

# **SHIFTING BOUNDARIES:**

## **Lessons on Relationships for Students in Middle Schools**

by Nan D. Stein, Ed.D.

with Kelly Mennemeier, Natalie Russ, and Bruce Taylor, Ph.D.

December 2010

(Updated 2018)

[wcwonline.org/ShiftingBoundaries](http://wcwonline.org/ShiftingBoundaries)

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The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

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(Updated 2018)

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# 6th Grade Classroom Lessons

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Class 1: What is a Boundary?

Class 2: Measuring Personal Space

Class 3: Use “Broken Harmonies” Video to  
Introduce Respecting Boundaries  
Agreement

Class 4: Mapping Safe and Unsafe Spaces at School

(6 class periods can be used to cover these 4 lessons)

## Class #1: What is a Boundary?

ASK THE STUDENTS TO KEEP THE ASSIGNMENT OR HANDOUTS  
AND TO FILE THEM IN THEIR FOLDERS

### Objectives

To define boundaries—from the personal through the geo-political: to define the meaning and role of boundaries in student relationships and experiences and to introduce boundaries as a theme in literature and social studies.

**Boundaries** range from the personal to the geo-political. Laws and rules serve as boundaries that ensure that people do not engage in certain behaviors before they reach a certain age (e.g. drinking alcohol, seeing R-rated movies). Additionally, laws and rules establish a standard threshold for certain privileges (e.g. voting, getting a driver's license, entering into a legal contract). People have boundaries, too, and determining other people's boundaries often takes some time to figure out. Personal boundaries aren't fixed, but can differ depending on the situation, so they are harder to figure out than state or legal boundaries. Some people, for instance, don't like when others stand too close to them; other people don't mind. Certain kinds of language (e.g. vulgar or lewd language), especially when directed at someone, can violate a person's personal boundaries.

### Preparation

Photocopy the handout **What is a Boundary?** for the students.

### Activity

Distribute the activity sheet **What is a Boundary?** and ask the students to answer the questions. Some of these may be done in class either by an individual student, in small groups, or as a full class discussion. Other questions may be assigned as homework.

### Introducing the Activity

*READ ALL THE QUESTIONS ALOUD.*

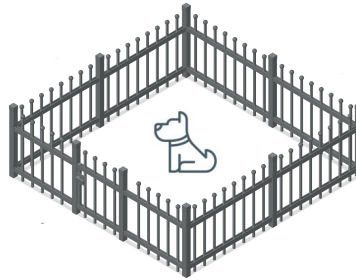
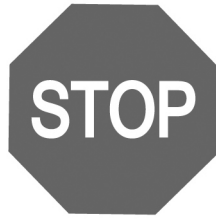
### Questions

1. What are boundaries in this school? In this classroom?
2. How do other people set boundaries for you?
3. What boundaries have your parents set for you?
4. How do you recognize when you have crossed a boundary? What may happen?
5. Are boundaries the same for everyone regardless of their gender?
6. What are some behaviors that kids **legally** cannot do because of their age?
7. What boundaries do you have for yourself?
8. How do you respond if your boundaries are crossed?
9. How do other people know your personal boundaries?
10. Do you feel you are in control of your boundaries?

### Time

- 15 minutes for students to write their answers to questions
- 25 minutes for class discussion

# What is a Boundary?



**Boundaries** range from the personal to the geo-political. Laws and rules serve as boundaries that ensure that people do not engage in certain behaviors before they reach a certain age (e.g. drinking alcohol, seeing R-rated movies). Additionally, laws and rules establish a standard threshold for certain privileges (e.g. voting, getting a driver’s license, entering into a legal contract). People have boundaries too, and determining other people’s boundaries often takes some time to figure out. Personal boundaries aren’t fixed, but can differ depending on the situation, so they are harder to figure out than state or legal boundaries. Some people, for instance, don’t like when others stand too close to them; other people don’t mind. Certain kinds of language (e.g. vulgar or lewd language), especially when directed at someone, can violate a person’s personal boundaries.

1. What are boundaries in this school? In this classroom?

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2. How do other people set boundaries for you?

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3. What boundaries have your parents set for you?

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4. How do you recognize when you have crossed a boundary? What may happen?

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5. Are boundaries the same for everyone regardless of their gender?

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6. What are some behaviors that kids **legally** cannot do because of their age?

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7. What boundaries do you have for yourself?

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8. How do you respond if your boundaries are crossed?

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9. How do other people know your personal boundaries?

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10. Do you feel you are in control of your boundaries?

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## **Class #2: Measuring Personal Space, with discussion**

ASK THE STUDENTS TO KEEP THE ASSIGNMENT OR HANDOUTS  
AND TO FILE THEM IN THEIR FOLDERS

### **Time**

- Spend the first **20 minutes** of the class period doing the measuring part of the exercise
- Spend the last **20 minutes** of the class period going over the discussion questions

### **Activity**

Divide into groups of three students. Make sure that friends are not in the same group and make sure that each group has a combination all genders.

Each group will be given a measuring tape. Each group member will in turn play all 3 roles:

1. The person who stand stills and says: STOP
2. The person who walks toward the person who is standing still
3. The observer and measurer

Begin by having 2 students stand pretty far away from each other but still within calling distance. One student walks toward the other student who is standing still. The standing still student says STOP when they feel that their personal space is being invaded and feels uncomfortable by the presence of the walking student who has gotten close to them.

The third student who is observing measures the distance between the 2 students' toes after the walking student has been told to STOP. Write down the distance on a sheet of paper.

Then switch roles.

#1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner who walks toward #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of inches: \_\_\_\_\_

#2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner who walks toward #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of inches: \_\_\_\_\_

#3 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner who walks toward #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of inches: \_\_\_\_\_

After each student has had a turn doing this, we will calculate the distances on the board, by gender/sex and by distance:

## **MEASURING PERSONAL SPACE**

**TIME:** Spend **20 minutes** on these questions:

Lesson #1 - Discussion questions (if you do not get through all of these in class, assign some as homework for the next class session).

1. What do we notice when people of other genders walked towards each other?
  - Was the distance greater or smaller when the word STOP was said?
  - Why do you think that is?
2. How could you tell when a student's personal space had been invaded?
  - What behaviors did you notice?
3. Can you think of some instances when people do not STOP when they are asked to stop?
4. What are some consequences of not stopping when you are asked to stop?





**Class #3: Watch “Broken Harmonies” Video\*  
and introduce Respecting Boundaries  
Agreement**

**Objective**

To help students differentiate between behaviors that are acceptable and behaviors that are against school policy or against the law.

**Time**

- Watch segments (about **5 minutes**) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUA3nk6\\_TtE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUA3nk6_TtE)
- Class discussion (**30 minutes**)
- It is fine to replay the video to show the segment for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time.

**Activity**

After the segment is over, using Newsprint, write in 3 columns:

**“No Big Deal”**

**“Against School Rules”**

**“Against the Law”**

Ask one student to serve as the scribe and to write on the newsprint the ideas from the class.

**NOTE TO EDUCATOR:**

If there are disagreements about which column/category any particular behavior belongs, just write it down everywhere that the students suggest. Educators should **NOT** interject their own opinions about the behaviors and which column they think it should be listed under.

**Activity**

Introduce Respecting Boundaries Agreement (see following pages).

\*“Broken Harmonies” is available on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUA3nk6\\_TtE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUA3nk6_TtE)

## **RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

### **GUIDELINES FOR STAFF IN NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS**

*The Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures* (the “Discipline Code”) provides a comprehensive description of unacceptable behavior in schools. It includes the range of permissible disciplinary and intervention measures which may be used when students engage in such behaviors, as well as a range of guidance interventions schools may use to address student behavior.

Many of the Discipline Code infractions reference behaviors where a student violates another student’s boundaries in small or large ways. Following an incident (and a report into OORS, the Online Occurrence Reporting System), school staff may wish to use the Respecting Boundaries Agreement (RBA) as a possible guidance intervention *in addition* to the appropriate disciplinary response. School staff are encouraged to use the RBA alongside lower-level boundary violations to educate students about respecting others’ boundaries, possible consequences for boundary violations, planning to avoid experiencing violations of their own boundaries by others, and/or avoiding violations of others’ established boundaries. The RBA is not recommended for higher-level boundary violations, including physical violence or electronic harassment (including via Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and other social media, other websites, e-mail, cell phone, or text message).

#### **Steps to Completing the RBA**

1. Ensure that a report of the incident is entered into OORS, the Online Occurring Reporting System, within twenty-four hours of the occurrence, and that students have received appropriate disciplinary responses in accordance with the Discipline Code. In cases where there are accusations of sexual harassment or of bias-based harassment, ensure that staff members have followed all procedures outlined in [Chancellor’s Regulation A-831 \(peer-to-peer sexual harassment\)](#) and/or [Chancellor’s Regulation A-832 \(bias-based harassment\)](#).
2. Within no more than a day or two of the incident, meet with the student who feels that their boundaries were violated. Review the definition of “boundaries,” which some students may have encountered in related classroom lessons. With the student, complete the **RBA: PART 1**. Let the student know that a copy of their section of the RBA, with no names included, will be made available to their parent/guardian.
3. Separately, meet with the other involved student(s) to review the definition of “boundaries,” and to discuss the ways that their actions constituted a violation of another student’s boundaries. With the student, complete the **RBA: PART 2**. Let the student know that a copy of their section of the RBA, with no names included, will be made available to their parent/guardian.
4. Copy each student’s section of the RBA, and be sure to carefully remove any other student’s name(s). Send a copy of *their child’s section only* to the parent/guardian.
5. About two weeks after the completion of the RBA, follow up with each student to review the content and to see how well they have been able to maintain the agreements established in the RBA. Follow up additional times, as appropriate.

**RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

**Part 1A: for student who has experienced a boundary violation  
Review of Boundary Violation**

**What is a boundary?**



There are lots of kinds of boundaries, from small and personal to big and global. Laws and rules serve as boundaries that ensure that people do not engage in certain behaviors before they reach a certain age (like drinking alcohol or seeing R-rated movies).

People have boundaries too, and understanding other people's boundaries often takes some time to figure out. Personal boundaries may differ depending on the situation, so they are harder to figure out than legal boundaries. Some people, for instance, don't like when others stand too close to them; other people don't mind. Certain kinds of language (e.g. vulgar or lewd language), especially when directed at someone, can violate a person's personal boundaries.

**Student Name:**

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

<p>1. Who do you feel didn't respect your boundaries?</p>	
<p>2. What is your relationship with the person?</p>	
<p>3. Who were you with when this incident occurred?</p>	
<p>4. Where did this incident happen?</p>	
<p>5. What happened leading up to the incident? What were you or other people saying, talking about, or doing?</p>	
<p>6. What was your response to the incident?</p>	
<p>7. If anything, what did you say or do to the other student?</p>	

**RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

**Part 1B: for student who has experienced a boundary violation  
Action Plan**

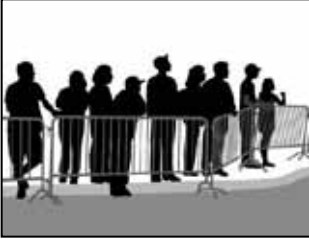
<p><b>What are some things that you might be able to do to respond to the boundary violations?</b></p>	<p>Option 1:</p>  <p>Option 2:</p>  <p>Option 3:</p>
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<p><b>There are many steps that you can take toward addressing negative boundary behaviors. One thing you can do is write down whenever you experience a boundary violation. What else can you do?</b></p>	<p>Step 1:</p>  <p>Step 2:</p>  <p>Step 3:</p>  <p>Step 4:</p>  <p>Step 5:</p>  <p>Step 6:</p>
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**RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

**Part 2A: for student whose behaviors may have violated another's boundaries  
Review of Boundary Violation**



**What is a boundary?**

There are lots of kinds of boundaries, from small and personal to big and global. Laws and rules serve as boundaries that ensure that people do not engage in certain behaviors before they reach a certain age (like drinking alcohol or seeing R-rated movies).

People have boundaries too, and understanding other people's boundaries often takes some time to figure out. Personal boundaries may differ depending on the situation, so they are harder to figure out than legal boundaries. Some people, for instance, don't like when others stand too close to them; other people don't mind. Certain kinds of language (e.g. vulgar or lewd language), especially when directed at someone, can violate a person's personal boundaries.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:**

**Another student feels that you did not respect their boundaries. What is your relationship with this person?**

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**Who were you with when this incident occurred?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where did this incident happen?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What happened leading up to the incident? What were you or other people saying, talking about, or doing?**

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**What do you think happened that led to the reporting student to feel that their boundaries were violated? What may have led them to feel this way?**

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**RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

**Part 2B: for student whose behaviors may have violated another's boundaries  
Action Plan**

**What are ways in which some people may violate others' personal boundaries?**

(e.g., calling people names, saying put-downs, using vulgar or abusive language)

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**What kinds of boundary incidents have you experienced?**

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**One of your peers was hurt by a violation of their boundaries. What are some things that you could have done in the situation that allowed you to communicate your feelings without another person feeling that their boundaries were violated?**

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**What are some other steps that you can take to make sure that you and your peers feel comfortable and respected?**

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

Step 5:

Step 6:



## **Class #4: Mapping “Hot” and “Cool” Spaces at School**

### **Objectives**

**(A)** To identify where (exact locations) in the school the students feel “hot” and where they feel “cool”; **(B)** to help students identify these places; **(C)** to provide information for the school to use in order to develop a “cooler” school environment; **(D)** to empower students to transform “hot” areas into “cool” areas by examining why they consider particular locations to be “hot” and what the school can do to make those areas “cooler.”

### **Preparation**

Each participating instructor will draw a crude blueprint of the school building to keep as a “master” copy (see Appendix for Illustration 1). This copy will then be photocopied and passed out for students to label where they feel “hot” or “cool.” The marked up crude blueprints will be collected at the end of class, and then compiled and coded, using a copy of the blueprint. In drawing the crude blueprint, think about the whole school. Include on the map all of the places in the school, including stairwells, restrooms, classrooms, hallways, locker rooms, cafeteria, outside spaces, etc. Write the names of each of these main places in the school and be sure to have the students color code these places. You can draw a very simple version of a map of the school; it can look like a rectangle, so long as the students can find the main parts of the school on the map.

Students will use the provided RED, YELLOW, and GREEN colored pencils for the maps they will draw on to identify “cool” and “hot” locations.

### **Time Allotment**

15 minutes – color-coding maps; 25 minutes – discussion

### **Activity**

**Ask each student to write their gender and their grade** on the top of a blank sheet of paper. Beyond this information, everything the student writes will remain anonymous. Make sure students complete this exercise alone, rather than in groups.

### **Read aloud to the students:**

*Spend 15 minutes color-coding the map. Use GREEN to mark the areas where you feel comfortable spending your time, where you feel safe – “cool” areas, as we’ll call them. Use RED to mark the areas you try to avoid, where you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or uneasy – “hot” areas, we’ll call them. Use YELLOW to mark to areas that seem somewhat unsafe, make you somewhat uncomfortable, or that you sometimes avoid.*

If students finish coding their maps early, ask them to begin working on the discussion questions on their own, on a separate sheet of paper. Collect these at the end of the discussion, along with the maps.

When students are finished color-coding their maps (see Illustration 2) in the Appendix, **lead them in a discussion** about the “hot” and “cool” spaces on campus, using the questions below.

***Be sure to collect all the maps before class is over.***

**(Educator Instructions)**

**Discussion questions:**

1. Which areas do you think most students in your school would identify as “cool” locations, places where they would feel safe and comfortable?
  
2. Which areas do you think most students in your school would identify as “hot” locations, places they try to avoid or feel uncomfortable or unsafe in?
  
3. Do you think certain areas might be designated as “hot” by some students and “cool” by others?
  - If yes, which? Why might that happen?
  
4. Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on one’s gender? If so, why?
  
5. Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on one’s age and grade? If so, why?
  
6. Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on one’s physical size? If so, why?
  
7. What are other reasons that certain areas may be labeled as “hot” or “cool”?
  
8. What can we as a class or as students do to make the problem areas “cooler” — safer and more welcoming? How can we make our school feel “cooler”?
  
9. In what ways could the school staff make the problem areas “cooler”?

## **Class #4: Mapping “Hot” and “Cool” Spaces at School**

Write your gender and grade at the top of a blank sheet of paper. Do not write your name.

This handout is a basic map of your school and includes the various locations in your school, including classrooms, stairwells, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, locker rooms, outside spaces, bus stop, etc.

Now consider what makes you feel safe, welcome, and comfortable in school – “cool” locations – and what makes you feel unsafe, unwelcome, or uncomfortable in school – “hot” locations. What specific locations on campus make you feel welcome and safe? Where do you feel most comfortable spending your time? In contrast, where do you feel unsafe or uncomfortable? Where do you try to avoid?

**Spend 15 minutes color-coding your map with the provided colored pencils. Shade the areas in RED to mark where you feel very unsafe, unwelcome, uncomfortable, or uneasy, and where you try to avoid. Use GREEN shading to mark where you feel safe and welcome, and where you feel comfortable spending time. Use YELLOW shading to mark places that you feel somewhat uneasy, uncomfortable, or unwelcome in.**

After completing the map, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

### **Discussion questions:**

1. Which areas on your map do you consider “cool” locations, places that are safe and welcoming?
2. Which areas on your map do you consider “hot” or unsafe, or do you try to avoid?
3. Might certain locations be considered “cool” by some people but “hot” by others?
  - If yes, which? Why might that happen?
4. Might the “hot or coolness” of certain areas differ depending on your gender? If so, why?
5. Might the “hot or coolness” of certain areas differ depending on your age and grade? If so, why?
6. Might the “hot or coolness” of certain areas differ depending on your physical size? If so, why?
7. What are other reasons certain areas may be labeled as “hot” or “cool”?
8. What can we as students do to make the problem areas safer and more welcoming? How can we feel safer and more comfortable at school?
9. In what ways could the school staff make the problem areas “cooler”?

## **Post-Activity Tasks for the Instructor To Do**

Be sure to collect the maps before students leave.

Using a blueprint, a map of the school, or a list of school locations, tally up the number of times each area was described as “hot” or “cool.” RED stands for very “hot” spaces, YELLOW stand for some-what “hot” spaces, and GREEN stands for “cool” spaces.

### **Using the rating form (provided) to compile the data.**

Consider the differences between areas generally considered “hot” by students and those generally considered “cool” by students.

- Is there more surveillance or a greater adult presence in “cool” areas?
- Do older students congregate in areas that younger students deem “hot”?
- What are the reasons students give when they label an area “hot”?

