

HAZING INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

Palm Elementary Charter School is committed to providing a safe and civil learning environment. PLCS takes a strong position against hazing and bullying, and any behavior that infringes on the safety or well-being of students, employees and any other persons within the jurisdiction or that interferes with learning or the ability to teach. PLCS prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint or participates in the complaint investigation process.

PLCS policy requires all employees, students and parents to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. "All students and staff of public primary, elementary, middle and senior high schools have the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure and peaceful." [Article 1, Section 28 (c) of the California State Constitution]. PLCS adheres to a strict compliance with Hazing Prevention and Bullying Prevention Policies.

Hazing, bullying, harassment or programs, exercises, assignments and lesson plans interpreted as harassment, bullying or hazing, or actions between employees, parents, students or directed at employees, parents or students is prohibited and a violation of this policy.

Hazing and bullying are part of a continuum of aggressive or violent behaviors. Some acts of hazing or bullying may constitute other categories of misconduct, such as assault, battery, child abuse, hate-motivated incident, criminal activity or sexual harassment and as such violate other PLCS policies. PLCS personnel, including volunteers, are obligated to follow appropriate PLCS reporting guidelines as detailed in related policies, procedures, and handbooks.

I. DEFINITIONS

A. Hazing, a form of bullying, is a method of intimidation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury, personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current or prospective pupil. Hazing can be an 'activity' that individuals must to before they can belong to a group. Hazing is any action or activity used to maintain a hierarchy or pecking order within a group. Hazing is an activity which may be physically, psychologically or socially harmful. Hazing as defined as a 'criminal act' does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events. [(CA Ed. Code § 48900 (q, r), CA Penal Code § 245.6)].

B. Bullying is any deliberate or unwanted severe or pervasive physical, verbal, written, or electronic act, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that

a. Is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by an actual or perceived characteristic, such as:

1. Race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identify and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that
2. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of the other students; and that

3. A reasonable person should know, understand the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or

4. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or

5. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

b. That has the intention of, or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of, one or more of the following:

1. Reasonable fear of harm to person or property.

2. Substantially detrimental effect on physical or mental health.

3. Substantial interference with academic performance.

4. Substantial interference with the ability to participate in or benefit from school services, activities or privilege.

* "Electronic act" means the creation and transmission originated on or off the school site, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager of communication [CA Ed Code §48900 (2)(A)]. Impersonating a person through electronic means for purposes of harming, intimidating, threatening or defrauding a person is violation of CA Penal Code §§ 528.5-529

C. Associated individuals are non-students who are affiliated with PLCS, including, but not limited to parents/guardians, volunteers, vendors, contracted service providers, former students, former employees, spouses, domestic partners, and relatives or friends of employees or students.

II. TYPES OF HAZING

All incidents must (1) be deemed a method of intimidation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury, personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current or prospective pupil and (2) must meet the impact criteria below, as well as be used to be considered hazing:

A. Cyberbullying is committed by means of an electronic communication device, such as a cellular phone, computer, or tablet. Cyberbullying may include messages, texts, sounds, images, posts on social

network, Internet websites, and the creation of false profiles or credible impersonations of another actual person without their consent (CA Ed Code § 32261 (a-g), CA Penal Code §§ 528.5-529).

B. Physical bullying includes intentional unwelcome acts of beating, biting, fighting, hitting, kicking, poking, punching, pushing, shoving, spitting and tripping.

C. Social, relational or psychological bullying includes spreading rumors, manipulating relationships, exclusion, blackmailing, isolating, rejecting, using peer pressure and ranking personal characteristics.

D. Verbal and non-verbal includes gossiping, making rude noises, name-calling, spreading rumors, hurtful teasing, taunting, making threats and making threatening gestures (includes emoticons).

E. Playful teasing is good-natured joking and name-calling among friends with the intention of *building closeness*. By contrast, Bullying or hazing is malicious teasing among individuals who are *not* friends with the intention of invoking harm, fear or humiliation. Teasing may have the unintended outcome of invoking embarrassment, whereas in bullying or hazing, invoking embarrassment is the intended goal. Teasing and bullying or hazing may appear similar, but the differentiating variables are the relationship between the parties and the intention of the perpetrators.

