

National Safe Schools Week

What You Can Do As a PTA Leader

Devote a PTA meeting to a town hall discussion about bullying.

- Before the meeting, work with your principal to conduct an anonymous student survey about the presence of bullying behavior at your school. Present these data at the beginning of the workshop to get everyone's attention. Some of the findings can also be used in promotional materials.
- Invite community leaders, school decision makers, teachers, and students and provide them with the opportunity to make brief comments about the ways they have, or plan to, address bullying in your community. After the meeting, follow up with a thank you to those who attended.
- Consider inviting members of the local media. If you aren't satisfied with the response, after the meeting is over you can also write a letter to the editor of your local paper to let them know what happened and why it is important.

Establish a special PTA subcommittee that will work with school personnel to create and implement an action plan for reducing bullying behavior.

- If possible, have a few members spend some time at the school observing the areas and times when bullying likely occurs, such as lunchtime in the cafeteria, in the halls between classes or near the buses at the beginning or end of the school day. Have them report back to this committee about what they noticed.

- If they are not able to become a permanent part of the committee, make sure that key personnel such as counselors, social workers, secretaries, nurses, janitors, librarians, media specialists or cafeteria workers and students are invited as special guests to your meetings to share their opinions about bullying at the school. Students may not always report bullying incidents, but these adults are critical eyes and ears around the school building that may have valuable information to share.

Work with your school's administration, counselor, social worker or nurse to identify a diverse group of students that can serve as an advisory board.

These students can help you design outreach materials and give you honest feedback on your approach.

- Be aware that this group might possibly consist of both bullying victims and perpetrators, and not all students that have been selected may feel comfortable participating. With the help of school personnel, invite each student through a separate one-on-one meeting where you discuss what their involvement would entail, and who else might be a part of the group. Give them the opportunity to decline the invitation, or find an alternative way to assist your efforts.

About National PTA®:

PTA® comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education health, and welfare of children and youth.