# A Multi-Tiered Approach to Bullying Prevention

Research suggests that a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention (BP) is most effective. This includes universal strategies aimed at building an inclusive school climate where clear behavioral expectations are taught, reinforced and consistently addressed; selective prevention to address the needs of students who have greater needs than the general student population; and intensive strategies for students whose needs are not addressed in selective prevention. This multi-level prevention system is overseen by a team that uses data to monitor student needs and responses to tiered interventions.

## TIER 1 — Universal

- Sustained focus on school climate:
  - Systematic instruction on schoolwide behavioral expectations
  - Inclusive norms/routines
  - Signals and reinforcement systems for prosocial behavior
  - Effective classroom management
  - Use of surveys and other data

- Common definition of bullying

- Clear BP policies and expectations for bullying reporting and follow-up

- Teacher and staff training on BP and intervention, including emphases on equitable trauma informed care

- Tracking system(s) for identifying potential bullying across settings

- Knowledge and skill-based instruction for students on BP, cyberbullying prevention, bystander expectations, and online citizenship

- Classroom meetings or social emotional learning (SEL) lessons focused on: self and interpersonal awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, perspective taking, and social problem-solving

- Caregiver education on BP, digital parenting, and cyber safety

## TIER 2 — Selective

- Active supervision in bullying "hot spots," including on-the-spot interventions when bullying is suspected

- Teach/reteach social-behavioral expectations in settings where bullying frequently occurs

- Referral system for identifying students who need more support:
  - Schoolwide data systems
  - SAP
  - Teacher nomination/ratings
  - Student and caregiver reports

- Direct SEL instruction for students who show early signs of problem behavior according to data. May focus on:
  - Social problem-solving skills
  - Self-management strategies
  - Friendship skills
  - Communication skills
  - Empathy-building
  - Peer support groups

- Create space for students to play a role in BP and shifting school climate:
  - Student voice on school climate team
  - Pro-social and social justice clubs/youth engagement opportunities

## TIER 3 — Intensive

- On-the-spot interventions by adults

- Individual meetings with students and caregivers

- Individualized plan for students who bully others:
  - May include regular check-ins, mentoring, skill practice/application, psychoeducational interventions for students and caregivers, etc.

- Individualized supportive planning with students who are bullied:
  - May include supportive check-ins, mentoring, plans for safety/support, follow-up meetings with caregivers, etc.

- IEP or 504 meetings for students already identified for individualized support

- Referral to SAP or behavioral health services and community supports, as needed

References: Bradshaw, C.P. (2015). Translating Research to Practice in Bullying Prevention. *American Psychologist*, 70(4), 322; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2016). *Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; Olweus, D., Limber, S. P., Flerx, V., Mullin, N., Riese, J., & Snyder. M. (2007). *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Schoolwide Guide.* Center City, MN: Hazelden; https://www.pbis.org