Then **present the results to a schoolwide body, following the instructions of the “Presenting and Responding to Results” form (provided)** to determine the school’s next steps in ensuring school safety.

## **Appendix**

### **Illustration 1:**

Blank Crude blueprint of the school building

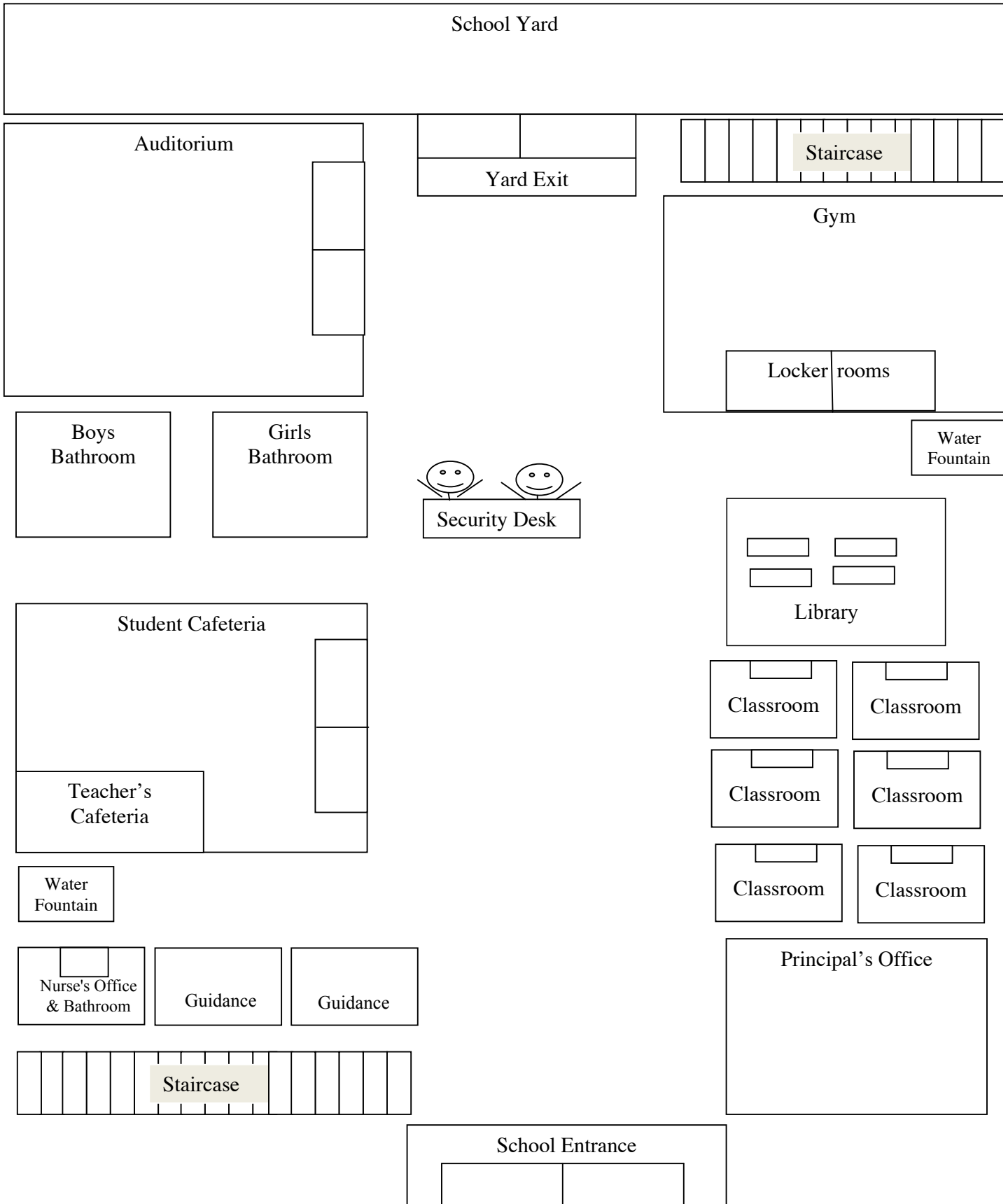
**Instructions for Analyzing the Student Maps of “Hot Spots”**

**Presenting and Responding to the Results**



### Illustration 1

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_



## Instructions for Analyzing the Student Maps of “Hot Spots”

Be sure to collect all the maps before students leave. The results from each students’ completed color-coded map will need to be transferred onto a Tally Map (described below), and then summed onto a Score Summary Map (also described below). Attached is an example of a Tally Map, a Score Summary Map, and illustrative scenarios of how these two maps are used. Below are the instructions on how to use the maps, and what to do with the results of the mapping work.

### Tally Map (represents the totals of each of the individual student maps)

- (1) At the bottom of the unmarked version of the blueprint write in the characteristics of the students that completed the maps (separate maps by gender and grade),
- (2) Tally up the number of times each area was described as a safe “cool” area (the number of *GREENS*), as an unsafe “hot” area (the number of *REDS*) and as a somewhat unsafe area (the number of *YELLOWS*) onto the map. Using red, yellow, or green colored pencils, make one slash mark on this master map per red, green or yellow shaded area on the students’ maps.

### Score Summary Map

- (1) Sum the total of each area from the *Tally Map* onto the second map (the *Score Summary Map*).
- (2) Transcribe three set of totals onto the *Score Summary Map*:
  - Total # of green slashes on the tally map
  - Total # of red slashes on the tally map
  - Total # of yellow slashes on the tally map

### What to do with the mapping results?

The areas with the highest number of red rating are the “hottest” areas and further safety measures are needed in those areas. Areas with no or few red ratings and mostly green ratings are the “coolest” areas and further safety measures are not likely to be needed in those areas.

The workers should also **consider the following factors in assessing differences** in how students perceive areas as “hot” or “cool”:

- Is there more surveillance or a greater adult presence in “cool” areas?
- Do older students congregate in areas that younger students deem “hot”?
- What are the reasons students give when they label an area “hot”?

**Bringing the mapping results to a school wide body:** After summing up the mapping results, take this information to a school wide body (e.g., school leadership council, school leadership team, school safety committee, problem-solving team, site-based coordinating council) to work on rectifying the student concerns about safe and unsafe areas (*see next page*).

## Presenting and Responding to the Results

After tabulating the results of the “hot” and “cool” areas (collected after the mapping exercise), take this information to a schoolwide body (e.g. school leadership council, school leadership team, school safety committee, problem-solving team, site-based coordinating council) to work on rectifying the student concerns about “hot” and “cool” areas.

Below is a list of potential methods of addressing “hot spots”; however, feel free to innovate or tailor these ideas to your specific school:

- Increase the presence of school safety personnel in “hot” areas
- Put up signs in “hot” locations reminding students of their rights
- Ask the teacher whose class is nearest to a specific “hot spot” to monitor the area between class periods
- Have custodians check the lighting in “hot spots”
- Consider ways to reroute school traffic
- Designate certain areas as limited to a particular class grade (e.g. a “6th grade only hall”)
- Send students to the restroom in pairs
- Ask a staff member to check bathrooms periodically (e.g. every 10 minutes)
- Institute a system of bathroom passes or bathroom locks
- Additional examples?

Document the ways in which you decided to respond to student concerns here:

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# 7th Grade Classroom Lessons

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- Class 1: What is a Boundary?
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- Class 4: Video segment on Shantai from *Flirting or Hurting* show (by PBS) Introduce Respecting Boundaries Agreement
- Class 5: “Says Who” questionnaire on myths/facts about sexual harassment;  
“What Can I Do?” tips on possible responses to being sexually harassed
- Class 6: Mapping Safe and Unsafe Spaces at School

## Class #1: What is a Boundary?

ASK THE STUDENTS TO KEEP THE ASSIGNMENT OR HANDOUTS  
AND TO FILE THEM IN THEIR FOLDERS

### Objectives

To define boundaries—from the personal through the geo-political: to define the meaning and role of boundaries in student relationships and experiences and to introduce boundaries as a theme in literature and social studies.

**Boundaries** range from the personal to the geo-political. Laws and rules serve as boundaries that ensure that people do not engage in certain behaviors before they reach a certain age (e.g. drinking alcohol, seeing R-rated movies). Additionally, laws and rules establish a standard threshold for certain privileges (e.g. voting, getting a driver's license, entering into a legal contract). People have boundaries too, and determining other people's boundaries often takes some time to figure out. Personal boundaries aren't fixed, but can differ depending on the situation, so they are harder to figure out than state or legal boundaries. Some people, for instance, don't like when others stand too close to them; other people don't mind. Certain kinds of language (e.g. vulgar or lewd language), especially when directed at someone, can violate a person's personal boundaries.

### Preparation

Photocopy the handout **What is a Boundary?** for the students.

### Activity

Distribute the activity sheet **What is a Boundary?** and ask the students to answer the questions. Some of these may be done in class either by an individual student, in small groups, or as a full class discussion. Other questions may be assigned as homework.

### Introducing the Activity

*READ ALL THE QUESTIONS ALOUD.*

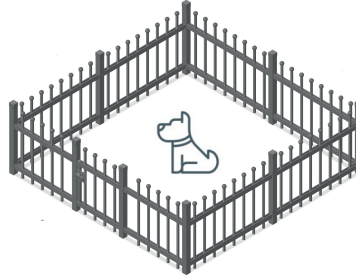
### Questions

1. What are boundaries in this school? In this classroom?
2. How do other people set boundaries for you?
3. What boundaries have your parents set for you?
4. How do you recognize when you have crossed a boundary? What may happen?
5. Are boundaries the same for everyone regardless of gender?
6. What are some behaviors that kids **legally** cannot do because of their age?
7. What boundaries do you have for yourself?
8. How do you respond if your boundaries are crossed?
9. How do other people know your personal boundaries?
10. Do you feel you are in control of your boundaries?

