



Detectives! Teacher's Guide

The performance of *Detectives!*, 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 *Detectives!*, 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.

***Detectives!* Education Goals**

Bullying Prevention:

- Recognizing
- Reporting
- Refusing
- Turning Bystanders Into Upstanders
- Identifying Reporting vs Tattling

Navigating Friendships:

- Sensitivity to others' feelings
- Responding to peer pressure

Conflict Resolution

- Asking for help to resolve a conflict after an independent attempt
- Appropriately sharing feelings

About The Play

Characters

Reese: New to class, curious, intellectual. Met Taylor last summer.

Taylor: Amiable, friends with everyone, fun

Andy: Struggling, insecure, funny

Ash: Quiet, observant, confident

Teacher/Playground Monitor/Librarian: Employees at the school. Played by the same actor.

Play Summary

On the first day of school, Taylor encounters Reese, a new student; they met during the summer and became friends out of school. Taylor introduces Reese to Andy, a friend from previous school years. Andy is a bit of a prankster and shows the kids a cell phone video that makes Reese and Ash, another classmate, a little uncomfortable. The teacher comes in and starts giving important first-day-of-fourth-grade details, including care of Houdini, the class hamster. The teacher, an amateur magician, offers to show the kids some magic tricks at the end of the week.

The kids decide to start a Detective Club at the school, and Reese practices the art of observation to learn things about Jasper, the school's new playground monitor. The teacher reminds Andy that phones aren't allowed in class, and Andy gets mad at Reese, thinking that Reese has complained about Andy's phone. As they start to argue, Ash discovers that Houdini has escaped from his cage. There's a frantic search until Ash finds Houdini again. Reese and Taylor look for clues to figure out how he escaped, in the classroom and then on their class trip to the school library.

4th grade continues for the week, although Andy is still mad and is consistently mean to Reese. When Friday comes, the teacher goes to look for magic supplies that have disappeared. The kids search for clues. Eventually Andy finds the magic kit in Reese's backpack. Reese says they didn't take the kit but the other kids have trouble believing that.

Reese is getting very unhappy at being blamed for taking the magic kit when Ash shows up to announce some of the conclusions of their detective work on the class's "three great mysteries:" the disappearance of Houdini, the theft of the magic kit, and the problems the kids are having being friends. In addition to facts about rodent care, Ash has uncovered information about bullying. Ash thinks Andy has been bullying Reese. Taylor has a hard time agreeing, being friends with all of them, but eventually realizes it is true. Ash's pamphlet from the library teaches the kids about the Three R's of bullying prevention: Recognize, Report, and Refuse, and how to be an Upstander—someone who helps someone else who is being bullied.

When Andy continues being mean to Reese, Taylor confronts them about all of the mean behavior. Ash makes a grand "detective unveiling the truth" presentation to the class that shows that Andy let Houdini out of the cage, stole the teacher's magic kit, and put it in Reese's backpack. Andy isn't sure how things have gotten so out of control and, after a moment of anger, manages to calm down and decides to try to be more friendly. Eventually the kids find a way to be friends again, and the play ends with Andy and the teacher performing a magic trick that can help solve some of the problems that Andy has caused.

Preparing For The Play

- In order to prepare your students for the performance, please remind them about theatre etiquette. This includes:
- Please don't talk during the performance. It is distracting to the performers and other audience members.
- Please try to keep non-verbal noise to a minimum. Unwrapping hard candy, popping gum, and electronic noises steal focus from what is happening on stage.
- It's okay to laugh if something strikes you as funny. It's also okay to cry if something makes you sad. These are examples of appropriate responses. However, whistling at the actors, shouting comments and catcalling are considered inappropriate responses.

- Live theatre is different from film and television because it is based on a relationship between the actors and the audience. Therefore, each performance of the same play is very unique because it is heavily influenced by the responses and interest of the audience. The best thing an audience member can do is to listen and get involved in the story.

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. Have you ever been in a situation where one of your friends wasn't treating another one of your friends well? Is that situation more complicated when you are friends with both of them? What is the best way to handle that kind of situation?
6. 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?

Post-Play Activities

1. (Recommended for grade levels K-2) Ask students to draw a picture of the most memorable moment or scene from the performance. Then ask students to share their illustration with the group, describe the scene, and why it was their favorite moment or how it made them feel.
2. (Recommended for grade levels 3-5) In the play, Taylor confronts Andy about their bullying behavior. Have the students act out a scene in which Reese confronts Andy about their behavior instead. How do both characters feel and how do their feelings affect their actions?
 - a. Afterwards, discuss what happened in the scene and how everyone's choices affected the outcome. Are there good and bad ways to have this kind of discussion?
 - b. Try acting out the scene again after having that discussion to see if the actors can come to a useful conclusion.
3. (Recommended for grade levels 3-5) Have the students act out a scene in which the teacher goes to some of the other adults in the school (maybe the playground monitor or librarian, or maybe the principal, who doesn't appear in the play) and tries to get their help addressing the issue of student bullying. Are they able to find any solutions?

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.