Any of the above used for purposes of a method of intimidation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury, personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current or prospective pupil is Hazing and is prohibited.

III. PROPER IDENTIFICATION OF BULLYING AND HAZING

A. What? Understand the difference between *Conflicts vs. Bullying*. During a conflict, name-calling, threats and other conduct that might look like bullying can occur. However, a conflict and bullying are very different. Unlike bullying, during a conflict people are equally involved in some type of disagreement. Conflict is considered mutual, meaning everyone is more or less evenly involved. Bullying, on the other hand, involves one or several people (the bullies) intentionally committing a mean or violent act or hazing against another person(s) or group of people (the victims). When bullying occurs, there is no mutual participation in a disagreement; it is one-sided. Bullying victims have a hard time defending themselves. The victims want the bullying to stop, but the bully continues the behavior. Conflicts and bullying can interrupt the school day, damage property and cause injuries to the people involved. However, when the behavior involves a conflict, the school will take action.

Bullying that Leads to a Conflict. An incident that is found to be bullying could lead to a conflict in the future. To decide whether a behavior is bullying, the school officials must think about all of the facts during an investigation. Examples of bullying and conflict by grade level are provided below:

GRADE LEVEL

CONFLICT
*(Mutual disagreements,
arguments or fights)*

BULLYING
*(Intent to emotionally or
physically hurt a student; it is
one-sided.)*

*Elementary
School*

“You copied my picture...you stole my idea!”
“No, I didn’t...you copied from my picture!”

A fellow student grabs the picture you colored and tears it up, calling you names related to your religion and cultural heritage.

*Middle/Junior
High School*

“After you borrowed my basketball, I asked that you return it and you didn’t!” “I did return it...I left it on your porch.”

While practicing basketball skills in the gym, several students sit nearby and call out insulting comments about the color of your skin and your basketball skills.

B. When? Bullying occurs when:

1. One or more students are victims of unwanted or uninvited aggression, as the behavior applies to the definition of harassment, intimidation and bullying;
2. The aggressor’s behavior would lead a person to reasonably believe that the aggressor is motivated by a desire to physically or emotionally hurt someone;
3. The aggression is one-sided; and
4. The behavior is not an attempt to positively or negatively address or resolve a problem.

C. Hazing and Bullying.

It can be easy to think that hazing and bullying are the same things. Hazing can involve bullying or can be considered bullying in some situations. The key difference is that hazing is behavior that is based on a tradition and is used by members of a group to maintain a hierarchy or “pecking order” within the group. The lower group member or persons who want to join the group either agree or go along with the hazing activities, which may be physically, psychologically or socially harmful. Unlike bullying, the victims or newcomers let themselves to be treated in a way that gets them accepted as a member of the group. Once accepted by the group, the victims become bystanders and watch others get hazed. Eventually, the bystanders achieve senior status and power and haze others.

Two things that make hazing and bullying different are:

- The victims agree or go along with being hazed as a way to prove that they should be accepted as a member of the group; and
- The victims eventually haze others after they have been accepted into the group and have achieved senior status or power.

IV. ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBILITIES. A safe campus approach requires a multi-faceted approach with strategies to present, respond to, and recover from incidents of bullying and hazing. The Principal at PLCS creates an environment where the school community upholds the standards of respect and civility and understands that bullying and hazing are inappropriate, harmful and unacceptable. Toward this goal, PLCS shall:

A. Communicate with and ensure that all certificated and classified staff, activity directors, and volunteers on campus:

1. Understand school policies regarding bullying and hazing.
2. Recognize the indicators of bullying and hazing.
3. Understand their individual responsibilities to respond to, intervene, and report any act or incident of bullying or hazing.
4. Promote mutual respect and acceptance.

B. Provide instruction to ensure that students and staff are educated about appropriate online behavior and cyberbullying awareness.

C. Certify compliance with the Bullying and Hazing Policy and the School Safety Plan. PLCS takes reported cases of bullying and hazing seriously and utilizes positive behavior support strategies, progressive discipline, interventions, and corrective measures to address inappropriate behaviors.