### Time

- 15 minutes for students to write their answers to questions
- 25 minutes for class discussion

# What is a Boundary?



**Boundaries** range from the personal to the geo-political. Laws and rules serve as boundaries that ensure that people do not engage in certain behaviors before they reach a certain age (e.g. drinking alcohol, seeing R-rated movies). Additionally, laws and rules establish a standard threshold for certain privileges (e.g. voting, getting a driver’s license, entering into a legal contract). People have boundaries too, and determining other people’s boundaries often takes some time to figure out. Personal boundaries aren’t fixed, but can differ depending on the situation, so they are harder to figure out than state or legal boundaries. Some people, for instance, don’t like when others stand too close to them; other people don’t mind. Certain kinds of language (e.g. vulgar or lewd language), especially when directed at someone, can violate a person’s personal boundaries.

1. What are boundaries in this school? In this classroom?

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2. How do other people set boundaries for you?

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3. What boundaries have your parents set for you?

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4. How do you recognize when you have crossed a boundary? What may happen?

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5. Are boundaries the same for everyone regardless of their gender?

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6. What are some behaviors that kids **legally** cannot do because of their age?

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7. What boundaries do you have for yourself?

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8. How do you respond if your boundaries are crossed?

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9. How do other people know your personal boundaries?

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10. Do you feel you are in control of your boundaries?

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**Class #2: Measuring Personal Space, with discussion**  
ASK THE STUDENTS TO KEEP THE ASSIGNMENT OR HANDOUTS  
AND TO FILE THEM IN THEIR FOLDERS

**Time**

- Spend the first **20 minutes** of the class period doing the measuring part of the exercise
- Spend the last **20 minutes** of the class period going over the discussion questions

**Activity**

Divide into groups of three students. Make sure that friends are not in the same group and make sure that each group has a combination of other genders.

Each group will be given a measuring tape. Each group member will in turn play all 3 roles:

1. The person who stand stills and says: STOP
2. The person who walks toward the person who is standing still
3. The observer and measurer

Begin by having 2 students stand pretty far away from each other but still within calling distance. One student walks toward the other student who is standing still. The standing still student says STOP when they feel that their personal space is being invaded and feels uncomfortable by the presence of the walking student who has gotten close to them.

The third student who is observing measures the distance between the 2 students' toes after the walking student has been told to STOP. Write down the distance on a sheet of paper.

Then switch roles.

#1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Partner who walks toward #1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of inches: \_\_\_\_\_

#2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Partner who walks toward #2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of inches: \_\_\_\_\_

#3 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Partner who walks toward #3: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of inches: \_\_\_\_\_

After each student has had a turn doing this, we will calculate the distances on the board, by gender/sex and by distance:

## **MEASURING PERSONAL SPACE**

**TIME:** Spend **20 minutes** on these questions:

Lesson #1 - Discussion questions (if you do not get through all of these in class, assign some as homework for the next class session).

1. What do we notice when people of other genders walked towards each other?
  - Was the distance greater or smaller when the word STOP was said?
  - Why do you think that is?
2. How could you tell when a student's personal space had been invaded?
  - What behaviors did you notice?
3. Can you think of some instances when people do not STOP when they are asked to stop?
4. What are some consequences of not stopping when you are asked to stop?

## **MEASURING PERSONAL SPACE**

1. What do we notice when people of other genders walked towards each other?
  - Was the distance greater or smaller when the word STOP was said?
  
  - Why do you think that is?
  
2. How could you tell when a student's personal space had been invaded?
  - What behaviors did you notice?
  
3. Can you think of some instances when people do not STOP when they are asked to stop?
  
  
4. What are some consequences of not stopping when you are asked to stop?



**(Educator Instructions)**

**Class #3: Big Deal or No Big Deal?**

ASK THE STUDENTS TO KEEP THE ASSIGNMENT OR HANDOUTS  
AND TO FILE THEM IN THEIR FOLDERS

Distribute the HANDOUT page to each student

- Each student is to do this activity by themselves, silently selecting one of the 4 choices:
  - "Big Deal,"
  - "No Big Deal,"
  - "Against a School Rule," &
  - "Against a Law."

Tell the students to circle their choice for each of the items on the questionnaire.

- Allot **10 minutes** for this part of the activity
- Allot **10 minutes** for a full class discussion of the circled choices
- Spend the final **20 minutes** of class time on the five discussion questions:
  - ⇒ 1. What difference does it make if the behavior happens at school or elsewhere?
  - ⇒ 2. What's changed about the behavior if it happens in public or private?
  - ⇒ 3. Does age make a difference in how you answered the chart?
  - ⇒ 4. Does gender make a difference in how you answered the chart?
  - ⇒ 5. Does race make a difference in how you answered the chart?

# Big Deal or No Big Deal?

Read each of the listed behaviors and decide if you think they are a **big deal**, **no big deal**, **against school rules**, or **against the law** when they occur. Circle your response.

	Student to Student	Student to Student	Student to Student	Student to Student
1. Calling someone a swear word	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
2. Mocking someone's appearance	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
3. Calling someone "gay" or "fag" as a put-down	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
4. Calling someone a "slut" or "ho"	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
5. Calling someone a "b*tch"	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
6. Making fun of someone's private parts	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
7. Grabbing butts	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
8. Groping the chest	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
9. "Pants-ing" (pulling down someone else's pants)	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
10. Slamming someone against a locker	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
11. Having sex when both people are 14 years old	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
12. Having sex when one person is 14 years old and the other is 18 years old	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law
13. Spreading sexual rumors by texting or over the internet	Big deal	No big deal	Against school rules	Against the law

## **Big Deal or No Big Deal?**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What difference does it make if the behavior happens at school or elsewhere?

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2. What's changed about the behavior if it happens in public or private?

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3. Does age make a difference in how you answered the chart?

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4. Does gender make a difference in how you answered the chart?

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5. Does race make a difference in how you answered the chart?

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**Class #4:**

**Watch Video segment on Shantai from Flirting or Hurting show (by PBS);  
Introduce the Respecting Boundaries Agreement (RBA)**

ASK THE STUDENTS TO PUT THE RBAs IN THEIR FOLDERS AT THE END OF CLASS

**Objectives**

(a) To help students differentiate between behaviors that are acceptable and behaviors that are against school policy or against the law; (b) to introduce students to the **Respecting Boundaries Agreements (RBA)** in their school; (c) to make them familiar with the RBA by having them practice filling one out.

**Time**

- Watch segments on "Shantai" (about **5 minutes**) [www.wcwonline.org/FlirtingOrHurtingVideoSegment](http://www.wcwonline.org/FlirtingOrHurtingVideoSegment)
- Class discussion (**30 minutes**)
- Introduce the Respecting Boundaries Agreement. Using Shantai's situation, have students fill out forms as if they were Shantai (**15 minutes**)

**Activity**

After the segment is over, using Newsprint, write in 4 columns:

**"Big Deal"**

**"No Big Deal"**

**"Against School Rules"**

**"Against the Law"**

Ask one student to serve as the scribe and to write on the newsprint the ideas from the class.

Say aloud to the students:

*"Think about everything that has happened to Shantai. Some of these behaviors were between Shantai and the other girls, and some of these behaviors were between Shantai and boys; Some of the behaviors happened in public with other kids or adults watching, and some of the behaviors happened in private, with no other witnesses or bystanders.*

*Now, let's list each behavior that happened to Shantai under one of the 3 columns"*

**NOTE TO EDUCATOR:** If there are disagreements about which column/category any particular behavior belongs, just write it down everywhere that the students suggest. Educators should **NOT** interject their own opinions about the behaviors and which column they think it should be listed under.

Then hand out **Respecting Boundaries Agreement** forms to students. Explain to students that your school is using these agreements when students experience boundary violations so that students better respect personal boundaries.

Ask students to fill out the forms as though they were Shantai, from the video.

Tell the students that you, their health teachers, the school safety staff, the principal, and guidance counselors will keep copies of these forms in their offices, should the students want to fill out one to resolve a boundary issue with another student. Details will be kept confidential but the adult staff members will have to discuss the information with the student who is named on the form because safety in school, both physical and emotional, is key to high achievement and having an environment in school that allows everyone to learn and flourish.

"Flirting of Hurting" video segment is available: [www.wcwonline.org/FlirtingOrHurtingVideoSegment](http://www.wcwonline.org/FlirtingOrHurtingVideoSegment)

Here is a summary of the Shantai video you will be showing in class.

[www.wcwoonline.org/FlirtingOrHirtingVideoSegment](http://www.wcwoonline.org/FlirtingOrHirtingVideoSegment)

## **From an Argument to Sexual Harassment: Shantai Case Study**

Shantai is sitting with her friends in the school lawn when Laura goes over to them, and accuses one of the girls to have stolen her necklace. Shantai defends her quiet and scared friend, telling Laura to leave her alone and calm down. Laura yells louder and gets into an argument with Shantai, calling her a “slut.”

