



PARENT GUIDE: BULLYING

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying can be physical (ex: hitting or shoving), verbal (ex: taunting or name-calling), social (ex: excluding or shunning), and cyber (ex: spreading rumors online or sharing inappropriate pictures). The behavior is typically repeated, but can be a one time instance. The effects on youth can be long-term, but bullying is preventable and resilience is possible with support. For information on bullying laws and definitions by state, visit: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/laws>

THE FACTS

 More than **1** out of **5** students reports being **bullied**.¹

The reasons for being bullied most commonly **reported by students** include physical appearance, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, and sexual orientation.²

When bystanders intervene, **bullying stops within 10 seconds 57%** of the time.³

90% of teens who report being cyberbullied **have also been bullied offline**⁴; only about **20 - 30%** of students **notify adults** about bullying.⁵

THINGS TO SAY/THINGS NOT TO SAY

"It Took Courage to Tell Me." Acknowledge how difficult it is to talk about bullying. Praise your child for their bravery and remind them that speaking up is the best way to end bullying.

"This Is Not Your Fault." Sometimes kids feel like they did something to cause the bullying. Remind your child that the responsibility for the bullying lies with those who bully. Avoid questions like, "Did you say something to upset the other kids?" or "Did you do something to them first?"

"How Do You Want to Handle It?" Avoid the instinct to "fix it." When you brainstorm solutions with your child, you empower your child to take control. Don't schedule a "meeting" with the other child's parents. Often times, this ends up being awkward and uncomfortable for both families and doesn't actually solve the problem.



THE SIGNS OF BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING



Signs of being bullied:

- Poor school adjustment, sleep difficulties, withdrawal from friends and family, sadness, poor concentration, decline in school performance, changes in eating or sleeping, anxiety, negative health effects (ex. headaches and stomach aches), difficulty trusting, fear of going to where they are the target of bullying



Signs of being cyberbullied:

- Loss of interest in electronic devices and won't talk about why, gets tense or stressed when receiving an email, text, or website notification



Signs of cyberbullying others:

- Hides online use, avoids conversations about computer and cell phone activities, uses multiple online accounts, switches or closes screens when others are nearby, excessive use of the computer or cell phone, overly upset if access to devices is limited or denied



Signs of bullying others:

- Aggression towards others, a need to control and dominate others and situations, impulsive, often tests limits and breaks rules, good at talking their way out of difficult and tense situations, shows little sympathy towards targets of bullying

BULLYING PREVENTION TIPS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

- 1. Bullying is a behavior, not an identity.**
Labeling a child as a bully can have a detrimental effect on their future and often limits their ability to change a child's behavior. Instead, try using language such as a "person who bullies" and "person being bullied."
- 2. Start a conversation with your children early.** Talk about respect before they start school and on an ongoing basis. Go over the roles in bullying situations – the person bullying other(s), the person being bullied, and the bystanders.
- 3. Teach your children to take action when they see bullying behavior.**
Stop bullying when you see it – the silence and inaction of adults can encourage and worsen bullying behavior. Talk about standing up for others without fighting.
- 4. Teach your children to say no when they feel uncomfortable or pressured.**
Teach them to respect the no's of others. Provide honest and positive reinforcement to help build self-esteem and respect for others.
- 5. Support children who speak up.** Telling an adult – even a trusted one – about bullying can be difficult for a child. Take time to listen and provide support before taking action.
- 6. Know your school's bullying policy.**
What are the definitions of bullying? What are the solutions and consequences to bullying behavior? Talk about clear policies around bullying, in your home and at school.
- 7. Collaborate!** Work with your parent-teacher organization to foster conversation and develop school programs to prevent bullying and improve safety for all.

(Adapted from Mental Health America *Bullying Tips for Parents*)



RESOURCES

For additional resources, please visit <http://BeauBidenFoundation.org/resources>.

¹ Lessne, D., Yanze, C. (2016). Student Reports of Bullying: Results From the 2015 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey. *NCES 2017015*

² National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016. U.S. Department of Education.

³ Hawkins, D. L., Pepler, D., and Craig, W. M. (2001). Peer interventions in playground bullying. *Social Development, 10*, 512-527.

⁴ George, M.J., Odgers, C.L. (2015). Seven Fears and the Science of How Mobile Technologies May Be Influencing Adolescents in the Digital Age.

⁵ Ttofi, M.M., Farrington, D.P. (2011). Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying: a systematic and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Experimental Criminology, 7(1)*, 27-56.