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BULLYING PREVENTION

Capstone Project

Educator Facilitation Guide

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Executive Summary

Bullying Prevention starts with you!

In 2016, Children’s Mercy and Sporting Kansas City began a ground-breaking, long-term partnership. Together, these two prominent Kansas City organizations are working to create positive change in the health and well-being of our community. Bullying has become an increasingly prevalent problem in Kansas City. Both kids who are bullied and kids who bully others can have long-term mental and physical health concerns. Children’s Mercy and Sporting KC are teaming up to help kids, teens and adults speak up against bullying. By using the iconic soccer red card—a widely recognized symbol of unacceptable behavior—Red Card KC calls attention to the problem of bullying and encourages positive behavior at schools, on playgrounds, and in the community.

As learned in the Red Card + MLS Actions Matter digital course, bullying is defined as actions that are unwanted, aggressive, and repeated (or have the potential to be repeated). Bullying can be physical, social, verbal, or cyber - and happens when there’s a power imbalance, whether that imbalance is real or perceived.

Major League Soccer (MLS) has set out to combat bullying, which has no place in schools or in communities at large. MLS and MLS WORKS, the League’s social responsibility platform, is dedicated to supporting the communities where we live and play our games, and to providing an environment where staff, players, partners and fans are treated with dignity and respect.

Through the topics of Relationships, Leadership, Resilience, Courage, and Community, the Red Card + MLS Actions Matter program provides concrete strategies on how to not only identify bullying, but to take the steps necessary to end it. The Red Card + MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project takes a tactical approach to bullying prevention by empowering students to take the lead in creating the change they want to see in their school community. Educators can help prepare students to become leaders by guiding them to plan, execute and troubleshoot bullying prevention initiatives.

Capstone Project Steps

The MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project involves the following steps (led by students):

STEP 1:

Gather a group of students to participate.

STEP 2:

Administer the anti-bullying survey.

STEP 3:

Interpret the results of the survey.

STEP 4:

Brainstorm ways to impact change.

STEP 5:

Implement anti-bullying strategies.

STEP 6:

Evaluate effectiveness and adjust strategies accordingly.

Educator Guidance

Below is some guidance to get you started in facilitating the MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project:

STEP 1: Gather a group of students to participate.

- Look for interest within existing leadership groups (e.g. student council, national honors society).
- Talk to the school about possible incentives to draw interest (e.g., building college resumes, credit for service requirements).
- Help students set up a time and place to meet (ideally within the school).

STEP 2: Administer the anti-bullying survey.

- Help students brainstorm ways to reach the largest number of their classmates for feedback.
- Encourage students to think outside their own cliques and friend groups.
- Assist with setup and delivery of paper and online survey versions, as well as focus groups.
- Coordinate (as needed) with the school administration.
- Alternately, school staff can administer the survey and provide the results to students for interpretation and leading an action plan for change.
 - » If school staff take the lead, they can add additional questions, as desired.
 - » Details on administering the survey can be found in the Anti-Bullying Survey Process Guide.

STEP 3: Interpret the results of the survey.

- Encourage students to focus action plans around the problems identified in the survey.
- Remind students that the data is just a starting point.

STEP 4: Brainstorm ways to impact change.

- Offer guidance and encouragement, but leave the decisions up to the students.
- Suggest students investigate ways they can build on existing anti-bullying initiatives, and give them access to details about those initiatives.
- Help students coordinate with administration and build school buy-in for key events and initiatives.

STEP 5: Implement anti-bullying strategies.

- Help students coordinate with school administration for approval, space and time for events.
- Suggest students broaden their vision to include the entire community if appropriate (e.g., administration, teachers, staff, parents).
- Regularly check in about problems or concerns and help identify solutions.

STEP 6: Evaluate effectiveness and adjust strategies accordingly.

- Guide students in evaluating effectiveness (such as re-administering the survey for comparison).
- Encourage students to reflect both on what worked and areas for improvement.
- Help students celebrate successes and actively think through places where more work can be done.
- Guide students to help identify and bring in the next set of leaders before their school term comes to a close.

