

Bullying

What You Need to Know



Dear Fellow Students,

Let's be honest. Bullying can be a problem. We all want it to stop, but stopping bullying is a hard thing to do. I've seen kids bullied in my school, and a couple of my good friends had problems with a bully when we were in middle school.

This booklet will help you understand bullying, and it will give you some really good tips on what you can do about it. At the end, there's also a section for parents. So, show this book to your parents—it will help them understand what we're dealing with.

Everyone knows that there's only so much that teachers and principals can do about bullying (especially since they often don't know when it's going on). If bullying is going to stop in your school, it's up to you, the students. This book will help get you started.

Hope you have a great year—a year *without* bullies!

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BULLYING

What it is and why some students do it



Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, harmful, and repeated.

There are several forms of bullying—all are hurtful.

Physical – using physical force to harm another

- pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking
- stealing or damaging someone's property
- hazing a member of a team or group

Verbal – using language to hurt others

- making intimidating or threatening remarks
- taunting, insulting, or embarrassing others

Social – hurting another's social standing

- spreading rumors, lies, or gossip
- purposely harming another's self-esteem or reputation
- excluding someone from a group

Cyberbullying – using technology to cause harm

- creating hurtful or embarrassing posts or pictures
- sending harassing or threatening text messages

Why do bullies bully?

Most students who bully do so for one or more of the following reasons.

Power and control – Bullies are often insecure people who are trying to show they are powerful by controlling others. They often target students who are passive or shy, and who are less likely to stand up for themselves.

Justice – Some students bully for revenge. They want to “get even” for something that’s happened.

Jealousy – Students who are jealous of another’s success, status, or possessions sometimes bully to “bring others down.”

Boredom – Some bullies are simply bored. They entertain themselves by harassing others—not stopping to think about what effect it might have. They may even think what they’re doing is clever or funny.

Intolerance – Bullies are often intolerant of people who look or act different than they do. These bullies target those with different backgrounds, beliefs, or interests.

To impress others – Some students bully to increase their status or to impress others. They think this will earn them respect and admiration.

What’s the difference between teasing and bullying?

Teasing happens between people who generally like each other. It’s also more playful. In bullying situations, you see the following.

1. There is a power imbalance.
2. It occurs repeatedly.
3. There is an intention to do harm.



BYSTANDERS

Bystanders, upstanders, and friends



Students who witness bullying are bystanders.

Students who witness bullying *and* take some action to stop or discourage it are upstanders.

When bullies feel their behavior is accepted by their peers, the bullying is likely to continue—or get worse.

If you witness bullying, you have the opportunity to help someone, and to make a real difference in that person's life. You also have an opportunity to help make your school a safer place for everyone.

If you witness bullying...

- speak up and tell the bully to stop.
- speak to the person who's being bullied and ask them to come with you. Then walk away together.
- walk away if you feel uncomfortable speaking up. Do not give the bully an audience. Later, find the student who was bullied and offer your support.
- report any bullying incident you see to a teacher, counselor, or trusted adult.

Hey Trevor,
cut it out.

C'mon, Sarah.
We need to get
to class.

I'm really sorry
that happened
to you.

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Martin Luther King, Jr.

Is your friend a bully?

Perhaps a friend of yours started teasing someone—and now the teasing has turned into bullying. It's possible your friend doesn't realize how big a problem their behavior has become.

Talk to your friend about things that are bothering them. Bullies often have issues that cause them to act out. Just talking things over is sometimes enough to keep someone from wanting to hurt others.

Help your friend find other ways to resolve conflicts. Be creative and help them come up with positive ways to deal with difficult situations and resolve conflicts. Be a voice of reason.

Encourage empathy. Encourage your friend to think about the effect their words and actions have on others.

Friends are in the best position to help bullies change their thinking — and their behavior.



Imagine this...

Between classes, Liam pushes Jaden into the lockers, causing him to drop his books and his notebooks. Several students laugh, and everyone else walks by, ignoring Jaden as he gathers his things.

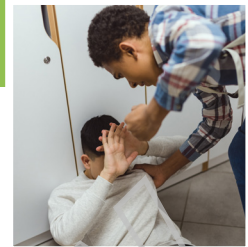
What if... someone says, "Hey Liam, leave him alone," and then three students stop to help Jaden pick up his papers.