D. Ensure that all reports of bullying or hazing are investigated and documented and that appropriate interventions are implemented and monitored. There must be at least one documentation of monitoring within 30 days and resolution within 60 days. For incidents of student misconduct related to bullying or hazing, document the investigation, interventions, and resolution. Incidents that substantially disrupt school operations, require additional resources or sustained monitoring, should also be documented.

D. Ensure that disciplinary actions are in compliance with PLCS guidelines. Bullying or hazing that warrants suspension or expulsion must be reviewed by PLCS standards.

E. Peer-to-peer bullying typically does not rise to the level of suspected child abuse. However, if child abuse is reasonably suspected, it must be reported to the appropriate child protective agency.

F. Post expectations of positive behavior throughout the school to communicate norms of socially appropriate behavior for classrooms, restrooms, yard, eating areas, and other school activities.

IV. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Model and enforce appropriate behavior by creating an environment where mutual respect, tolerance, civility, and acceptance among students and staff are promoted,

and students understand that bullying and hazing are inappropriate, harmful, and taken seriously.

B. Be familiar with the indicators of and appropriate responses to bullying and hazing.

C. Communicate and reinforce positive behavior expectations and norms for classrooms, restrooms, yards, eating areas, and other school activities.

D. Discuss all aspects of the Bullying and Hazing Policy with students including strategies to prevent, respond to, and report bullying and hazing.

V. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES.

Students are significant contributors toward creating a safe school environment. Students should:

A. Be safe, respectful, and responsible for their actions at all times, during, before, and after school, and during school-related events and activities.

B. Treat everyone with respect. Participate in school-wide efforts to celebrate diversity. Be sensitive as to how others might perceive actions or words.

C. Practice safe and respectful behavior while on-line and while using electronic devices. Electronic behavior that causes a substantial disruption to school, even if it occurred during non-school hours, may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion.

D. Report bullying or hazing to a PLCS employee.

E. Never engage in retaliatory behavior or ask, encourage, or consent to anyone to retaliate on their behalf.

VI. RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND HAZING

It is imperative that schools investigate to determine if the behavior meets the criteria of bullying and hazing, make efforts to prevent its recurrence, and provide appropriate responsive actions. The following procedures should be followed in addressing incidents:

A. Secure student safety.

B. Assure involved parties that allegations are taken seriously.

C. Obtain factual written statements from the involved parties and if appropriate, witnesses (see Attachments A and B, Bullying and Hazing Complaint Form).

D. Provide the Title IX Bullying Complaint Manager with copies of the complaint and supportive documentation.

- E. Investigate promptly and thoroughly.
- F. Develop an action plan to respond to and monitor the behavior. An Individual Student Safety Plan and the No Bullying and Hazing Contract are resources to assist in documenting agreements and interventions for the parties involved but are not required for all situations.
- G. California Education Code Section 48900 stipulates that schools may respond to bullying that is created by electronic means (i.e., cyberbullying) that originated on or off of the school site *if* the incident meets the impact criteria of bullying *and* can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
1. Reasonable fear of harm to person or property.
 2. Substantially detrimental effect on physical or mental health.
 3. Substantial interference with academic performance.
 - 4 Substantial interference with the ability to participate in or benefit from school services, activities, or privileges.
- H. For student misconduct related to bullying or hazing, document the investigation, interventions, and actions taken. Incidents that substantially disrupt school operations, or require additional resources or sustained monitoring, should also be documented.
1. Confidentiality laws prohibit the sharing of information about a child to persons other than the custodial parents/guardians and authorized staff. The determination of findings and resolution must be documented and communicated to the complainant.
- K. Monitor to ensure that the misconduct has ceased. If there is a possibility that the incident has not been resolved, document at least one follow-up within 30 days of the initial filing to indicate the status of the investigation and actions taken. Within 60 days, document how the incident has been resolved.
- L. Targets and perpetrators of bullying and hazing may benefit from support to reengage with the school community. Interventions should be reasonable, fair, age-appropriate, match the severity and nature of the misbehavior, and be paired with meaningful instruction and guidance.
- M. Bullying, hazing or harassment that is based on the person's actual or perceived characteristics or association with any protected classes, may also constitute discrimination or a hate-motivated incident and must be investigated.
- N. Peer-to-peer bullying typically does not rise to the level of suspected child abuse. However, if child abuse is reasonably suspected, it must be reported to the appropriate child protective agency.
- O. The determination of findings and resolution must be documented and communicated to the complainant.