This argument goes beyond the two girls. Someone writes “slut” on Shantai’s locker. Girls that she does not even know loudly call her nasty names in the hallways. Boys start receiving dirty notes signed by Shantai, but she denies writing them. Shantai has to prove her innocence to the vice-principal who has gotten a hold of some of these letters. Laura and her friends spread rumors that Shantai would do anything with any boy.

Soon, the verbal harassment turns into physical. Boys start to touch and grab her. One day Shantai is in the hallway drinking from a water fountain when Kevin comes up and grabs her behind, slapping her butt, making Shantai extremely irritated. The vice-principal walks by at that moment and sees Kevin’s action. She calls him to the office, referring to his action as “unacceptable.”

It is not until Shantai talks to the vice-principal that she realizes that Laura had been sexually harassing her. The vice-principal acknowledges that the sexual harassment has to be stopped. The vice-principal approaches the issue by advising Shantai to write a letter to Laura describing her discomfort with the sexual harassment. She calls Laura to her office, gives her the letter and demands that she must stop harassing Shantai.

## **RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

### **GUIDELINES FOR STAFF IN NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS**

*The Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures* (the “Discipline Code”) provides a comprehensive description of unacceptable behavior in schools. It includes the range of permissible disciplinary and intervention measures which may be used when students engage in such behaviors, as well as a range of guidance interventions schools may use to address student behavior.

**Many of the Discipline Code infractions reference behaviors where a student violates another student’s boundaries in small or large ways. Following an incident (and a report into OORS, the Online Occurrence Reporting System), school staff may wish to use the Respecting Boundaries Agreement (RBA) as a possible guidance intervention *in addition* to the appropriate disciplinary response. School staff are encouraged to use the RBA alongside lower-level boundary violations to educate students about respecting others’ boundaries, possible consequences for boundary violations, planning to avoid experiencing violations of their own boundaries by others, and/or avoiding violations of others’ established boundaries. The RBA is not recommended for higher-level boundary violations, including physical violence or electronic harassment (including via Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and other social media, other websites, e-mail, cell phone, or text message).**

#### **Steps to Completing the RBA**

1. Ensure that a report of the incident is entered into OORS, the Online Occurring Reporting System, within twenty-four hours of the occurrence, and that students have received appropriate disciplinary responses in accordance with the Discipline Code. In cases where there are accusations of sexual harassment or of bias-based harassment, ensure that staff members have followed all procedures outlined in [Chancellor’s Regulation A-831 \(peer-to-peer sexual harassment\)](#) and/or [Chancellor’s Regulation A-832 \(bias-based harassment\)](#).
2. Within no more than a day or two of the incident, meet with the student who feels that their boundaries were violated. Review the definition of “boundaries,” which some students may have encountered in related classroom lessons. With the student, complete the **RBA: PART 1**. Let the student know that a copy of their section of the RBA, with no names included, will be made available to their parent/guardian.
3. Separately, meet with the other involved student(s) to review the definition of “boundaries,” and to discuss the ways that their actions constituted a violation of another student’s boundaries. With the student, complete the **RBA: PART 2**. Let the student know that a copy of their section of the RBA, with no names included, will be made available to their parent/guardian.
4. Copy each student’s section of the RBA, and be sure to carefully remove any other student’s name(s). Send a copy of *their child’s section only* to the parent/guardian.
5. About two weeks after the completion of the RBA, follow up with each student to review the content and to see how well they have been able to maintain the agreements established in the RBA. Follow up additional times, as appropriate.

**RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

**Part 1A: for student who has experienced a boundary violation**

**Review of Boundary Violation**

**What is a boundary?**



There are lots of kinds of boundaries, from small and personal to big and global. Laws and rules serve as boundaries that ensure that people do not engage in certain behaviors before they reach a certain age (like drinking alcohol or seeing R-rated movies).

People have boundaries too, and understanding other people's boundaries often takes some time to figure out. Personal boundaries may differ depending on the situation, so they are harder to figure out than legal boundaries. Some people, for instance, don't like when others stand too close to them; other people don't mind. Certain kinds of language (e.g. vulgar or lewd language), especially when directed at someone, can violate a person's personal boundaries.

**Student Name:**

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

1. Who do you feel didn't respect your boundaries?	
2. What is your relationship with the person?	
3. Who were you with when this incident occurred?	
4. Where did this incident happen?	
5. What happened leading up to the incident? What were you or other people saying, talking about, or doing?	
6. What was your response to the incident?	
7. If anything, what did you say or do to the other student?	

**RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

**Part 1B: for student who has experienced a boundary violation  
Action Plan**

<p><b>What are some things that you might be able to do to respond to the boundary violations?</b></p>	<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Option 2:</p> <p>Option 3:</p>
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<p><b>There are many steps that you can take toward addressing negative boundary behaviors. One thing you can do is write down whenever you experience a boundary violation. What else can you do?</b></p>	<p>Step 1:</p> <p>Step 2:</p> <p>Step 3:</p> <p>Step 4:</p> <p>Step 5:</p> <p>Step 6:</p>
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**RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

**Part 2A: for student whose behaviors may have violated another's boundaries  
Review of Boundary Violation**



**What is a boundary?**

There are lots of kinds of boundaries, from small and personal to big and global. Laws and rules serve as boundaries that ensure that people do not engage in certain behaviors before they reach a certain age (like drinking alcohol or seeing R-rated movies).

People have boundaries too, and understanding other people's boundaries often takes some time to figure out. Personal boundaries may differ depending on the situation, so they are harder to figure out than legal boundaries. Some people, for instance, don't like when others stand too close to them; other people don't mind. Certain kinds of language (e.g. vulgar or lewd language), especially when directed at someone, can violate a person's personal boundaries.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:**

**Another student feels that you did not respect their boundaries. What is your relationship with this person?**

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**Who were you with when this incident occurred?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where did this incident happen?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What happened leading up to the incident? What were you or other people saying, talking about, or doing?**

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**What do you think happened that led to the reporting student to feel that their boundaries were violated? What may have led them to feel this way?**

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**RESPECTING BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT (RBA)**

**Part 2B: for student whose behaviors may have violated another's boundaries  
Action Plan**

**What are ways in which some people may violate others' personal boundaries?**  
(e.g., calling people names, saying put-downs, using vulgar or abusive language)

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**What kinds of boundary incidents have you experienced?**

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**One of your peers was hurt by a violation of their boundaries. What are some things that you could have done in the situation that allowed you to communicate your feelings without another person feeling that their boundaries were violated?**

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**What are some other steps that you can take to make sure that you and your peers feel comfortable and respected?**

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

Step 5:

Step 6:





**(Educator Instructions)**

**Class #5: “Says Who” questionnaire and “What Can I Do?” tips**

ASK THE STUDENTS TO KEEP THE ASSIGNMENT OR HANDOUTS  
AND TO FILE THEM IN THEIR FOLDERS

**Objectives**

To define sexual harassment; to dispel common myths about sexual harassment; to raise awareness of the prevalence of sexual harassment.

**Preparation**

Review the handout **Says Who: A Questionnaire** and the **Teacher Answer Guide**. Photocopy the questionnaire for each student.

**Activity**

Distribute the **Says Who?** questionnaire page to each student, and ask students to silently select whether they “Agree” or “Disagree” with each of the 12 statements. If students disagree or are undecided, ask them to write down the reason why and what further information they need to decide. (They can write on the back of the handout.)

After students complete the questionnaire, ask them to gather in groups of three or four to decide upon and discuss three of the statements:

“Choose and discuss the three most debatable, controversial questions, that is to say, the statements you had the hardest time responding to. Select someone in your group to present the main points of your discussion to the class.”

As a class, review the statements students have highlighted in their discussions, with each group presenting their group’s feedback. As students explore their own insights, offer further insight and information from the “Teacher Answer Guide.” Statistics can be written on the board for students to see and analyze.

**Time**

- 10 minutes for students to fill out the questionnaire
- 10 minutes for small-group discussion
- 20 minutes for class discussion

**handout**

# SAYS WHO? A QUESTIONNAIRE

- Read each statement.
- Check "A" if you agree with the statement.
- Check "D" if you disagree with the statement.

**A D**

- 1. Boys cannot be sexually harassed by girls.
- 2. If a girl wears a short skirt or tight jeans, she is asking for sexual attention.
- 3. If no one else sees me being harassed, there's nothing I can do because the harasser will just say I'm lying.
- 4. If I've flirted with this person in the past, then I have to be okay with them flirting and more with me.
- 5. Girls cannot sexually harass other girls.
- 6. Boys are sexually harassed just as often as girls.

**A D**

- 7. If you ignore sexual harassment, more than likely it will stop.
- 8. A boy who claims he has been sexually harassed is a nerd, wimp, sissy, or "wuss."
- 9. Writing dirty things about someone on a bathroom wall or in a text or email at school is sexual harassment.

**A D**

- 10. When a girl says "no," she really means "yes" or "maybe" or "later."
- 11. If a girl says she is being sexually harassed and the boy says he is only fooling, then it's not sexual harassment.
- 12. Sexual harassment isn't a serious problem in school since it only affects a few people.



ask  
yourself...

## WHAT CAN I DO?

### Tips for Students If You Feel You Are the Target of Sexual Harassment

**Let the harasser know** you don't like the behavior or comments. If you feel safe and comfortable doing so, tell the harasser that his or her behavior bothers you and that you want it to stop.

**Tell someone and keep telling** until you find someone who believes you. Find supporters and talk with them about what's happening. The point is to find someone you can trust, and someone who will take the kinds of actions you want.

