

Classroom Bullying Scenario

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Bullying is a serious issue that is far too commonplace in the classroom today. From recognizing it is happening to identifying the type of bullying to handling the situation properly to making every preventative effort to ensure it doesn't happen again, bullying can be a nightmare to deal with. However difficult bullying may be to deal with, educators have to be able to handle it for the safety, benefit, education, and personal growth of all students.

The first type of bullying witnessed in the classroom bullying scenario can be identified as relational bullying. "Relational bullying, also known as social aggression, is the use of relationships to hurt others. It includes preventing people from playing with others, using the silent treatment, and spreading rumors and lies" (Burden, 2016). In this particular instance, at lunch, Emily publicly rejected Tasha by not allowing her to sit at the lunch table with their friend group. Emily is leading this relational bullying and controlling the situation while Keisha is following along and adding to Tasha's hurt. If the girls were not already friends, this act may not have been as hurtful, but the exclusion of a friend coupled with the public humiliation classifies the incident as relational bullying. A solution that lets Keisha and Emily know what they are doing is wrong and that would prevent Tasha from being left out or humiliated in this way again would be to make and enforce a rule that no one can tell another student where they may or may not sit at lunch. If this solution is not effective and the problem progresses further, I would assign seats at lunch for my class to completely take away the possibility of this specific situation from happening again. By implementing one or both of these solutions, I would hope to see new student behaviors of inclusion and tolerance at lunch that would carry over to the classroom. I would hope to see changed attitudes and hearts of students as they begin to understand the

importance of inclusion in all settings and the ramifications of intentionally trying to hurt someone by leaving them out.

The second type of bullying seen in this scenario as the day progresses is verbal bullying. “Verbal bullying is also known as direct bullying, which includes face-to-face quarrel and insults. According to France et al. (2013), verbal bullying is one of the forms of oral and written communication, which is done by the perpetrator against the targeted victim with having an intention to harm” (Saintvil, 2021). This incident is classified as verbal bullying because Keisha uses hurtful words in the form of a poem that she shares with others in the class to attack and humiliate Tasha for her own entertainment. Solutions I would take to prevent further action from taking place would be to privately discipline Keisha for her blatant act of bullying by calling her parents and reprimanding her. I would also speak to the entire class about bullying in an effort to educate them on what is okay and what is not, not only in the classroom, but how we are to treat people in general. I would take instructional time in class to share personal experiences, videos talking about the effects of bullying, statistics on what long-term bullying has done to victims, and invite the class into an open discussion about what bullying is and how they can not engage in it and stop it when they see it. From this solution, I would hope to see a changed classroom environment as students begin to understand and recognize what constitutes bullying and the drastic negative effects bullying has.

The third type of bullying seen in the classroom bullying scenario is physical bullying. The incident in question can easily be identified as physical bullying because Emily intentionally tripped Tasha with her foot and consequently caused Tasha herself harm and her property physical damage. Physical bullying is a serious offense and can cause extremely negative

ramifications for the victim not only physically, but emotionally. “Physical victimization refers to being harmed physically... Bullying victimization is related to various negative socialemotional outcomes, such as depressive symptoms (for a metaanalysis, see Christina et al., 2021) and low self-esteem (for a meta-analysis, see Tsaousis, 2016)” (Demol, 2022). To prevent this from happening again, Emily must face serious consequences for her actions. I would write a disciplinary referral and contact her parents. I would also bring both students and both sets of parents into a conversation to discuss a plan to distance the girls from each other at school because of how far the bullying has progressed. After facing serious consequences for her actions, one would hope to see new student behaviors of kindness, gentleness, and self-control from Emily. Making an effort to keep the girls away from each other would likely make Emily understand the severity of her actions and hopefully keep Tasha from continuing to be a victim to bullying, and set her back on track academically and emotionally.

Teaching at a Christian school, all of these incidents are perfect opportunities to bring up what the Bible says about how we should act and carry ourselves as followers of Christ Jesus. The Bible lays out certain attributes that believers are called to carry out in every action taken and every word spoken. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit” (English Standard Version, 1978/2011, Galatians 5:22-25). Believers aim to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled in every circumstance and situation because Jesus, the Savior of the world, exemplified all of those characteristics. Understanding that every person is an

image-bearer of the One True King and deserves to be treated as such can have drastic implications on the frequency of bullying in the classroom. There is no room for bullying when one not only knows the fruits of the spirit but understands why they are so important to follow and make an intentional effort to exemplify daily. Believers are called to be more like Jesus every day and he was the ultimate example of what it means to have the fruits of the spirit evident in one's life. In an effort to remind students of the fruits of the spirits and that we are called to follow them in all things, I would hang a poster, very visibly, at the front of the classroom. Seeing this most valuable scripture every day may just make a difference in the classroom in regard to bullying.

References

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