



The PETS! Teacher's Guide

The performance of *PETS!*, along with the materials in this guide, is intended to supplement (not replace) current education and guidance on bullying and other related issues in the schools.

Discussion Etiquette

Due to the sensitive nature of the issues presented in PETS!, it is very important for everyone to follow the standard ground rules for group discussion.

Respect what others say without passing judgment.

All things said within the group should remain confidential. Students ought to bear in mind that they should speak in general terms, as opposed to specific, when talking about personal or uncomfortable facts.

Only those students who feel comfortable speaking should be asked to do so.

PETS! Education Goals

Bullying Prevention:

- Recognizing
- Reporting
- Refusing
- Turning Bystanders Into Upstanders

Overcoming Failure:

- Recognizing mistakes
- Forgiveness

Teamwork:

- Sensitivity to others' feelings
- Celebrating everyone's strengths

About The Play

Breakdown of Characters

The Pets:

Biscuit the Pup: Loves EVERYTHING about their daily routine and helping their friends.

Bagel the Beagle: Supportive friend of Biscuit. A star pet student

Benny The Bunny: Supportive friend of Biscuit

Feathers the Parrot: Supportive Friend of Biscuit. Expert in breathing techniques

Ravioli the Cat: Mysterious, shy and rarely seen. Holds some unexpected words of wisdom

The Humans:

Corey: Best human friend of Biscuit. Learning to stand up for themselves

Drew: Friend of Corey's. Struggling with the news of his move to a different school

Phoenix: Friend of Drew and Corey. Learning to be an upstander

Sage: Friend of Drew and Corey. Learning to be an upstander

Pet School Teacher: AKA- Pet School chaos manager

Dog Walker: Not like the *other* dog walkers

Play Summary

At Pet School, we meet Biscuit, an energetic and enthusiastic puppy who loves everything about his daily routine and their animal friends. They are especially fond of their best human friend, Corey, a fourth grader who drops them off at Pet School each morning before heading off to human school. At the end of each day, Corey picks Biscuit up and they happily share stories of their day. Corey is preparing for the school science fair and dreams of fifth grade, while Biscuit is just proud of learning “roll over.”

At the bus stop the next day, Corey runs into Drew, a classmate. They awkwardly talk about the science fair. Drew reveals he won't be participating because he's moving soon and implies that being too enthusiastic about school projects might make him seem like a “loser.” The tension between them grows as Drew tries to brush off the seriousness of the situation but eventually becomes defensive and lashes out when Corey asks questions about the move. As more friends (Sage and Phoenix) arrive, a small accident causes Drew to get splashed with mud. He overreacts and cruelly calls Corey a “loser,” telling him to stay away. The others awkwardly follow Drew, leaving Corey standing alone, hurt and confused.

Biscuit continues his day with the other animals and the Dog Walker. After the walk, the Dog Walker asks the school to set out their pamphlets related to their various side-gigs. Among the pamphlets is one titled *“The Three Rs of Bullying Prevention and How to Be an Upstander.”*

When Corey returns to pick up Biscuit, the warmth and enthusiasm are noticeably missing. Corey is distracted and withdrawn. As they walk home, Corey opens up: Drew has been calling him names and isolating him at school. Biscuit, sensing something is wrong, is heartbroken and blames himself. Despite trying to help Corey and cheer them up, things only get worse. Increasingly distressed, Biscuit becomes restless and overwhelmed by guilt, causing them to act out in Pet School and get scolded. The other pets encourage Biscuit to open up about how they feel. They help Biscuit calm down and, with guidance from wise Ravioli the Cat, learn what bullying is and how to help Corey.

At the bus stop, tensions among the humans rise again, but this time Biscuit's quiet intervention sparks change. After causing a distraction, Biscuit sneaks the Bullying Prevention pamphlets into Phoenix and Sage's backpacks. On the bus, the duo discovers the pamphlets and recognize Biscuit's paw prints. Later, they approach Corey, explain the bullying they witnessed, and introduce the 3 R's of bullying prevention they learned from the pamphlet: Recognize, Report, and Refuse. They also explain what it means to be an Upstander—someone who stands up for others.

