Who are bullies? What leads these individuals to bullying? These are often students who have witnessed physical or verbal aggression in their own homes. They have seen other people push or hit children or adults. A bully is often a physically strong individual. A bully may or may not be popular with their peer group. Bullies generally have trouble following rules. They show little concern for the feelings of others. And, sadly many bullies do not understand how wrong their behavior is and how it makes the person being bullied feel.

With the diverse backgrounds and cultures of the students at Boys Town the Boys Town Schools might seem like they would be rife with bullies.

That, however, is not the case.

Three key factors help keep bullying to a minimum on the Boys Town campus.

1. **Constant Observation**
   Boys Town teachers receive staff development on how to observe and counter bullying in the schools. The training includes what are the signs to look for, which students or groups of students seem uneasy, keep a vigilant eye on students who may be visibly distraught and keep a particular eye on students who have removed themselves from their usual group of friends or peers.

   Boys Town teachers also closely monitor hallways during passing periods, looking for changes in movement and/or behavior. This is also a great way to “catch kids being good,” which is one of the hallmarks of Boys Town’s approach to curbing negative behaviors.

2. **Peer Reporting**
   Another key component to Boys Town’s anti-bullying approach is peer reporting. Students are encouraged to report instances of bullying. They are taught that for bullying to stop, they cannot simply let it occur, even when it’s not happening to them. For resources on teaching kids to stand up to bullying, get *The Power of Bystanders* by Kip Jones from the Boys Town Press.

3. **Respect for Diversity**
   The third factor in keeping bullying to a minimum in Boys Town Schools is fostering a culture of respect for diversity of all kinds. As an inherently diverse institution, Boys Town Schools is home to children of many backgrounds. As such, its students are exposed to a level of cultural diversity not typically experienced by their peers at most public schools. Boys Town Schools teaches them to respect one another and demonstrate respect on a daily basis.

   This year, for the first time, Boys Town Schools is hosting a Diversity/Gender Training Program for its students. The goal is not only to teach the students about the benefits of diversity, but also for them to learn from each other’s inherent diversity.

Observation, reporting and respect – when faculty, staff and students practice these three things, they work together to reduce bullying while celebrating the diversity that makes us stronger, both academically and socially.

www.boystowntraining.org