

# WISCONSIN SCHOOL TALK

A Safety and Health Bulletin for K-12 Schools From  
Gallagher National Risk Control

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## Breaking Up Student-on-Student Fights

School staff may encounter situations in which their attempts to intervene in breaking up a student-on student fight may lead them to sustain an injury or be subject to being struck by a student during an altercation. School staff members are not usually trained in law enforcement or physical restraint techniques, but more and more frequently find themselves confronting students involved in fighting. It is important that staff follow the school district policies addressing its expectations of staff members in such situations.

If an argument between students escalates and erupts into a fight, school staff must know how to stop or intervene in order to stop the fighting and take necessary steps to properly deal with aggressive student behaviors. The following are tips on handling student-on student confrontation.

- Always follow your school's established procedures for intervening in student fights.
- Do not ignore aggressive behavior, since it can often turn into a violent situation. Preventing student fights begins with addressing bullying and aggressive student behavior. Follow established school policies.
- You should move toward the scene of violence because a teacher's presence can often stop the aggressive behaviors.
- Extend one arm out with the hand raised in a stop motion and, in a commanding and confident voice, tell students to stop fighting. Repeat the stop motion.



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- Summon assistance or ask someone to report the fight to the office immediately. Do not leave the scene if possible.
- Look to see if any weapons are present.
- Pay attention to the surrounding onlookers and disperse those who may be encouraging the fight.
- Do not get between students who are fighting.
- Continue to review the situation to ascertain what has happened, who is there and what will likely happen.
- Support the victim(s) in the best way you can and get proper medical assistance if necessary. Keep the victim(s) away from other students—favoritism by a teacher or staff may further alienate them from others or result in additional taunting because of the perceived relationship they have with the faculty member.
- Document the incident immediately.

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