With newfound support, Corey begins to heal. They're deeply moved to learn it was Biscuit—their loyal dog—who started the chain of support that helped bring understanding and friendship back into their life.

Pre-Viewing Discussion Questions

To place the students in a proper frame of mind for viewing the play, we suggest using the following discussion questions.

1. Can you define bullying? What are some examples of bullying?
2. Have you ever seen someone get bullied (picked on unfairly) before, or have you ever been bullied yourself? How did that make you feel?
3. What does it mean to respect others? How can you respect someone you don't get along with, or who is different from yourself?
4. What should you do when you see someone being bullied? How do you know if the situation is safe for you to help?
5. Do you think bullying is a problem at our school? Why or why not?

Post-Play Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of the play did you like the best? Were there parts that made you think more than others? Were there things in the play that surprised you?
2. Which characters did you like best and which characters did you not like, and why? Who did you identify with? Should any of the characters have made different choices?
3. What is bullying? What is cyberbullying?
4. What are some examples of bullying you noticed from the play? What are some examples you've seen in the real world?
5. What are the negative effects of bullying? What are the negative effects of bullying for the student who is being bullied? What are the negative effects of bullying for the student doing the bullying?
6. What should you do when you see someone getting bullied?
7. How can you connect with someone who seems different than you? How can we celebrate our differences?
8. What can we do to help stop bullying in our school?

Definitions

Bullying: Bullying is one-sided and unfair. It happens when someone who is more powerful, physically or socially, repeatedly hurts, scares, threatens or leaves out another person on purpose.

Bystander: Someone who witnesses bullying behavior.

Upstander: A positive bystander who witnesses bullying behavior and helps the student being bullied, either by intervening in the situation or by reporting the behavior to an adult

Tattling: Telling on someone just to get them in trouble or to get revenge

Reporting: Reporting (telling on) someone to keep you or someone else safe.

Recognize, Report, Refuse: When faced with a bullying situation, it is important to *recognize* that the behavior is a bullying behavior, *report* the behavior to a trusted adult who can help you *refuse* the behavior by staying calm and confident when asking them to stop. The recognizing, reporting, and refusing method focuses on safe ways to keep someone/yourself from getting hurt.

*The definitions used in this show and study guide are brought to you through our partnership with **Committee for Children**, and their **Second Step** bullying prevention program. Please visit them at www.cfchildren.org for more information.*

For Teachers Only

Handling Bullying Reporting with Students

From Committee for Children's *Second Step* curriculum

www.cfchildren.org

Following performances of our shows, schools often experience an increase in bullying reporting as students become aware that bullying is not acceptable and help is available. Administrators, counselors, and teachers are all seen by students as responsible adults who can help in a bullying situation.

Every school has their own process for handling bullying reporting. The following guidelines are used by permission of Committee for Children. They are taken directly from the *Second Step* curriculum and are intended to supplement (not replace) existing curriculum and guidelines already used in your school.

Handling Bullying Reports

The Four-A Response Process

Because *Steps to Respect* is a schoolwide program, it is essential that all staff know how to respond to bullying reports. Following is the process adults should use when a student reports bullying.

1. Affirm the child's feelings.

Ideas:

- a. "You were right to report/get help from an adult."
- b. "I'm glad you asked for help with this."

2. Ask questions.

Ideas:

- a. "Tell me more about what happened."
- b. "Has this happened before?"
- c. "Did anyone try to help you?"
- d. "Are you telling me this to get someone in trouble or to keep someone safe?"

3. Assess the child's safety.

Determine what the child needs to feel safe now.

4. Act.

Coach the child or refer the child for coaching.

Tell the child what will happen next.