P. Complainants who disagree with the outcome of a bullying or hazing complaint may appeal the decision Board of Directors. Hate motivated incidents and bullying or harassment on the basis of a protected class can be appealed to Educational Equity Compliance through the Uniform Complaint Procedure.

IX. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Data collection and analysis are critical tools that can inform efforts to create and refine school wide, classroom and individual student interventions to promote a positive school culture.

X. RESOLUTION OF INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

Reported allegations of bullying must be investigated, monitored, and documented within 30 calendar days and resolved within 60 calendar days. "Resolution" means that an incident has been investigated and appropriate interventions have been taken to reasonably ensure that the specific behavior has ceased. A new incident should be regarded as a new report and investigated accordingly, unless it is determined to be a continuation of the initial complaint, in which case, the initial complaint could be reopened. The determination of findings and resolution must be documented and communicated to the complainant.

XI. CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-RETALIATION

The reports and investigations of bullying or hazing shall respect the privacy of all parties to the fullest extent possible. Every effort shall be made to limit the distribution of information to those personnel who need to know within the confines of the PLCS' reporting procedures and investigation process. PLCS will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who reports suspected bullying or hazing or participates in the investigation process. Confidentiality and nonretaliation requirements extend to all parties involved.

Step 1: The Verbal Report – All reports of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying acts should be reported to the Principal the *same day* the incident occurs when a school staff member, a contractor or a volunteer:

- a. Personally witnesses an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying; or
- b. Receives reliable information indicating that harassment, intimidation or bullying act occurred.

Parents, students and others also may make verbal reports.

Step 2: Parent Notification – As soon as possible following any verbal report of harassment, intimidation or bullying to the Principal, the Principal must inform the parents of all suspected student offenders and suspected student victims. Depending on the school's procedure and the facts of each incident, the Principal might inform the parent by phone, letter or some other form of communication. If it is

appropriate to the situation, the Principal may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

Step 3: The Investigation – *One school day* after receiving the verbal report, the Principal or the Principal’s designee must start an investigation of the act. The school Principal conducts the investigation.

Length of Investigation – The investigation should be completed as soon as possible. The Principal will make every attempt to complete the investigation no later than *10 school days* from the date of the report. During the investigation:

1. The Principal might appoint other school staff to help with the investigation; and
2. The Principal might administer discipline or take other steps under the Board of Director’s anti-bullying policy or code of student conduct if the facts show there is enough information to do so.

Amending the Investigation Report (Depends on the Facts): If there is information related to the investigation that is received after the 10-school day deadline, the original results of the report may be amended to include the information. There is no deadline for making an amendment to the report. PLCS would make a decision on the way to respond to the additional information, depending on the facts.

Step 4: PLCS Actions – Based on the investigation report, the Principal may choose to take any one of the following additional actions:

1. Impose discipline;
2. Provide intervention services;
3. Create training programs to reduce harassment, intimidation or bullying, improve school climate and make the school safer and more accepting of all students;
4. Order counseling; or
5. Take any other actions necessary to address the incident or reduce harassment, intimidation or bullying in the schools.

Step 5: Information to Parents – Within *five school days* after the results of the investigation are reported PLCS must provide the parents with information about the investigation that is limited to the following:

1. The type of investigation that was conducted;
2. Whether or not the district found evidence of harassment, intimidation or bullying; and

3. Whether or not discipline was imposed or services were provided to address the harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Limited Information and Student Privacy Laws: Due to student records and privacy laws and regulations, parents are only entitled to review their child's educational records; a parent is not entitled to view the records of other students. This means that parents are not permitted to receive the entire harassment, intimidation or bullying investigation report if it in any way would identify a student other than their own. If parents believe they are entitled to more information than has been provided by PLCS, the parents may file a complaint with the Board of Directors.

Request for Reconsideration – After receiving the information on the investigation, parents have the right to request a reconsideration by the Board of Directors, if they are unsatisfied with the investigation findings or any other actions taken by the school.