**Do not blame yourself** for sexual harass-

ment. Harassment is unwanted and can make you feel trapped, confused, helpless, frustrated, embarrassed, and scared. You certainly did not ask for any of those feelings.

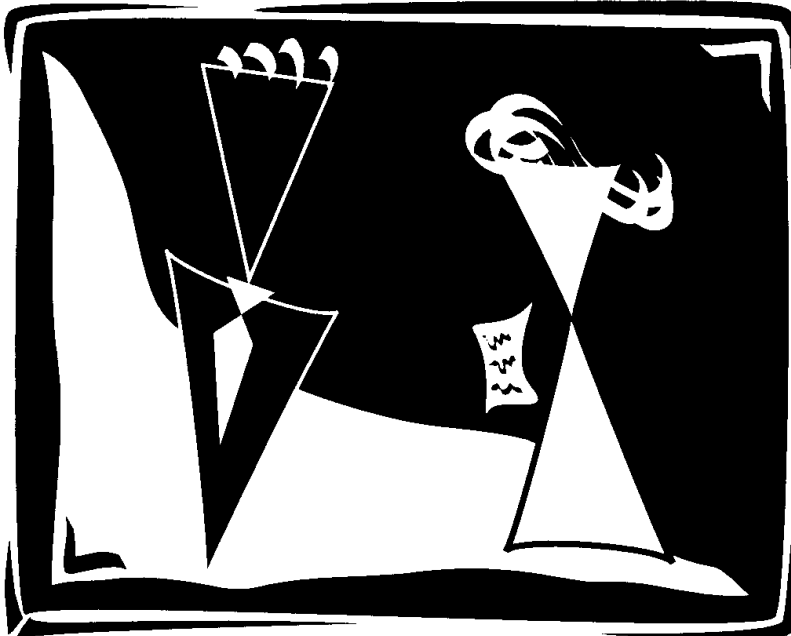
**Keep a written record** of the incidents: what happened, when, where, who else was present, and how you reacted. Save any notes or pictures you receive from the harasser.

**Find the official person** who has been designated by your school district as the one responsible for dealing with complaints about sexual

harassment. If you feel uncomfortable talking to the designated person, go to another adult whom you like and trust. It's okay to bring a friend or a parent with you to that meeting.

**Write a letter to the harasser** that describes the behaviors which you consider to be sexual harassment, saying that these behaviors bother you and that you want them to stop. Keep a copy of your letter. Write the letter with the help of an adult advocate and have the adult hand-deliver the letter to the harasser so that the harasser takes this letter seriously.

**You have the right to file a complaint** with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, with your state's Department of Education, or to bring a lawsuit under federal law Title IX.



REMEMBER...

**SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT  
IS AGAINST  
THE LAW!**

*Flirting or Hurting?*, p. 38. ©1994 National Education Association and Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. Originally appeared as "Stop Sexual Harassment in Schools," by Nan Stein in *USA Today* (May 18, 1993): 11A.

## Teacher Answer Guide

### *Says Who? Questionnaire*

#### 1. Boys cannot be sexually harassed by girls.

- Yes, they can, and the June 1993 Harris Poll, commissioned by the AAUW Foundation, found that 57% of boys who have been harassed have been targeted by a girl, 35% by a group of girls.
- The kinds of examples boys give include comments on the size of their private parts, jokes about the extent of their sexual experience, being called “gay,” and unwanted grabbing of their butts.
- Despite permission from the law, boys may be less likely to name behaviors as “unwanted or unwelcomed” because of social and cultural pressures.

#### 2. If a girl wears short skirt or tight jeans, she is asking for sexual attention.

- Of course, girls (and boys) like to dress stylishly and attractively, but that does not mean that they want to attract everyone or that they are looking to be sexually harassed.
- Women and girls are sexually harassed regardless of their appearance, age, race, class, occupation, or marital status. Sexual harassment is not caused by the physical characteristics of the target.
- Sexual harassment must be distinguished from sexual attraction. Harassment is an assertion (in a sexual manner) of hostility and/or power.
- This statement is an example of “blaming the victim.”

#### 3. If no one else sees my being harassed, there’s nothing I can do because the harasser will just say I’m lying.

- It is important to speak up because the harasser may have targeted others, and all of the combined stories may establish credibility.
- Unlike sexual harassment in the workplace, which is often a “he said/she said” dispute, sexual harassment in schools usually isn’t a private event since schools are very public places with many bystanders, and passers-by.

Update: 2001 survey of 2,000 students in 8th-11th grades showed:

Sexual harassment is widespread in school life.

While boys today are even more likely than boys in 1993 to experience sexual harassment, they are still less likely than girls to have this experience.

- Eight in 10 students (81 percent) experience some form of sexual harassment during their school lives: six in 10 (59 percent) often or occasionally and one-quarter (27 percent) often. These levels have not changed since 1993.
- Girls are more likely than boys to experience sexual harassment ever (83 percent vs. 79 percent) or often (30 percent vs. 24 percent).
- Boys today are more likely than those in 1993 to experience sexual harassment often or occasionally (56 percent vs. 49 percent) or often (24 percent vs. 18 percent).

Update: 2011 survey by AAUW of 1,965 students in 7th-12th grades showed:

- A majority of harassed students (54%) identified one male student as their harasser, and 12% of harassed students said that they were harassed by a group of male students. In contrast, only 14% of students said the harasser was one female student, and 5% said that they were harassed by a group of female students. (p.13, AAUW, 2011).
- Only 16% of students surveyed (14% of girls and 18% of boys) admitted that they had sexually harassed another student, either in person or online (p. 14, AAUW, 2011). (Students were asked to think about the school year, 2010-2011).

- Clearly, though, some interactions between students occur privately; students hold private conversations and may have contact with one another which is unobserved. In this instance, if two students interpret one event in different ways, the disagreement might result in one student accusing the other of “lying.” That is no reason not to speak up – to tell someone whom you trust. It is also a good idea to write everything about the event that you can remember: where it took place, what time of day, what exactly happened and what was said. Write how you felt, too. These details help with the investigation.
- Working with an adult in the school, this might be an appropriate time to “write a letter to the harasser.”

**4. If I’ve flirted with this person in the past, then I have to be okay with them flirting and more with me.**

- See comments regarding Question 1, above.
- Flirting and sexual harassment are two very different interactions. Flirting is a mutual encounter, stems from attraction and interest, and makes both individuals feel good. Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcomed by the target, and disrupts the educational environment.
- What was wanted attention on one day may not be wanted on another – it often *depends*.

**5. Girls cannot sexually harass other girls.**

- Recently, there have been same sex sexual harassment complaints. State and federal agencies which investigate complaints of sexual harassment in schools have issued contradictory rulings about whether same sex behaviors can be sexual harassment. Some of these rulings indicate that same sex harassment is considered to be sexual harassment.
- Examples of same sex harassment include spreading sexual rumors, hanging sexually demeaning posters or writing sexual graffiti about another girl around the school, and spreading sexual rumors.

## 6. Boys are sexually harassed just as often as girls.

- Boys are not sexually harassed as often as girls, but a significant number of boys report having been the target of sexual harassment in school.
- The 1993 Harris Poll/AAUW Survey *Hostile Hallways* reports the following:

**Boys most commonly** experience being the target of sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks (56% of the boys, compared with 76% of the girls).

**Two of five boys** (42%) have experienced being touched, grabbed or pinched in a sexual way, compared with 65% of the girls.

**Roughly equal numbers of boys and girls** say they have been shown, given or left sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, messages, or notes (31% of the boys, 34% of the girls).

**Twice as many boys as girls** have been called “gay” (“fag,” “queer”).

**Boys are most often** harassed by a girl acting alone.

**Boys are more likely than girls** to have been targeted in the locker rooms and the rest rooms.

**Boys are less likely than girls** to tell someone they have been sexually harassed.

## 7. If you ignore sexual harassment, it will probably stop.

- Sexual harassment which is ignored often escalates.
- Sometimes people who are being harassed are afraid to say “stop!” They may fear the harassment is their fault, or that if they mention it to someone else they’ll be laughed at, retaliated against, or shamed.
- It is important for targets of sexual harassment to take some action in order to let the harasser know that his or her attention is unwanted and to alert other people – a friend, a school counselor, a trusted adult – to the problem.
- Targets of sexual harassment need to know that their *rights* are being violated and that there are concrete steps that they can take to protect themselves.

Update: 2001 survey of 2,000 students in 8th-11th grades showed:

Sexual harassment is widespread in school life.

While boys today are even more likely than boys in 1993 to experience sexual harassment, they are still less likely than girls to have this experience.

- Girls are more likely than boys to experience sexual harassment ever (83 percent vs. 79 percent) or often (30 percent vs. 24 percent).
- Boys today are more likely than those in 1993 to experience sexual harassment often or occasionally (56 percent vs. 49 percent) or often (24 percent vs. 18 percent).

Update: From the 2011 AAUW survey of 1,965 students in 7th-12th grades:

- Overall 40% of boys experienced sexual harassment compared to 56% of girls.
- For in person sexual harassment, 44% of boys experienced sexual harassment in person, while 52% of girls experienced sexual harassment in person.
- For sexual harassment online, 24% of boys experienced sexual harassment while 36% of girls reported experiencing sexual harassment.
- Thus, a gender gap remains with more girls reporting and experiencing sexual harassment than boys, whether in person or online. (The survey asked the students to think about the school year 2010-2011).

