

Bullying...What is it and What You Can Do About It?

What is Bullying?

1. Bullying is not fair.

Bullying involves a power imbalance - students who bully are more powerful than students who targeted as their victims because of an advantage of age, size, ability, social status, peer support, etc. Students who bully others may also have power if they harass or provoke other students about a sensitive concern (e.g. being short, overweight, or about race, family or sexuality).

2. Students who bully, harass on purpose – their behaviors are not accidental.

3. **Bullying is not fun for the victimized students** who experience distress and may feel: angry, anxious, fearful, sad, embarrassed, and ashamed. Students who are **victims of bullying often feel unsafe at school** and try to avoid going to school.

4. Bullying happens over and over again.

What are the Types of Bullying?

Direct (Face-to-Face)

- Verbal (teasing, insults, put-downs, harassment)
- Physical (shoves, pushes, hitting, assault)
- Psychological (making a mean face, rolling your eyes, “dirty looks,” uttering threats,)

Indirect (Behind Someone’s Back)

- Gossip (lowering people’s opinions about the victimized student)
- Leaving out, exclusion, shunning
- Social aggression (telling people not to be friends with a victimized student).

Cyber (Use of electronic technology as a vehicle for bullying and harassing)

- Sending threatening or harassing emails or instant messages, on myspace or facebook
- Creating a website that belittles or ridicules another student
- Taking unflattering or inappropriate pictures of other students without their permission and sharing them with others or posting them on an internet site
- Stealing someone’s password and sending mean messages to others
- tricking someone into sharing sensitive personal information while instant messaging and then forwarding that information to others

How are Students Involved in Bullying?

Students play many roles in a bullying situation:

- Student who is considered a bully and bullies others - often bully more than one student.
- Student who is a victim of bullying - usually only one student.
- Bystanders- students who are close enough to see and hear the bullying behavior.

- Interveners- students who do something to *“Put the Brakes on Bullying.”*

How Can Students Help To Stop Bullying?

There are many ways in which students can help to stop bullying. Here are a few suggestions, but you probably have many more. Remember, when you intervene- **do not bully the bully!**

- Talk to the student who is bullying. Label the behavior as bullying and tell the bullying student to stop.
- Reach out to the victimized student in friendship. Provide comfort and support to any student who is a victim of bullying. (Be an “ally”).
- Report the bullying to school staff or to your parents.

Remember: Telling is reporting to get someone out of trouble. It’s not the same as tattling or ratting, which is to get someone into trouble.

What Can You Do If Someone is Bullying You?

There are many ways in which students can respond when they are being bullied. Here are a few suggestions, but you probably have many more. Remember, **do not bully the bully**- fighting back, almost always makes the situation worse!

- Ignore and walk away from the bullying student (this works best when bullying is mild).
- Look the student who is bullying you in the eye, and confidently tell her/him to stop.
- Report the bullying to your teacher or to your parent.

You could try:

- Using humor.
- Finding “allies.”
- Being with a group of other kids.
- Staying near a grown up.

You should definitely:

- Tell someone you trust how you are feeling.
- Don’t keep your stress bottled up inside.

Remember, you have the right to feel safe at school and in your community.