

# Bus Drivers and Bullying Prevention

Bullying in schools continues to be a concern across the country. In Manitoba, Safe Schools Legislation, school division policies, training and numerous programs are an indication of a commitment to address the problem. Awareness and education are key to ensuring student safety. Bullying is defined as a repeated assertion of power with the intention to do harm. It can take many forms - physical, verbal, social and electronic. The prevention and effective intervention of bullying behaviours requires the involvement of all members of the school community. School bus drivers can play a critical role in making sure that all students who ride the bus everyday feel respected, included and ultimately, safe. With the new school year upon us, it is timely to share the following useful tips for bus drivers:



## Tips for Bus Drivers

### To Intervene in Bullying

- Learn about bullying so you know what you are looking for (visit [www.safeschoolsmanitoba.ca](http://www.safeschoolsmanitoba.ca)). When you see something, do something - stay assertive and calm.
- Start with verbal warnings. Use the name of the student who is bullying.
- Call your school. Sometimes the call will stop the behaviour.
- If the behaviour escalates, stop the bus in a safe place if you have to.
- Maintain control of yourself.
- Stand up and speak, clearly and calmly, to the involved students.
- Do not argue with or try to convince the student who is bullying.
- Move affected students to new, safe seats.
- Report incidents as required by your school's policy.
- Talk to other school staff about what you've witnessed. Share your concerns about the students you drive, since they interact with the same students during the rest of the day.

### To Prevent Bullying

- Establish a positive atmosphere on the bus. Be clear, fair, and consistent about the rules.
- Treat the students the way you want to be treated and the way you want them to treat each other.
- Learn and use their names. Introduce yourself.
- Get to know all of the students on your bus - including the students who bully.
- Use positive, non-verbal interactions - a smile, a nod, a thumbs up, a high five, a pat on the back.
- Notice something positive the students do and say something about it to them or someone else where they can hear it.
- If you regularly drive for a group like a sports team or club, get to know what they do. Go watch them in action and say something to them about it.
- Submit positive bus referrals.

*Source: National Education Association*