VI. BULLYING/HAZING PREVENTION – PARENTS RESPONSE

What Not to Do if You Believe Your Child is Being Bullied

It can be challenging to know the most helpful things to do and say if your child is being bullied. Some things a parent should *not do* include the following:

- *Do Not encourage your child to harm or “get back at” the person who is bullying them* – This could get your child hurt, suspended or expelled from school or sent to court.
- *Do not demand school officials contact the parents of the students who bullied your child* – This might make matters worse by increasing the pressure on your child, increasing the bullying or bringing about bullying from the parent. While ultimately school officials may be able to intervene, these matters can and should be resolved between the parents of the involved student(s).
- *Do not demand or expect a solution right away* – Indicate that you want to determine the best course of action, but need to be sure that your child is safe. Also, be aware that PLCS only has so much ability to resolve the matter. Further, PLCS is prohibited from revealing information on the students who might be involved in the situation, including the disciplinary actions taken against other students. The law preventing school officials from giving you details on other students does not mean appropriate action has not been taken.

What to Do if Your Child is Bullying Others

Finding out that your child has bullied another person can be very difficult. Most often parents deny this is possible. The first step is to admit to yourself your child has behaved in this way. Some parents may have difficulty accepting this because they have not seen personally their child behave in this way. Some parents may be concerned that they will be blamed for their child's conduct. Despite these concerns, it is very important for parents to deal with their child's behavior. Bullying is not harmful just to the victims.

Signs that Your Child Might be Bullying Others

If your child behaves in one or more of the following ways, it might indicate that he or she bullies others. If you observe these behaviors, you might want to spend some extra time talking with your child about his or her behavior and schedule a conference to talk about your concerns with school staff:

- Teasing, threatening or kicking other children;
- Being hot-tempered, hyperactive, impulsive or having a hard time following rules;
- Being aggressive toward adults;
- Acting tough or showing no sympathy for others;
- Being involved in other antisocial behavior, such as vandalism or theft; and
- Engaging in controlling or dishonest behavior.

How to Help Stop Bullying (Prevention)

The most effective way to prevent bullying, whether inside or outside of school, is for parents, students, school staff and community members to cooperate in planning and acting to stop HIB. This part of the guide gives parents actions they can take in their home, the community and their child's school to prevent bullying any place it might occur.

Work Together with Your Child's School to Stop Bullying

There are many different actions parents can take to make sure their children's schools are correctly dealing with bullying. These actions include:

- *Knowing PLCS' anti-bullying and other policies* – Taking the time to read the anti-bullying policy and code of student conduct will provide parents with an understanding of the steps the school must take when bullying takes place. Understanding the policies and procedures will help parents decide whether the matter is in fact bullying, whether the matter is better handled by the parents, rather than school officials, and if the school is to act, what action is appropriate.

- *Being active in your children's educations* – One of the best ways parents can protect their children at school is to take an active role in their education. Some ways parents can be involved with their children's schools include:

- 1.) Attend parent-teacher conferences and contact your child's teacher regularly to stay updated on how your child is doing at school. Ask about what your child is learning, if he or she is having trouble with any school work, and what you can do to help.
- 2.) Make an appointment with the principal if you have concerns with school policies.

Take Action to Help Stop Bullying

Before children begin to attend school, they learn to interact from behaviors they observe in their homes and communities. Research reports indicate that the success of any bullying prevention program is 60% based on whether the same types of approaches are used in the home. Some ideas for parents to use to help to stop the cycle of bullying include:

- *Build empathy* – Encourage empathy by teaching your children about the struggles all human's face, including pain, rejection and misunderstanding. Help your children to understand the common human experience and to understand and accept all people, especially those who may look, speak, act or seem

different from them.

