

# The Wildcat Word

A Newsletter from the Guidance Department of Nottingham West Elementary School  
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## Take a Stand - Lend a Hand

No Name Calling Week  
January 23-27, 2012

*In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.*

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Each year, many children experience the pain and humiliation of being teased and bullied. Bullying can damage the physical, social, and emotional well-being of its targets. It also hurts the children who bully, as well as those who watch it happen. But bullying does NOT have to be a part of growing up. Recent research on the dynamics of bullying focuses on the powerful role of the bystander to intervene and prevent bullying.

Bullying situations usually involve more than the bully and the target. They also involve bystanders—those who watch bullying happen or hear about it. Depending on how bystanders respond, they can either contribute to the problem or the solution. Bystanders rarely play a completely neutral role, although they may think they do.

### HURTFUL BYSTANDERS

Some bystanders instigate the bullying by prodding the bully to begin. Other bystanders encourage the bullying by laughing, cheering, or making comments that further stimulate the bully. And other bystanders join in the bullying once it has begun.

But most kids are good kids and don't participate in bullying. Instead, most bystanders passively accept bullying by watching and doing nothing. Often without realizing it, these bystanders also contribute to the problem. Passive bystanders provide the audience a bully is looking for and the silent acceptance that allows bullies to continue their hurtful behavior.

### HELPFUL BYSTANDERS

Bystanders have the power to play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying. Some bystanders directly intervene, by discouraging the bully, defending the target, or redirecting the situation away from bullying. Other bystanders get help, by rallying support from peers to stand up against bullying or by reporting the bullying to adults.

*Why don't more bystanders intervene?*

*They think, "It's none of my business."*

*They fear getting hurt or becoming another target.*

*They feel powerless to stop the bully.*

*They don't like the target or believe the target "deserves" it.*

*They don't want to draw attention to themselves.*

*They think that telling adults won't help or it may make things worse.*

*They don't know what to do.*

### PREPARING CHILDREN TO BECOME HELPFUL BYSTANDERS

We can teach children to become helpful bystanders by discussing with them the different ways bystanders can make a difference. Remind them of the power they have to make a positive change for someone else by taking a stand.

We also need to let kids know that adults will support them, if and when they step forward. Without realizing it, we sometimes sabotage our own efforts to prevent bullying and teasing by reminding kids not to "tattle tale". Parents and teachers should teach kids to distinguish between "tattling" about small, unimportant matters, and "reporting" about issues of safety or bullying.

By supporting and celebrating the role of Helpful Bystanders in preventing bullying, we can help kids to TAKE A STAND AND LEND A HAND, making their school a safe and welcoming place for all kids.

## Guidance Happenings

Ongoing	Classroom Guidance Lessons Grade 2 and 3
Ongoing	Guidance Groups
Ongoing	Guidance Advisory Group
January 23-26	No Name Calling Week

