff about you on the wall.

Amanda: Whoever did it, I'm asking that you take it down. I know I can't control that but I'm asking you to do it.

Megan: Whatever- I knew you were going to be totally dramatic about this. *(Rolls her eyes.)*

# If the child is a bystander

“I’m sorry this is happening. Thanks for telling me because I know it can be hard to come forward about things like this and I really respect the fact that you did. Now let’s think about what we can do about it.”

**USE SEAL TO FRAME STRATEGY**

# Choosing Your Moment



**Mark:** Forwarding those pictures of Michael was messed up.

**Andy:** Huh ( video game, eyes glued to screen)?

**Mark:** You know what I'm talking about.

**Andy:** No it wasn't! It was amazing! And if it was so wrong why were you laughing your butt off ?

**Mark:** I'm not proud of this but I laughed because the whole thing made me nervous.

**Andy:** We were just messing around! If he was so freaked out why didn't he say anything?

**Mark:** Because if he said anything than you would make fun of him even more.

**Andy:** Well that's not my fault so I don't see why it's my problem.

**Mark:** Andy, can you please hear me out? It's wrong to embarrass him on purpose. I think we need to make it right. I'm going to talk to him about it. It'd be cool if you came with me.

**Andy:** Knock yourself out.

**Mark:** I'm going to tell him before first period tomorrow so if you change your mind that'd be cool.

*Did you here what she's saying about you?*

**Common responses:**

- Disappear until graduation
- Immediately talk, text and FB whoever you can for reconnaissance.
- Plot with your friend about how to get back at the person who you think started it.
- Say, *"Whatever, it's not worth it."* But really worry about it a lot.



For whatever reason the person is motivated to get a response that's why they keep going after you.

**Here's the SEAL:**

*I can't control what she does. I'm not going to go back at her because that's exactly what she wants me to do. (Can't say, I'm not going to be so immature, pathetic, stupid etc.) I've directly told her that I want her to stop attacking me. It's up to her. I hope you will back me up by not talking about how we are in this big war.*

Never  
Care

Sometimes  
Care

**BOYFRIENDS/  
GIRLFRIENDS**

Boy Crazy

Don't care

# How Does Sexting Start? Fruit Cup Girl

Pros: You “just know” how to get boy’s attention.

Cons: Peers easily ridicule her, doesn’t value other parts of her identity as worthwhile to merit boy’s attention. She can make other girls ashamed/embarrassed so they turn away from her.

Boys have their own version because they have to prove their heterosexuality.

# Sexting differences between boys and girls

## Common patterns:

- Girls sext in response to a request, to get a boy's attention, or a dare.
- Girls take pictures in a provocative pose, semi nude, or kissing another girl. Boys are more likely to share it with peers.
- Boys sext pictures of their genitals. Girls are more likely to tell an adult. The public nature is limited meaning it's less likely peers will know.

# Faculty and Staff have to do it too...

**Explain:** I need to talk to you about something that's uncomfortable but I know you'd want me to tell you. Sam is rolling his eyes, calling other kids gay, fat, etc. I'd like to come up with a strategy to address it.

**Possible responses:** Silence, gossip among faculty, anger, denial, going over your head. "That's not what I hear what when I get home."

**Affirm/Acknowledge:** This is hard for me. I've been sitting on this for a long time.

**Lock:** Our working relationship is really important to me. The best way I know to do that is to talk honestly and keep talking--especially when we're going through something that's difficult like this.

Reach out with 24 hours.

# They go over your head

Thank you for meeting with me. I know that you have already spoken to (insert head of school/your supervisor here). I want to talk to you about X but I also think it's important to discuss the reason you didn't feel comfortable or that it would be ineffective to talk to me. What would you like to discuss first?

Possible responses: Mike has repeatedly told you X and you aren't doing anything about it.

As Mike's counselor/teacher I want to do my best for him. This is my understanding of what has happened so far...

Are you saying that it's my child's fault...

No, I'm not. I am telling you what I know about the situation so we can work together to solve the problem.

# Finding My Ally

Qualities I'm looking for in an ally include:

1. opinionated but not judgmental

2. honest

3. reliable

# Finding My Ally

My top 3 choices for an ally are:

1.

2.

3.



# My Relationship Rights

●	List the three rights that are most important to you in a relationship or friendship.
	1.
	2.
●	3.

# My Deal Breakers

●	List three ways that someone could treat you where you would consider ending the friendship/relationship.
	1.
	2.
●	
	3.

# Resources

- <http://www.youthvoiceproject.com/>
- South Park “Kyle Has No Friends” episode and “Breast Cancer Show Ever”
- Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less from Each Other: Sherry Turkle, Basic Books 2011
- Reality is Broken: Why Games Makes Us Better and How They Can Change the World: Jane McGonigal, Penguin 2011
- <http://imbee.com/nobullyzone/>

# Want to Reach Me?

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Maya: *I want to talk to you about you taking my phone.*

Jordan: *You know I love you! I was just messing around!*

Maya: *Taking my phone without telling me and then sending those texts to Will really embarrassed me.*

Jordan: *You're making such a big deal out of this! If you did it to me I wouldn't care! I would think it was funny!"*

Maya: *Well, you're not me and you can't tell me how I feel.*

Jordan: *Fine, if you're going to be completely insane about something like this...*

Maya: *I am asking you as my friend to listen to me. Friends have to be able to tell each other what they are really thinking. Think about it and get back to me.*