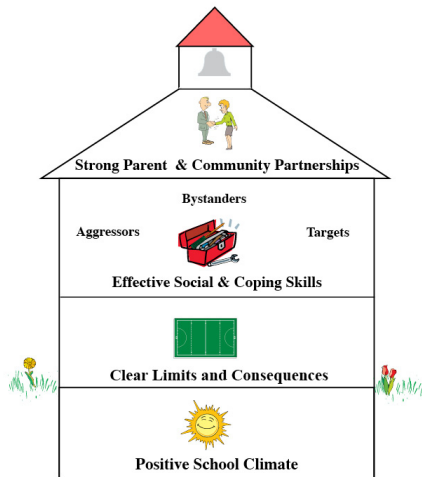


Overview of Bully-Free Schools: Circle of Support

Effective bullying prevention requires a systems approach that impacts the climate and culture of a school as a whole. An effective comprehensive, systems approach includes the following:

Positive school climate, characterized by “warmth, positive interest, and involvement by adults” and adults acting as “authorities and positive role models” (Olweus, 1993);

Clear limits and consequences, characterized by “firm limits to unacceptable behavior and non-hostile, nonphysical negative consequences” (Olweus, 1993);



Effective social and coping skills, characterized by the implementation of formal and informal approaches to teaching appropriate skills to students (aggressors, bystanders, targets); and

Parent and community partnerships, characterized by open communication and shared efforts to promote the healthy youth development of students

Efforts to create a safe and supportive school for all students will be optimized when the school functions as an aligned system where all the individual members, programmatic components, and policy and procedures are coordinated and working toward the same goals.

Implementation Steps to Creating a Systems Approach to Safe and Caring Schools

- Create a leadership team (long-term commitment).
- Conduct staff and student surveys and gather a wide range of data.
- Train all staff (i.e., administrators, teachers, school health center staff, and all support staff).
- Develop strategies to increase positive school climate and feeling tone in school, including the following: 1) staff role modeling of respectful behavior, 2) frequent use of descriptive praise to reinforce positive behavior, and 3) implementation of strategies to increase student connectedness.
- Develop a consistent, transparent school-wide discipline system with input from staff (rubric and reporting procedures).
- Develop staff skills and protocol for effective interventions with peer-to-peer aggression.
- Develop a policy that is aligned with and support all aspects of the systems approach.
- Think systems: Align with other related initiatives and strategies designed to enhance school climate and promote positive student behavior (e.g., School Improvement, Michigan Model Comprehensive Health Curriculum, School-Based Health Center, Removing Barriers for Learning, Restorative Practices, PBIS/MiBLSi, Why Try, Second Step, Project Connect).
- Provide awareness and develop partnerships with parents and community members/agencies.
- Develop strategies to engage students and positively impact peer norms.