Coaching Students Involved in Bullying Situations

Second Step Coaching Models

Once bullying has been reported, both the student who was bullied and the student who did the bullying must receive coaching—it is essential that no exceptions to this rule occur. *Second Step* recommends that all classroom teachers be prepared to coach students. The following sections detail the models teachers should use when coaching students.

Coaching the Student Who Was Bullied

Children rarely report the bullying they experience to adults—in part because they believe that adults are unable or unlikely to stop the harassment. Adults can combat children’s feelings of helplessness by (1) affirming children’s actions in reporting (which demonstrates that adults will provide the needed support and consequences) and (2) checking back with students who report bullying to see whether the problem has stopped.

Second Step recommends the following five-step model when coaching a child who has been bullied.

1. Affirm the child’s feelings.

- a. “You were right to report/get help from an adult.”

2. Ask questions.

Get information about the current situation and the history of the situation

3. Identify what has and has not worked in the past.

4. Generate solutions for the future.

Ideas:

- a. Discuss how the child can avoid the student who has bullied him or her. (Examples: The child could sit somewhere else, play somewhere else, or travel with a group of friends.)
- b. Coach the student in using assertive refusal skills. (If relevant to the situation, remind the student that aggression is *never* an appropriate solution.)
- c. Identify others (parents, teachers, friends) who can support the child

5. Follow up.

- a. See how the plan is working.
- b. Contact parents as appropriate.
- c. Refer more serious or chronic cases to an administrator or counselor.

Coaching the Student Who Bullied

Your school’s bullying policy should provide the necessary framework for applying consequences for student bullying. In addition to those consequences, children who bully need more targeted help

addressing their problem behavior. Children are more likely to change problem behavior if adults help them select positive alternative behaviors and provide consistent feedback on their progress.

This coaching model (for use with students who bully) has five steps.

1. Identify the problem and diffuse reporting responsibility.

Ideas:

- a. "I have been hearing that..."
- b. Many students have reported that..."

2. Ask questions and gather information.

Ideas:

- a. "I'd like to hear from you about what happened."
- b. "How would you feel if this happened to you?"

3. Apply consequences.

Ideas:

- a. Review the school policy regarding bullying.

4. Generate solutions for the future.

Ideas:

- a. "What are some ways to prevent this happening again?"

5. Follow up.

Ideas:

- a. See how the plan is working.
- b. Contact parents as appropriate.
- c. Refer students for further discipline as appropriate.
- d. Refer more serious or chronic cases to an administrator or counselor.

Note: Be sure to coach the students who have been bullied separately from those who bullied them. Children who have been bullied are often frightened, and may deny that there is any problem when face-to-face with children who have repeatedly harassed them.

Additional Resources

These tools and references are provided to support educators in addressing bullying, cyberbullying, and online safety in and out of the classroom.

❖ [Report Cyberbullying — StopBullying.gov](#)

Explains how and where to report cyberbullying — including guidance for reporting to schools, online platforms, and law enforcement.

❖ [Into the Cloud Web Series \(NCMEC\)](#)

A kid-friendly animated series focused on digital safety.

- **Season 1 (Ages 5–10):** Teaches safe online behavior and how to respond to cyberbullying or unsafe content.
- **Season 2:** Covers online exploitation prevention and how to report/remove harmful content.
- **Season 3 (Ages 10–11):** Focuses on online threats like enticement, sextortion, and AI-generated content, with resources for reporting and support.

Watch the series at NCMEC's website

❖ [Washington Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies](#)

Outlines state laws to help educators understand Washington's legal framework for addressing bullying in schools.

❖ [Get Help Now – StopBullying.gov](#)

A practical guide for students and adults, organized by age and type of bullying issue, to help find the right kind of support quickly.

❖ [WA State Office of the Education Ombuds](#)

Provides information for parents and educators on identifying and addressing bullying, harassment, and intimidation in Washington schools.

❖ [ACLU of Washington – Schools' Legal Duties](#)

Explains public schools' legal responsibilities to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment.

❖ [The Committee For Children](#)

Authors of the Second Step bullying prevention curriculum used in our productions.