**8. A boy who claims he has been sexually harassed is a nerd, wimp, sissy, or “wuss.”**

- There indeed may be strong cultural and social pressure on boys not to identify themselves as the targets of unwanted sexual attention, but the law makes no such distinction – they are just as eligible as girls to say that they are the targets of sexual harassment.

**9. Writing dirty things about someone on a bathroom wall or in a text or email at school is sexual harassment.**

- School districts are required by law to take a stand against those actions, activities, pranks and expressions that create a hostile and intimidating, “poisoned” educational environment. When a particular student or group of students is singled out, such “targeted speech” (speech which targets a particular person/s) may not be protected by the First Amendment.

**10. When a girl says “no,” she really means “yes” or “maybe” or “later.”**

- “No” means no, but sometimes people will say or do things that *mean* “no” without directly saying so. This can be confusing to the other person. For example, boys often don’t understand that when a girl says, “I don’t feel like it,” she means “no.”
- When there is the slightest doubt about whether a person is comfortable with your behavior, you must ask them what they are feeling and then *respect their limits*. Otherwise, you are pressuring someone to do something against their will, and could run the risk of committing sexual harassment, sexual assault, or some other violation of their rights.
- It is okay for a girl (or a boy) to say, “I’m not sure.”

### 11. If a girl says she is being sexually harassed and the boy says he is only fooling, then it's not sexual harassment.

- Sexual harassment is defined from the target's perspective, not the harasser's.
- Consensus between the target and perpetrator is unnecessary in determining the nature of a behavior. All legal definitions of sexual harassment build in personal, subjective components.
- If you do not want or welcome attention which is of a sexual nature, and if this attention is interfering with your ability to do your school work, you are being sexually harassed.

### 12. Sexual harassment isn't a serious problem in school since it only affects a few people.

- A majority of students report that at sometime in their school life they experience some form of sexual harassment.
- *Secrets in Public: Sexual Harassment in Our Schools*, a 1993 report written by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women and cosponsored by the NOW legal Defense and Education Fund, found the following results from a *Seventeen* magazine survey of girls:
  - **89% of girls** report having received sexual comments, gestures or looks, while 83% of girls report having been touched, grabbed or pinched.
  - **When sexual harassment occurs**, it is not a one-time-only event: 39% of girls reported being harassed at school on a daily basis during the last year.
  - **Sexual harassment is a public event**; other people are present at over two-thirds of the incidents.
  - **More harassers of girls** are male.
  - *Note:* 4300 girls between the ages of 9 and 19 responded; the study analyzed a random sample of 2000.
- *Hostile Hallways*, a 1993 survey conducted by the Harris Poll and sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Foundation, reported the following results:
  - **4 out of 5 students report** having been the target of sexual harassment during their school lives. Despite the stereotype of males as harassers, significant numbers of boys (76%) report having been sexually harassed, compared to 85% of the girls.

Update: from 2001 survey of 2,000 students in 8th-11th grades:

- Three-quarters of students (76 percent) experience nonphysical sexual harassment at some point in their school lives, more than half (54 percent) often or occasionally.
- Six in 10 students (58 percent) experience physical sexual harassment at some point in their school lives, one-third (32 percent) of students are afraid of being sexually harassed. Girls are more than twice as likely as boys to feel this way (44 percent vs. 20 percent).

Update: from 2011 AAUW survey of 1,965 students in 7th-12th grades.

- 44% of all students encountered sexual harassment in person
- 30% of all students encountered sexual harassment through texting, email, Facebook or other electronic means
- 56% of all girls experienced sexual harassment
- 40% of all boys experienced sexual harassment.



**Two-thirds of students**, have been the targets of sexual comments, jokes, looks or gestures.

**Over one-half of students** report having been touched, grabbed or pinched in a sexual way at school.

**More than one-third** of the students have been the target of sexual rumors.

**One in ten students** have been forced to do something sexual at school other than kissing.

*Note:* This poll was a scientific random sample of 1600 students in 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grades.

- School district officials are responsible under Title IX and other federal and state statutes to guarantee all students an education in an environment free from sexual harassment and sex discrimination. It is the responsibility of school administrators to tell students the rules and explain what is legal and illegal within the school.
- If school officials are negligent and fail to respond to complaints of sexual harassment, then they are allowing and encouraging behaviors which are both frightening and illegal.
- A student may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, which will conduct an investigation; students also may file lawsuits in federal court under Title IX.
- In a 1992 unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court established that schools may be liable for compensatory damages in sex discrimination and sexual harassment cases.

Update: Another U.S. Supreme Court case in 1999 (Davis v. Monroe) established that school administrators are liable for student-to-student sexual harassment in schools if the administrators knew about it and failed to take corrective actions.



## **Class #6: Mapping “Hot” and “Cool” Spaces at School**

### **Objectives**

(A) To identify where (exact locations) in the school the students feel “hot” and where they feel “cool”; (B) to help students identify these places; (C) to provide information for the school to use in order to develop a “cooler” school environment; (D) to empower students to transform “hot” areas into “cool” areas by examining why they consider particular locations to be “hot” and what the school can do to make those areas “cooler.”

### **Preparation**

Each participating instructor will draw a crude blueprint of the school building to keep as a “master” copy (see Appendix for Illustration 1). This copy will then be photocopied and passed out for students to label where they feel “hot” or “cool.” The marked up crude blueprints will be collected at the end of class, and then compiled and coded, using a copy of the blueprint. In drawing the crude blueprint, think about the whole school. Include on the map all of the places in the school, including stairwells, restrooms, classrooms, hallways, locker rooms, cafeteria, outside spaces, etc. Write the names of each of these main places in the school and be sure to have the students color code these places. You can draw a very simple version of a map of the school; it can look like a rectangle, so long as the students can find the main parts of the school on the map.

Students will use the provided RED, YELLOW, and GREEN colored pencils for the maps they will draw on to identify “cool” and “hot” locations.

### **Time Allotment**

15 minutes – color-coding maps; 25 minutes – discussion

### **Activity**

**Ask each student to write their gender and their grade** on the top of a blank sheet of paper. Beyond this information, everything the student writes will remain anonymous. Make sure students complete this exercise alone, rather than in groups.

### **Read aloud to the students:**

*Spend 15 minutes color-coding the map. Use GREEN to mark the areas where you feel comfortable spending your time, where you feel safe – “cool” areas, as we’ll call them. Use RED to mark the areas you try to avoid, where you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or uneasy – “hot” areas, we’ll call them. Use YELLOW to mark to areas that seem somewhat unsafe, make you somewhat uncomfortable, or that you sometimes avoid.*

If students finish coding their maps early, ask them to begin working on the discussion questions on their own, on a separate sheet of paper. Collect these at the end of the discussion, along with the maps.

When students are finished color-coding their maps (see Illustration 2) in the Appendix, **lead them in a discussion** about the “hot” and “cool” spaces on campus, using the questions below.

***Be sure to collect all the maps before class is over.***

**(Educator Instructions)**

**Discussion questions:**

1. Which areas do you think most students in your school would identify as “cool” locations, places where they would feel safe and comfortable?
  
2. Which areas do you think most students in your school would identify as “hot” locations, places they try to avoid or feel uncomfortable or unsafe in?
  
3. Do you think certain areas might be designated as “hot” by some students and “cool” by others?
  - If yes, which? Why might that happen?
  
4. Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on one’s gender? If so, why?
  
5. Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on one’s age and grade? If so, why?
  
6. Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on one’s physical size? If so, why?
  
7. What are other reasons that certain areas may be labeled as “hot” or “cool”?
  
8. What can we as a class or as students do to make the problem areas “cooler” — safer and more welcoming? How can we make our school feel “cooler”?
  
9. In what ways could the school staff make the problem areas “cooler”?

## **Class #6: Mapping “Hot” and “Cool” Spaces at School**

Write your gender and grade at the top of a blank sheet of paper. Do not write your name.

This handout is a basic map of your school and includes the various locations in your school, including classrooms, stairwells, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, locker rooms, outside spaces, bus stop, etc.

Now consider what makes you feel safe, welcome, and comfortable in school – “cool” locations – and what makes you feel unsafe, unwelcome, or uncomfortable in school – “hot” locations. What specific locations on campus make you feel welcome and safe? Where do you feel most comfortable spending your time? In contrast, where do you feel unsafe or uncomfortable? Where do you try to avoid?

**Spend 15 minutes color-coding your map with the provided colored pencils. Shade the areas in RED to mark where you feel very unsafe, unwelcome, uncomfortable, or uneasy, and where you try to avoid. Use GREEN shading to mark where you feel safe and welcome, and where you feel comfortable spending time. Use YELLOW shading to mark places that you feel somewhat uneasy, uncomfortable, or unwelcome in.**

After completing the map, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

### **Discussion questions:**

1. Which areas on your map do you consider “cool” locations, places that are safe and welcoming?
2. Which areas on your map do you consider “hot” or unsafe, or do you try to avoid?
3. Might certain locations be considered “cool” by some people but “hot” by others?
  - If yes, which? Why might that happen?
4. Might the “hot or coolness” of certain areas differ depending on your gender? If so, why?
5. Might the “hot or coolness” of certain areas differ depending on your age and grade? If so, why?
6. Might the “hot or coolness” of certain areas differ depending on your physical size? If so, why?
7. What are other reasons certain areas may be labeled as “hot” or “cool”?
8. What can we as students do to make the problem areas safer and more welcoming? How can we feel safer and more comfortable at school?
9. In what ways could the school staff make the problem areas “cooler”?

