**What is Bullying?**

There have been many misconceptions about the nature of bullying. Below is a brief quiz that presents some common questions and ideas that many people still have about this complicated problem.

1. **Bullying is not a serious problem for the bullies; they eventually grow out of this behavior.**

False. Studies have established a strong correlation between bullying other students during the school years and experiencing legal or criminal troubles with violence as adults.

1. **Most bullying occurs in high school because older students are more confident and willing to pick on others.**

False. Some studies indicate that bullying is most prevalent during the elementary school years, while other studies indicate that it increases and peaks during the middle school years. However, it is clear that bullying – though certainly present in high school – is more prevalent among younger students.

1. **Bullying is usually verbal, not physical, in nature.**

True. While bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual in nature, verbal bullying – including name-calling – is the most common form.

1. **Bullies are usually insecure loners with low self-esteem.**

False. Bullies are likely to have both friends and followers – in fact, they trend to be rather popular in the early school years. Furthermore, research indicates that bullies typically have average or above average levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.

1. **Bullies don’t usually pick on passive students; instead, they bully in response to some sort of provocation from their victims.**

False. Only 10-15% of victims actually provoke bullies into action. 80-90% of victims are passive, with many not even reporting that they have been bullied.

1. **A bully usually attacks when no one else is watching.**

False. Other students are watching as bystanders during most bullying incidents. In contrast, adults – such as teachers and parents – rarely observe bullies victimizing others.

**Mulvane Public Schools Plan to Prevent Bullying**

“Bullying” means: Any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act or threat that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student or staff member that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, knows or should know will have the effect of:

* Harming a student or staff member, whether physically or mentally;
* Damaging a student’s or staff member’s property;
* Placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm; or
* Placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of damage to the student’s or staff member’s property.

Bullying also includes cyberbullying. "Cyberbullying" means bullying by use of any electronic communication device through means including, but not limited to, e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, pagers, online games and websites.

Additionally, bullying means any form of intimidation or harassment prohibited by the board of education of the school district in policies concerning bullying adopted pursuant to K.S.A. 72-8256 or subsection (e) of K.S.A. 72-8205, and amendments thereto.

USD 263 will not tolerate these actions by students or staff. Any act of bullying by either an individual student or group of students is prohibited on or while utilizing school property, in a school vehicle or at school-sponsored functions. This policy applies to students who directly engage in an act of bullying, to students who, by their behavior, support another student’s act of bullying, and to all staff members who engage in similar behaviors.

All students participate in Social Emotional Learning. Teachers and counselors present various social skills lessons using research-based curriculum programs to prevent “school bullying.” Copies of bullying prevention lessons, intervention practices, and referral forms are available at every school. Community involvement with respect to the district’s “bullying plan” is ongoing and conducted through climate/culture surveys and site council presentations at the beginning of each school year.

No teacher, administrator, or school district employee shall engage in, permit, or tolerate bullying. All district staff shall receive training and education on bullying at the beginning of each school year. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness to bullying is prohibited. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, retaliation or false reporting of bullying, shall be subject to discipline in accordance with school district policy and procedures.

The school district may take into account the following factors: the ages of the parties involved; the developmental and maturity levels, special education needs of the parties involved, and the severity of the behavior. Discipline guidelines for student bullying are found in the student handbooks. Offenses over time may result in discipline up to and including suspension and/or expulsion or termination from employment. As appropriate, reports to local law enforcement will be filed to report criminal bullying behaviors.

(See USD 263 Board Policies EBC, GAAC, GAACA, JGEC, JGECA and KN)