What a difference these upstanders make! Jaden feels supported, and Liam just looks like a bully.

TARGETS

What targets can do

If you are the target of a bully, it's important to remember that this is not your fault. No one deserves to be bullied, harassed, or intimidated.



Tips to avoid being the target of a bully

- Bullies often target those who are quiet or seem passive. As you walk through the halls at school, stand tall, and walk confidently. Use body language that shows you are confident and self-assured.
- Bullies are less likely to target students in a group. Sit with friends at lunch, and try to be around others whenever you're concerned about bullying.

Tell someone

- Tell your parents and your friends what's going on. Also, talk to your counselor or to a favorite teacher. Sometimes just having things out in the open can be enough to make bullies stop.
- Don't think of it as "tattling" or "snitching" when you tell someone. Think of it as standing up for yourself and for what's right. And if you're being bullied, chances are the bully is also causing problems for others. By stopping the bully, you're not only protecting yourself—you are making your school a safer place for everyone.

"Never be bullied into silence."

Harvey Firestone

If you find yourself in a difficult situation...



You don't have control over another's actions, but you do have a choice as to how you respond. Here are some things you can try if you're dealing with a bully.

Walk away. Calmly walk away and ignore the bully. Fear, anger, and other reactions give bullies what they're looking for.

Speak up and speak out. Remind yourself that no one has the right to bully you. Remain calm, and speak in a confident, respectful voice. Be assertive, and tell the bully to stop.

Leave me alone.

Use humor. Smile and say something that's humorous to show that you're not upset.

That's a good one.

Keep a record. Write down dates, times, and the names of the people involved. Also make note of the places where the bullying occurred, along with anything that was said, done, sent, or posted online. You will then have a record if you decide to talk to a school official or law enforcement.

Tell someone. Bullies try to isolate those they are bullying. Do not let that happen. Tell someone!

Mom, I need to talk to you about something.

Coping during difficult times

Whenever you're going through a difficult time, get involved in positive activities. Sports, band, clubs, and other school activities can help you stay positive. They can also be safe havens from bullies.

Believe in yourself. Remind yourself of your strengths and talents, and replace negative thoughts with positive self-talk. Keep it in perspective. It is important to know that bullying is not permanent. *These days will pass, and things will get better.*

BULLIES

Bullies need help too



Bullies often have problems they don't know how to deal with. Bullies, as well as targets, need help and understanding.

Below are some factors that may contribute to someone becoming a bully.

Personality traits

Bullies tend to be aggressive and impulsive, having little regard for the feelings of others. While some bullies feel they are “better” than their targets, most bullies are insecure and use bullying as a way to feel powerful and build their self-esteem.

Family behavior

Many bullies come from families where they were physically or emotionally abused, or where they witnessed abuse.

Peer group

Some students may join in on the bullying to try to fit in. They might even feel that if they don't join in, they could become targets themselves.

Past experience

Many bullies have been bullied themselves. They take out their anger on others, or they simply do what's been done to them.

Are you a bully?

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do you sometimes use your strength or size to get your way? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Do you say hurtful things to others? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Have you intentionally damaged someone's property? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Have you sent hurtful messages or created hurtful social media posts? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Have you intimidated others to make them feel afraid? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Do you sometimes solve problems with force? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Have you told lies or spread rumors in order to damage someone's reputation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Do you want others to fear or respect you because you're tough? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, think about your behavior—and about what kind of person you want to be.

Bullies can change

If you recognize that you may be a bully, or are perhaps feeling badly about how you've treated others in the past, consider doing the following:

Examine your motives. What have you done and why did you do it?

Increase your empathy. Having empathy means being able to put yourself in another person's shoes—and trying to imagine how they might feel.

Find positive ways to be powerful. Look for positive ways to use your passion, strengths, and/or leadership skills.

*“If it is not right, do not do it.
If it is not true, do not say it.”*

Marcus Aurelius

CYBERBULLYING

How you can take control



Cyberbullying is the use of electronic devices, apps, and social media to harass, threaten, or embarrass others.

Who are the cyberbullies?

