

## **DISCLAIMER:**

**This is the experience of one student, on one day of the school year. We have chosen to print the story, including the vulgar, racist and hurtful comments she experienced without censoring or softening the language. Our children should not have to deal with this on a daily basis, with this type of abusive and harassing behavior. One Mom's solution, with a focus on compassion, may help some of you.**

**All names have been changed.**

**June 3, 2015 (getting off the bus at home at approximately 3:30 pm)**

Dear Reader:

I was sitting on my front porch when the bus pulled up to drop Britney off. As Britney got off the bus, I heard a boy call out, "Her mom is on the porch!" Another boy stuck his face up out of the open bus window for me to see and then yelled to Britney, "You're a douche bag!" Britney never looked back and walked straight to me, upset and crying about what had happened on the bus. I told her to tell me what had happened and asked her the names of the boys yelling at her and she replied, "John Smith and Andrew White."

Britney explained she had boarded the bus and sat by herself near the back of the bus. She and her friend Kate Jones were fighting. Britney told me that all day people were allowed to be on their devices, texting and taking pictures, but no one, not even Kate, would take a picture with her. So Britney was upset and didn't sit with Kate.

Britney sat down and John Smith was in the seat behind her and Andrew White was in the seat across from her. John reached around and hit the seat bench and Britney's leg, taunting her with the following: "It was because of you Lindsey Peters got into trouble with her E-Cigarette," and "Are you going to tell on me for having a vape pen?", and "Are you an Indian?" and "You smell like a fish." Then John and Andrew continued engaging in nasty, raunchy conversation together about her; some of which she didn't even understand but knew it was bad. One asked, "What kind of fish do you think she smells like?" and the other responded, "An ugly puffer fish." And, "Why are you talking to some black nigger chic?" Britney told them to stop, and she admittedly confessed she hit John back and that she also twisted and pushed Andrew's arm, telling them to stop and leave her alone. Crying and shaken up, she was very concerned about me being mad at her for hitting the boys, but said she couldn't take it anymore. John asked her if she wanted to fight him, said "Come on, let's see it.", and called her a "pussy". Andrew told her he was going to text his dad that there was a girl on the bus hitting him, and then they taunted and teased her that they were going to call the vice principal, Mr. Flynn, and report her. She was very scared and begged them not to send the text or call Mr. Flynn.

After she finished her account, we got into my car and I drove to John Smith's house where I spoke to a receptive elderly woman. She alluded to me several times how complicated the situation was there, and she did not say if John's parents were in residence there or identify herself as his grandmother, but gave me a piece of paper to call after 5 pm. (I did call later that evening at 7pm. The woman who answered only identified herself as a caregiver and told me John is trouble. She said he is a ring leader and is a habitual liar and as he cannot be trusted, she was there to watch him.) I asked John to come over from the wooded area and speak to me. He walked over and barely made eye contact with me as he sent text messages on his phone and tried making excuses for the events of that afternoon. I politely expressed my disgust in his language and told him that his behavior was unacceptable. We would not tolerate bullying, name calling, and harassing Britney. I told him I did not want to press charges, but I would if the harassment continued. I encouraged him to make better choices as I knew he was capable of doing, and I urged him to leave Britney alone in the future.

We then drove to Andrew White's home. An adult woman passed by me as I went up to the home, but did not bother to ask me why I was there. Andrew was very receptive, respectful and cooperative. He seemed to understand how wrong his actions and words were that afternoon. He said, "I shouldn't treat anyone like that," and he said he shouldn't even be friends with John. I could clearly see the genuine pain in this boy's eyes. I told him Britney has gone through a lot of her own dysfunction in life - more than he could ever imagine; so why not have each other's back instead of hurting each other? I told him she goes through living hell at school and cannot wait to get home, so why not be a friend and be there for each other, as you both know the painful feeling of being hurt by others? He nodded in agreement. He made eye contact, never interrupted me, and listened. He apologized to me and then asked my permission to approach Britney in the morning and apologize. I told him that she was the car now. I had Britney get out of the car so they could apologize to each other. They shook hands and I encouraged them both to move in a better direction of friendship and fun, not enemies and hatred. They smiled and it appeared sincere to me.

My heart breaks for both of the young men. It is sad. It's very apparent there is a lack of guidance and they are both hurt children themselves inside. I told them both that my intention was not to get them into trouble, but rather to get them to stop their hurtful behavior towards Britney. My goal is not to endorse a punitive discipline plan of more pain and suffering for those kids, but rather a compassionate approach to teaching them how to deal with their own pain in order to stop inducing it upon others. Saturday Schools and detentions that do not work!! These kids need to know someone cares about their personal pain!!! Sometimes school is the only real sense of Home these kids have!!

Sincerely,  
A Concerned Mom