## **Post-Activity Tasks for the Instructor To Do**

Be sure to collect the maps before students leave.

Using a blueprint, a map of the school, or a list of school locations, tally up the number of times each area was described as “hot” or “cool.” RED stands for very “hot” spaces, YELLOW stand for somewhat “hot” spaces, and GREEN stands for “cool” spaces.

### **Using the rating form (provided) to compile the data.**

Consider the differences between areas generally considered “hot” by students and those generally considered “cool” by students.

- Is there more surveillance or a greater adult presence in “cool” areas?
- Do older students congregate in areas that younger students deem “hot”?
- What are the reasons students give when they label an area “hot”?

Then **present the results to a schoolwide body, following the instructions of the “Presenting and Responding to Results” form (provided)** to determine the school’s next steps in ensuring school safety.

## Instructions for Analyzing the Student Maps of “Hot Spots”

Be sure to collect all the maps before students leave. The results from each students’ completed color-coded map (see Illustration 2 in the Appendix) will need to be transferred onto a Tally Map (described below), and then summed onto a Score Summary Map (also described below). Attached is an example of a Tally Map, a Score Summary Map, and illustrative scenarios of how these two maps are used. Below are the instructions on how to use the maps, and what to do with the results of the mapping work.

### Tally Map (represents the totals of each of the individual student maps)

- (1) At the bottom of the unmarked version of the blueprint write in the characteristics of the students that completed the maps (separate maps by gender and grade),
- (2) Tally up the number of times each area was described as a safe “cool” area (the number of *GREENS*), as an unsafe “hot” area (the number of *REDS*) and as a somewhat unsafe area (the number of *YELLOWS*) onto the map. Using red, yellow, or green colored pencils, make one slash mark on this master map per red, green or yellow shaded area on the students’ maps.

### Score Summary Map

- (1) Sum the total of each area from the *Tally Map* onto the second map (the *Score Summary Map*).
- (2) Transcribe three set of totals onto the *Score Summary Map*:
  - Total # of green slashes on the tally map
  - Total # of red slashes on the tally map
  - Total # of yellow slashes on the tally map

### What to do with the mapping results?

The areas with the highest number of red rating are the “hottest” areas and further safety measures are needed in those areas. Areas with no or few red ratings and mostly green ratings are the “coolest” areas and further safety measures are not likely to be needed in those areas.

The workers should also **consider the following factors in assessing differences** in how students perceive areas as “hot” or “cool”:

- Is there more surveillance or a greater adult presence in “cool” areas?
- Do older students congregate in areas that younger students deem “hot”?
- What are the reasons students give when they label an area “hot”?

**Bringing the mapping results to a school wide body:** After summing up the mapping results, take this information to a school wide body (e.g., school leadership council, school leadership team, school safety committee, problem-solving team, site-based coordinating council) to work on rectifying the student concerns about safe and unsafe areas (*see next page*).

## Presenting and Responding to the Results

After tabulating the results of the “hot” and “cool” areas (collected after the mapping exercise), take this information to a schoolwide body (e.g. school leadership council, school leadership team, school safety committee, problem-solving team, site-based coordinating council) to work on rectifying the student concerns about “hot” and “cool” areas.

Below is a list of potential methods of addressing “hot spots”; however, feel free to innovate or tailor these ideas to your specific school:

- Increase the presence of school safety personnel in “hot” areas
- Put up signs in “hot” locations reminding students of their rights
- Ask the teacher whose class is nearest to a specific “hot spot” to monitor the area between class periods
- Have custodians check the lighting in “hot spots”
- Consider ways to reroute school traffic
- Designate certain areas as limited to a particular class grade (e.g. a “6th grade only hall”)
- Send students to the restroom in pairs
- Ask a staff member to check bathrooms periodically (e.g. every 10 minutes)
- Institute a system of bathroom passes or bathroom locks
- Additional examples?

Document the ways in which you decided to respond to student concerns here:

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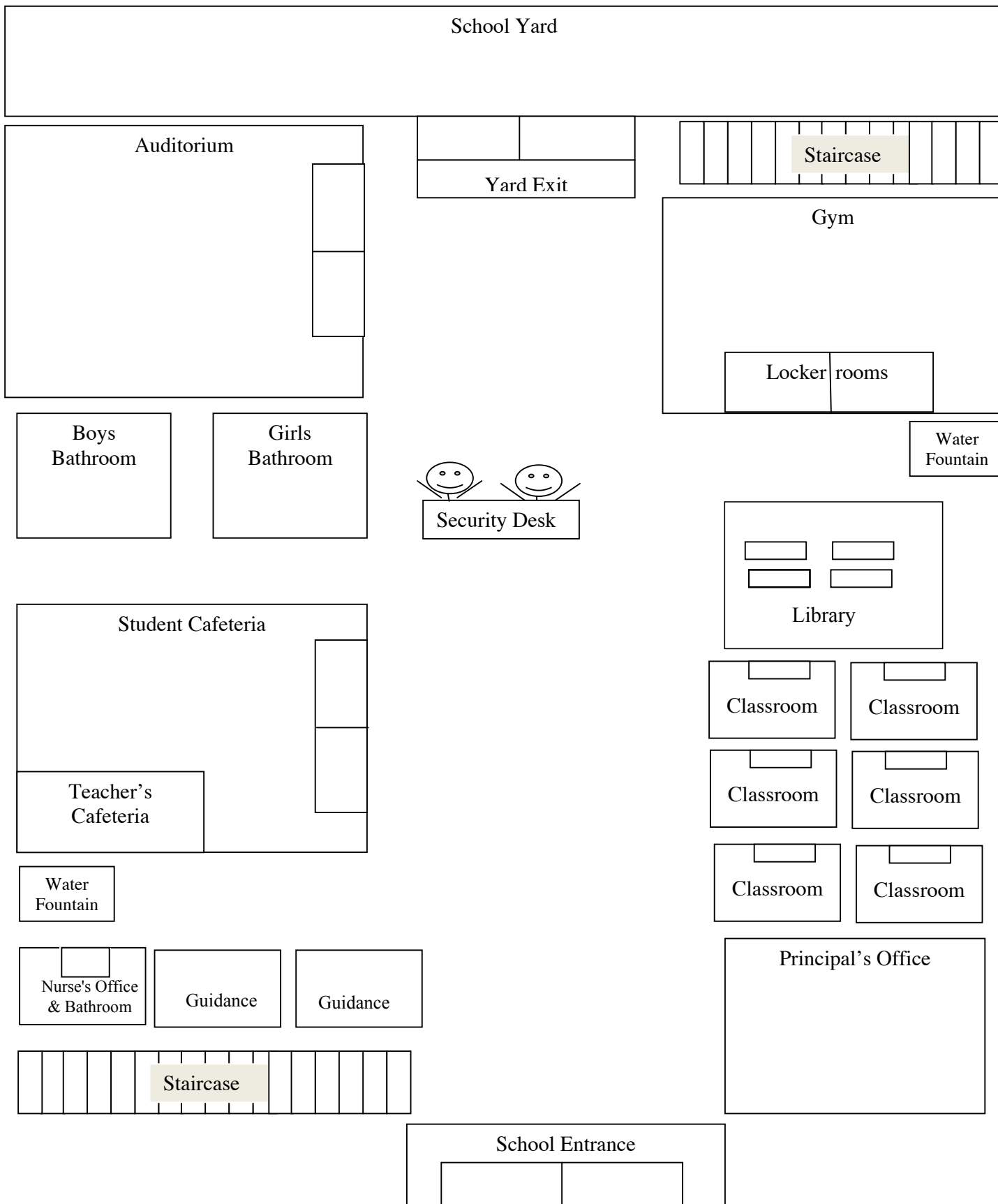
## **Appendix**

### **Illustration 1:**

Blank Crude blueprint of the school building

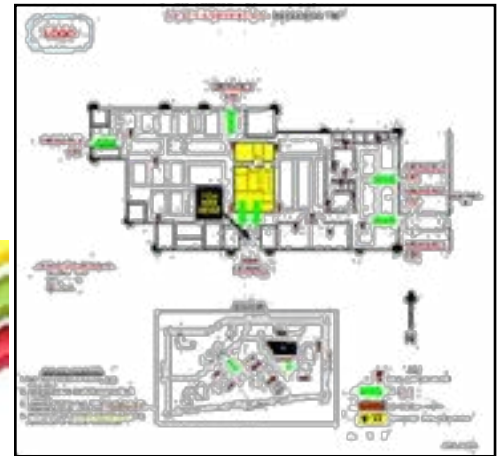
### Illustration 1

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_



## School-wide Interventions

- > Respecting boundaries agreement (counseling intervention)
- > "Hot spots mapping" of safe and unsafe areas of the school
- > Posters to increase awareness and reporting of DV/H with contact names for school counselors\*



\*Posters may be downloaded from:

[www.wcwonline.org/proj/datingviolence/ShiftingBoundariesInterventionPosters.zip](http://www.wcwonline.org/proj/datingviolence/ShiftingBoundariesInterventionPosters.zip)

NOTE: In our research findings, the school-wide interventions were found to be more effective compared to the classroom interventions, when used separately. However, the classroom interventions were effective when used with the school-wide interventions. We urge you to consider implementing the school-wide interventions along with the classroom lessons, and NOT merely the classroom lessons alone.