

BULLYING

SCHOOLS AROUND THE WORLD BELIEVE THEY CAN CONTROL SCHOOL BULLYING. THEY THINK FORCING STUDENTS TO SIGN ANTI-BULLYING FORMS AND RECITE PLEDGES WILL INFLUENCE THEIR DECISIONS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT IT HAS VIRTUALLY NO REALISTIC IMPACT AT ALL.

Bullying occurs daily in thousands of schools across the world. It is the perfect example of the primitiveness of the human species: our instinct to harm the weak has hung around for our entire existence. This does not mean we cannot suppress it fully, however – bullies have absolutely no excuse for acting the way they do. Thanks to our evolved intelligence, we have the ability to suppress some of those ugly past traits that sometimes break through.

Schools across the world have instituted anti-bullying policies in their curriculums. Governments have passed laws “firmly” countering the continuing tsunami of physical and psychological pain that ripples through their educational systems every second. They believe that, through their tactics, bullying will wither and die. However, this is far from true. Bullying is as commonplace as it ever has been in schools, and comes in more severe forms as our innocent young children learn the “sins” of life – preferably homosexuality – from their multimedia world. School districts think that by forcing their gullible students into signing cheaply produced anti-bullying forms, reciting cheesy anti-bullying pledges, and participating in special anti-bullying curriculums, they can stop the tyranny. The real situation is that students don’t care one bit about signing papers and taking pledges. School, with its mix of police-state ideals (the staff government) and anarchism (the vague rules of the school that allow students to get away with whatever they desire when there are no adults around) is impossible to police. Sadly, bullying is inevitable. No matter the attempts to combat it, there will always be that handful of children who just don’t understand compassion.

So here is my proposition: the schools must stop their expensive and inefficient methods of “preventing” bullying. Instead, there should be a real no-tolerance policy put into effect: any child caught bullying gets punished and counseled. No excuses. This reminds me of another problem I have with the school system: teachers, mostly the less experienced ones, become agitated at the number of however small bullying situations they have to deal with on a daily basis. Many educators for elementary/primary school limit their students from complaining about smaller bullying situations because the teachers “get annoyed” by their constant complaining. What they fail to see here is that this picking on one another can develop into a larger problem. Some teachers go as far as telling their young students not to complain to them about anything “unless you’re bleeding”. Of course, the children take this seriously and refrain from discussing situations out of fear of the teacher *punishing* them for it. Teachers, this is your job. Stop complaining about the children. You are their *mentor*, and you must protect them from bullies rather than punishing them for telling you about them. If you really enforce such rules, you do not deserve to be educating the next generation and should get a career where you can sit all day without anyone talking to you. Our kids should be encouraged to talk about their problems, and suppressing them is extremely dangerous as it can snowball into something much more sinister. The emotional stability of a small child is at stake, and you refuse to acknowledge it out of some dangerously misplaced annoyance?

Schools fail to police their students for bullying properly. The reason children and teenagers get away with bullying, usually over long periods of time, so easily is because their teachers are oblivious to what is occurring when their students socialize with each other. Staff should be required to be trained on how to single out potential bullying in action and listen carefully for offensive and degrading language and insults. Schools love to brag about how their school is “bully-free”, but they are not the children, and they do not really know what occurs every day. Occasionally they find out about some random incident, but besides that an overwhelming majority of bullying goes unnoted. The real situation is that those nice, innocent, bully-free schools; the winners of the Anti-Defamation League’s embarrassingly pathetic “No Place for Hate” program, are actually crawling with bullies that they haven’t noticed yet.

However, the schools are not the only ones to blame. Parents must stop acting in defense of their child’s actions in *every* situation. It’s easily observable that many school bullies are spoiled by their parents, to

the extent where they believe they possess the power to do anything, anywhere – and have their guardians come to their justification. The parents of bullies like this almost always come to their defense in any situation, even if all the evidence is against their darling little boy or girl. We need to get these parents to admit their children are not perfect little angels. It would be ignorant of any adult to think their offspring is some kind of outstanding, perfectly behaved child that will always obey rules and do well in class. Parents may be tricked into believing their bully sons/daughters are good, but their gullibility is their fault, not their child's.

There is one exception to bullying: the actions of poor and struggling children who are crying out for a place in the world. A good chunk of bullies grow up in unstable families where income is fatally low or the family is splitting in half. These children need counseling *only* – not punishment. Growing up in an environment where a child has no means of support can cause them to feel cast aside in their world, with their last resort for attention being bullying. Kids like these don't deserve any punishment whatsoever, because throwing detentions, suspensions and threats of expulsion at them will just make them feel even worse. There are so many people in the world that don't deserve punishment for crimes – because they were out of pure desperation and anguish – and yet still we chastise them. Schools must learn how to separate “poor and struggling” from “greedy and mischievous” before any major mistakes are made in their no-trial, no-review, no-appeal justice systems.

So, in closing, the sad truth is that bullying is an unstoppable force that will be existent in all branches of education. This does not mean that schools are powerless to lessen its force, however, and through use of proper tactics bullying and harassment can be toned down dramatically. Unfortunately, the programs thousands of schools across the Western world use currently – a system of pledges and group activities – does not have a strong enough effect to combat the primitive practice of bullying. Tough, clear, uniform rules and appropriate punishments and counseling will be the “solution” to conflict in the young world. Cheap pledges and pathetic group activities are not. The schools must learn, or they will be forever cursed with violence and hatred.

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