Administering and Interpreting Results from the Anti-Bullying Survey

Administering The Anti-Bullying Survey

- You can access the anti-bullying survey [here](#).
 - » Sign in (or sign up) for survey monkey and then use the anti-bullying template to create a version specifically for your school community.
- Using the survey is free.
- The survey is anonymous.
- Ideally, the survey will be administered and interpreted by students, with educator guidance. If the administration wants to run the survey instead, include language about what you're doing and why. Be sure to inform students that their answers are confidential. Here's some sample language to get you started:

Each of us is invested in creating a school community where everyone feels safe and respected. To that end, we're using this survey [[link out to your school's version](#)] to find out about your experience. The survey is completely anonymous and confidential. The more students who respond, the better we can focus our efforts for change!

If you want to join your school's efforts to make our community the best it can be, contact [[include name of your group, if applicable, and contact information for point person in student group](#)].

Interpreting the Results of the Anti-Bullying Survey

- Ideally, the survey results will be interpreted by the student group; however encourage them to focus their actions in particular around questions where the survey revealed both:
 - » A higher number of students answering something other than 0.
 - » More students responding that they've experienced negative actions multiple times a week.

Idea Guide for Generating Interest

Reach out directly.

- Check in with groups and students already involved in school activities, like student government and NHS.
- Talk to students with high social referent status.
 - » Students with a lot of connections to different groups have power when it comes to moving the bar on change.
- Make sure all students know about the project, and everyone feels invited.
 - » Consider posters and other promo materials with inviting, inclusive messaging.

Incentivize.

- Talk to administration about counting participation toward services hour requirements.
- Remind students that leadership positions look great on college and job applications.

Appeal to students' desire to create change.

- Studies show that large numbers of Generation Z students are already involved in volunteering and activism. Capitalize on that desire to personally impact change by highlighting the student-led nature of the Capstone Project.

Action Plan Checklist

Note: This Action Plan is intended for student use. It is included in the Educator Facilitation Guide as a reference for educators providing guidance in the project.

Goals of the MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project

- Reduce instances of bullying in your school community.
 - » When bullying does happen, increase action to stop it.
 - » When bullying does happen, make sure classmates know how to get support and help.
- Increase inclusion, so every student feels connected, supported and respected.
 - » Give classmates opportunities to get involved in helping to create a school community that's positive for everyone.

Mission Statement

- Create a Mission Statement around your goals.
 - » Your Mission Statement should reflect the goals of the MLS Actions Matter Capstone project listed above.
 - » Your Mission Statement can also reflect specific needs of your school community, based on your Anti-Bullying Survey results.
- Share your Mission Statement with members and classmates.
 - » Use it to increase participation and build consensus.

Action Plan

- Create an Action Plan, identifying issues in your school community (based on discussion, results of your Anti-Bullying Survey and other classmate feedback) and methods for solving them.
- Be specific - connect your action items to problems identified by your Anti-Bullying Survey.
- Assign roles to each Action Item in your Action Plan.
 - » Ask for volunteers.
 - » Utilize classmates' strengths and unique skills.

Student Roles

- Target roles for both the Capstone Project as a whole, and for individual Action Items.
- Capstone Project roles might include:
 - » President
 - Writes agenda and runs meetings.
 - » Communications Director
 - Develops Mission Statement for group approval.
 - Creates materials (posters, information sheets, etc.) to support the group and projects.
 - » Secretary
 - Keeps notes on meeting decisions and plans.
- Action Item roles should be broken out based on the needs of the project, but consider:
 - » What you need to do for the Action Item to succeed.
 - » Break the Action Item up into smaller pieces to complete.
 - Assign roles based on the smaller pieces, based on what people are interested in and what their skills are.
 - » Report back on progress for each of the pieces at the meetings.
 - Adjust roles/plans as needed (e.g., if someone needs help, you can add another person to the role; if an action item isn't generating results you want, you can come up with an additional/replacement plan).

Sample Materials

School Buy-in Letter Template

Dear _____,

I'm writing to seek your support in implementing a student-led leadership and anti-bullying project in our school called the MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project, in partnership with Major League Soccer (MLS).