- *Teach respect* – Teach respect for differences among people. Discuss the subjects of hate, prejudice and intolerance, and help your children learn about others who are different from them.
- *Show interest in your children's life and be an empathetic listener* – Show your children that you are interested in learning about their hobbies and ordinary activities. Ask about their days at school and their school work, not just grades. Make it clear to your children that you want them to be happy, and that you accept and love them as they are. Encourage open communication. This does not mean encourage them to victimize themselves. Not every negative situation is bullying or conflict.
- *Actively supervise your children* – Active supervision helps to set clear, reasonable, consistent and age-appropriate rules and guidelines for your children. Clearly explain how you expect your children to behave, and be consistent in how you handle bullying that takes place inside and outside of the home.
- *Know your children's friends* – Meet your children's friends; get to know them and their activities. Get to know the parents of your children's friends. Your children's friends and activities can have a major effect on their behavior and how they relate to others.
- *Become involved in your community* – Learn what is happening in your community. The behavior of people in the community may affect how your children behave. You can help stop the cycle of bullying by becoming involved in community activities and taking steps to ensure it is a safe and supportive environment. These steps can include communicating regularly with public safety officials in your area, and asking your neighbors to keep an eye on your children and to report any incidents of harmful or unlawful behavior. These steps do not include bullying other children or their parents.
- *Encourage positive problem solving* – Discourage verbal and physical revenge by telling your children that this type of behavior is unacceptable. Encourage your children to solve conflict with words and not with physical or verbal abuse. Suggest they walk away from difficult incidents and talk to an adult for guidance.
- *Ask questions* – Ask your children questions about the way they handle social situations to determine whether they are being bullied or are bullies. Ask school staff about things they see in your children's social relations to help confirm whether there is need for concern. Be mindful of rewarding reporting false information. Children who feel they are earning respect or attention from parents by reporting bullying, even when it is not happening will only serve to perpetuate false allegations.
- *Disapprove of bullying* – Send a clear message that bullying behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Teach your children not to laugh when other children are being bullied, not to take part in bullying and not to support bullies.
- *Teach your children to be "upstanders," rather than bystanders* – Stopping the cycle of bullying involves teaching your children to be "upstanders," instead of being bystanders. Bystanders are people who watch bullying, including cyberbullying, and who do or say nothing to stop it or help. When bystanders do nothing, they are sending a message to the bully that they accept bullying. Upstanders are people who take some action when they see bullying. Below are some actions you can suggest to your children that will prevent them from acting as bystanders and help them be bystanders.
 - Do not laugh or encourage the bully in any way;
 - Stay at a safe distance and help the target of the bullying get away;
 - Do not give the bully attention and support by watching;
 - Reach out to the victim in friendship;
 - Support the victim in private;

- Include the victim in some of your children’s activities;
- Tell an adult; and
- Only take actions that are safe.

If your children take these actions, they can take an active role in stopping the bullying of others. Practicing these situations with your children can increase the chances they will act as “upstanders.”

Bullying Prevention Activities Parents and Children Can Do Together

There are many specific activities parents can use to help their children develop empathy, respect for others and positive problem-solving skills, including the following:

- *Perform community service* – Participating in community service with your children can help them to better understand people of different backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, ages, educations and income levels. For example, research reports show that students who participated in service activities were more likely to treat each other kindly, help each other and care about doing their best. Consider having your children volunteer with an organization that focuses on servicing certain groups that are commonly misunderstood or harassed by others.
- *Watch films that discourage prejudice* – Watching films with your children on the harmful effects of racism, homophobia, sexism and other forms of prejudice throughout history can help your children develop empathy and discourage them from bullying others. Watching these films may help children who have been bullied to identify with other groups that have been mistreated. Films on the civil rights movement may be useful. Many films that address these issues can be found at the public library.
- *Read books or other literature that discourage prejudice* – Similar to watching films that address the prejudice many groups have faced, reading books on this topic can help your children develop empathy and discourage them from bullying others. Books that deal with prejudice should be available at the school library and in the public library.
- *Visit museums and attend educational events on social issues* – Taking your children to museums or educational events with exhibits that focus on social issues, such as poverty, civil rights and prejudice, can help your children to better understand the lives and struggles of others. Conducting an online search of museums and exhibits in your city or town may help to find some of these activities in your area. Many local community organizations, governments and public universities also regularly hold panels, workshops and other events on past and current social issues that are open to the public.
- *Keep your family up-to-date on current events* – Watching the news, reading the newspaper and engaging in other activities that help your children stay up-to-date on current events can have many benefits. Talking about the events and discussing the behavior seen can help to teach the behavior you want to see from your children. These activities can help them to better understand the effects their decisions have on themselves and others and can help your children become more empathetic and open to developing relationships with children that are different from them.