

Tips for Bullying Prevention



What is Bullying?

Bullying occurs when a stronger or more dominant child repeatedly hurts, threatens, or torments a more vulnerable child. Bullying is intentional, it happens more than once, and there is a marked imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. In short, bullying is a one-sided, unfair match. Bullying is different from a single incident of teasing. It is also distinct from the normal conflicts of childhood. It is not bullying when two children of approximately equal strength or power have a fight.

Warning Signs

(Source: www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)

Possible warning signs that a child is being bullied:

- Comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings;
- Has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches;
- Has few, if any friends, with whom he or she spends time;
- Seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the bus, or taking part in organized activities with peers (such as clubs);
- Takes a long, "illogical" route when walking to or from school;
- Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school;
- Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he/she comes home;
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical ailments;
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams;
- Experiences a loss of appetite; or
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem.

What is Cyberbullying?

(Source: www.cyberbullying.info)

Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies, mediums such as mobile phone text messages, emails, phone calls, internet chat rooms, instant messaging – and the latest trend – social networking websites such as MySpace, Facebook and Bebo. Cyberbullying is a fast growing trend that experts believe is more harmful than typical schoolyard bullying. Nearly all of us can be contacted 24/7 via the internet or our mobile phones. Victims can be reached anytime and anyplace. For many children, home is no longer a refuge from the bullies.



Graphics source: the Virginia Department of Health

What Can I Do?

(Source: education.com)

1. Encourage your child to report bullying incidents to you.

- Validate your child's feelings by letting him/her know that it is normal to feel hurt, sad, scared, angry, etc.
- Let your child know that s/he has made the right choice by reporting the incident(s) to you and assure your child that s/he is not to blame.
- Help your child be specific in describing bullying incidents: who, what, where, when. (Look for patterns or evidence of repeated bullying behaviors.)

2. Ask your child how s/he has tried to stop the bullying.

3. Coach your child in possible alternatives.

- Avoidance is often the best strategy.
 - Play in a different place.
 - Play a different game.
 - Stay near a supervising adult when bullying is likely to occur.
- Look for ways to find new friends.
 - Support your child by encouraging him/her to extend invitations for friends to play at your home or to attend activities.
 - Involve your child in social activities outside of school.

4. Treat the school as your ally.

- Share your child's concerns and specific information about bullying incidents with appropriate school personnel.
- Work with school staff to protect your child from possible retaliation.
- Establish a plan with the school and your child for dealing with future bullying incidents.

5. Encourage your child to seek help and to report bullying incidents to someone s/he feels safe with at the school:

- Adult in charge of a specific activity or area (such as the playground, lunchroom, field trips, bus lines, gym, classroom)
- Teacher
- Counselor
- Principal

6. Use school personnel and other parents as resources in finding positive ways to encourage respectful behaviors at school.

- Volunteer time to help supervise on field trips, on the playground, or in the lunchroom.
- Become an advocate for schoolwide bullying prevention programs and policies.

7. Encourage your child to continue to talk with you about all bullying incidents.

- Do not ignore your child's report.
- Do not advise your child to physically fight back. (Bullying lasts longer and becomes more severe when children fight back. Physical injuries often result.)
- Do not confront the child who bullies.
- Do not confront the family of the child who bullies.



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Bullying is widespread in the United States.

- In a 2009 nationwide survey, about 20% of high school students reported being bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey
- During the 2007/2008 school year, 25% of public schools reported that bullying occurred among student on a daily or weekly basis. A higher percentage of middle schools reported daily or weekly occurrences of bullying compared to primary and high schools
- In 2007, about 4% of 12-to-18 year old students reported having been cyberbullied during the school year
- Only 25%-50% of students who are bullied tell an adult about the bullying

Check out these online resources to address bullying:

www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
www.safeyouth.gov
www.olweus.org/public/bullying_page
suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

www.onguardonline.gov
www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying
pbskids.org/itsmylife/friends/bullies/

You may obtain a free copy of NetCetera: Chatting with Kids about Being Online.
Contact your school counselor or call Student Services at 433-1801.



***To report concerns, please call the Safety Hotline.
This hotline is available 24/7 by calling 319/433-2081***