Cyberbullies are often people who lack the courage or strength to confront someone face to face. While bullies who attack others physically or verbally are looking for power and control, cyberbullies are often motivated by anger or revenge.

Sometimes cyberbullying is unintentional. Classmates start out playing around, or think they're just teasing. They don't realize how hurtful the things they say can be.

Tips to prevent cyberbullying

- Be polite when posting on social media. Don't send a message to someone else when you're upset or angry.
- Post only what you are comfortable with the world seeing ***forever***.
- Delete anything you receive that's hurtful to another. Don't respond to it. Don't forward it.
- Photos can be altered and reposted in ways you might not like. If you do post a photo, use one that your parents would approve of.

Remember, there is no such thing as privacy online!

Cyberbully Survey

Have you ever done the following?

Yes No

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sent a mean, insulting, or threatening message | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Spread gossip, rumors, or lies about another student online | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Excluded others from an online group in order to hurt them | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Pretended to be someone else online in order to get that person in trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Sent or posted a photo or information that would be embarrassing to another | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Shared someone's secret online | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

All of the above are examples of cyberbullying. If you have done any of these, think about how your actions may have affected others.

What to do if you're the target of cyberbully

- Immediately block or delete the cyberbully's number, email, and profiles.
- Do not respond; ignore it. Cyberbullies who don't get a reaction often get bored and quit.
- Save and print all messages or posts. Keep a record of where they come from and when it happens.
- Tell an adult you trust and tell your friends. Don't let anyone bully you into silence!
- Look for clues to help you identify a cyberbully. Once identified, cyberbullies should be reported.
- If you feel threatened, it's serious. Tell your parents what's going on, inform school officials, and consider involving law enforcement.



FOR PARENTS

Dear Parents,

You can probably remember being picked on or teased when you were young. It was generally seen as part of growing up. But today's world is more complicated, and now children are dealing with bullies not only at school, but also online—and the online bullying can take place 24/7.

As a parent, it's important to talk to your child about bullying. Make it clear that you believe bullying is wrong, and that it is never justified.

Let your child know that you want to hear about any problems they may be having in school or online. Also, make sure your child knows that if they're being harassed or bullied, that you are there to listen and to help any way you can.



How you can help

- Bullies often target students who are quiet or passive. Encourage your child to stand tall, walk confidently, look people in the eye, and use body language that shows self-confidence. (A self-defense class or martial arts training can often help with confidence.)
- Be aware of what's happening online and set limits. Consider keeping your home computer in a common space, such as the family room. Set a time at night when your child's cell phone must be turned off and put in a central location to recharge.
- Encourage your child to be involved in school activities. They will help your child develop friendships and feel more connected.
- Spend one-on-one time with your child, and regularly talk about what's happening at school and with friends.

If your child is a target

Be observant

Young people are often afraid or embarrassed to tell their parents they are being bullied. If your child exhibits any of the following, ask if anyone is bothering them.

- suddenly more anxious, quiet, or insecure
- not wanting to go to school
- drop in grades
- loss of appetite
- complaints of illness
- unexplained injuries

Monitor online activity and smartphone use

Have clear cut rules for internet and phone use.

Listen to your child

If your child is being bullied, it's critical that you believe, support, and empower them.

Ask your child to explain what has happened, who was involved, and how often it has occurred. Also, make a printout of anything that has been sent or posted online.

Talk to your child, and together decide how to best handle the situation.

Communicate concerns

Sharing information and working with school officials is the best way to stop bullying at school.

If your child is bullying...

If you learn that your child is bullying others, here are some suggestions.

- ❑ Take it seriously and don't make excuses.
- ❑ Listen to your child's reasons, but emphasize that there are always other options, no matter what the situation.
- ❑ Avoid lecturing, criticizing, and blaming. Be loving and firm, and focus on solutions.
- ❑ Discuss the consequences of bullying, and hold your child accountable. Allow your child to experience the consequences.



Bullying

What You Need to Know

Bullying seems to be everywhere nowadays—and it's a real problem. But what can be done about it?

This booklet doesn't have all the answers, but it will help you understand bullying, learn how to prevent it, and teach you strategies to cope with bullying if it happens to you.

"How people treat other people is a direct reflection of how they feel about themselves."

Paolo Coelho

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