Major League Soccer is the top-flight men's professional soccer league in the United States and Canada, and is proud to offer MLS Actions Matter in partnership with EVERFI. This new bullying prevention program prepares future leaders by providing students with tools designed to train them on how to change behavior and create a positive environment in-school, on social media and throughout their community.

The Capstone Project allows students to take the lead in impacting change based on knowledge and skills gained through their digital MLS Actions Matter experience.

National data for high school indicates that 20% of students self-reported being bullied on school grounds in the past year (and data on self-reporting on bullying suggests this number is actually likely to be higher).

Bullying is a risk factor for suicide, drug abuse and school shootings. Even students who witness bullying but don't participate in it report increased feelings of helplessness and less sense of connectedness and support.

But I believe that our students can lead the way in creating lasting change and building an even stronger community at our school. Studies show that coming from a positive school community leads to more long-term successes, including:

- Better academic achievement, which can result in more opportunities after high school.
- Less drug and alcohol abuse.
- Better psychological well-being.

I'd like to help take on the role of educator facilitation, and I'd like your support with this project. Some ways you can support the MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project and our students include:

- Helping inform parents and students about the project.
- Assisting with delivery of the anti-bullying survey to all students in the school.
- Supporting the leadership group who volunteers to draft an Action Plan for change.

Thank you so much for your support with this project! I believe it can help us build strong leaders for tomorrow, while creating a stronger, more resilient and more supportive school community today.

Sincerely,

Parent and Student Notification Letter Template

Dear _____,

Our school is committed to creating a positive school community where all students feel valued and respected. To that end, we recently deployed MLS Actions Matter in partnership with Major League Soccer (MLS).

Major League Soccer is the top-flight men's professional soccer league in the United States and Canada, is proud to offer the online course, MLS Actions Matter in partnership with EVERFI. This new bullying prevention program prepares future leaders by providing students with tools designed to train them on how to change behavior and create a positive environment in-school, on social media and throughout their community. The digital experience empowers students to create change, whether they're engaging in bullying, on the receiving end of it, or witnessing it in school.

As an extension of the MLS Actions Matter experience, we are initiating the MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project. This project encourages students to take the lead in creating the change they want to see in their school community. This leadership opportunity is open to all students.

[If applicable, include details about how the Capstone Project meets volunteer service requirements or any other requirements.]

Students who volunteer will:

- Help administer and interpret an Anti-Bullying Survey in their school.
- Help identify places where improvement could be made.
- Create an Action Plan of ideas to create change.
- Implement their Action Plan in the school, with educator support.

[Name of educator in primary support role], [educator's title], will be the primary contact and point person for the MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project. [Name] will provide support and guidance to students who volunteer, and help them bring their vision to life.

Students who wish to volunteer for this leadership opportunity can [sign-up/contact information].

If you have any questions about the MLS Actions Matter Capstone Project, please contact [name] at [contact information].

Sincerely,

Social Media Announcements

[School name] is kicking off our #MLSActionsMatter project! Join us today to help put an end to bullying. Contact [contact name & info] for more details on how you can help lead the solution!

Help us make a lasting impact on our school community: Join our #MLSActionsMatter project and lead our school initiatives to end bullying. Contact [contact info] for more details!

Our #MLSActionsMatter project is underway! Students help build an inclusive school community, leading the way to a better future! [include pictures, details about efforts]

Students lead the way in creating change in our school community. Our #MLSActionsMatter project is taking off! [include pictures, details about efforts]

Promo Poster

GET INVOLVED.
MAKE A CHANGE.



Become part of the **Red Card + MLS Actions Matter** with Sporting Kansas City and Children's Mercy and help lead the way in creating the school community you want to see: one that's inclusive, supportive, and free from bullying.

contact
for more information.



Promo Poster

WHAT DOES YOUR WORLD LOOK LIKE?



is it positive?



are classmates supportive?



is everyone included?

If not, what do you wish were **different?**

You can be part of **the change.**

Become part of the **Red Card + MLS Actions Matter** with Sporting Kansas City and Children's Mercy and help lead the way in creating the school community you want to see: one that's inclusive, supportive, and free from bullying.

Contact for more information.





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