

What if your child is a bully?

- Explain to your child that this behaviour is unacceptable. It is not a joke. It is not funny.
- Provide effective, non-violent consequences for your child's actions.
- Help and expect your child to understand how the other person may feel, decide how to fix the damage, and change the behaviour and underlying beliefs.
- Increase supervision, establish reasonable rules and curfews, and decrease your child's exposure to violent television, video games and music.
- Increase your child's awareness of social justice issues and principles by discussing global examples of misuse of power and control and identifying bullying in the world.
- Teach your child to value diversity.

How will the school respond?

Your child's principal will follow up immediately if you report your child is being bullied, has witnessed bullying, or has bullied someone else. The principal will investigate the matter, in a way that minimizes the possibility of your child being threatened or facing reprisals for reporting the bullying. The principal will then take appropriate steps, such as disciplining the bully, ensuring the individuals involved receive the support they need, and reinforcing the anti-bullying message.

In some cases, the principal may also recommend that the offender, the victim, witnesses, their families, and staff participate in the restorative practice approach. This involves all of the affected parties sitting down together in a formal process that gives everyone - including the victim - a say in identifying how the offender can repair the harm. Offenders must hear firsthand how their

behaviour has affected others. They must take responsibility for the hurt they have caused, and take steps to make it right. Restorative practice works only if all parties agree to and support the process. It does not replace other consequences, such as suspension. In fact, latest legislation adds bullying to the list of infractions for which principals must consider suspending students.

Want more information?

All schools must have a School Code of Conduct, bullying prevention and intervention plans, and a safe school team. For more information on what your school is doing to prevent and respond to bullying, please speak to your school principal or vice-principal.

More information also is available in two brochures: Restorative Practice, and Safe, Caring and Restorative Schools. These brochures available from your school and from the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board website at www.kprschools.ca

You will also find useful information for parents about bullying on the Ministry of Education website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying.html



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Bullying is a problem encountered in society every day. Sometimes, this behavior spills over into the classroom and onto playgrounds. Although conflict is a normal part of interacting with one another, bullying is not the result of normal conflict. It is **never acceptable**.

What is bullying?

The Ontario Ministry of Education defines bullying in this way:

“Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, aggressive behaviour that is directed at an individual/s that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear, distress and/or harm to another person’s body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context when there is real or perceived power imbalance.”

In other words:

- Bullying is a deliberate act.
- There is an intent to harm.
- It is persistent over time.
- There is an imbalance of power.

Where bullying is based on race, gender, creed, sexual orientation or other factors identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code, it is a form of discrimination.

Physical bullying includes pushing, tripping, restraining, spitting, hitting, blocking the path of another person, not allowing an individual to walk or sit in certain areas, and theft of money or possessions.

Verbal bullying includes name calling, insults, threats or slurs; disrespectful, demeaning or untrue statements about individuals, their friends or family; and spreading of rumours or personal information.

Social bullying involves excluding an individual from activities or information, or agreeing with others to shut out or alienate one individual. It often includes forms of verbal and physical bullying, in that it can involve spreading rumours to alienate the individual, or even threatening friends into ending the relationship - sometimes to the point of having them join in the bullying.

Because girls tend to use verbal and social bullying, they are sometimes overlooked as possible bullies. In fact, both boys and girls do bully, and in ways that can cause long-lasting emotional harm. In addition, we know that the latest technologies such as cell phones, e-mail and the Internet are used increasingly to bully individuals and groups.

Why be concerned about bullying?

Being bullied compromises people’s sense of safety and security. It creates anxiety, fear, frustration and distraction for all involved, including the person being bullied and people who may witness the bullying. Being bullied repeatedly affects concentration, sleep, learning, social interaction and physical health, as well as behaviour and self-esteem.

Bullying can result in depression and in some cases even suicide. We also know that bullies themselves may at some time have been bullied or witnessed bullying. Not only does bullying cause harm to individuals and groups, it also prevents us from building a society that respects the dignity of all humans.

Did you know...?

- Bullies have little empathy for others.
- Children learn to bully from the examples set by adults and those around them.
- Most bullying is not reported.
- Bullying occurs in all social classes.
- Older children can be bullied by younger children in situations where there is an unequal level of power, influence, status, skill or support.
- Bullies are four times more likely to commit a criminal act.
- Bullying is harassment. It is against the law.

How can parents tell if a child is being bullied?

- If your child tells you about the same individual “bothering” him frequently, try to find out more about the circumstances.
- Changes in your child’s habits, such as suddenly being unwilling to go places or to do things she usually does, can be your child’s way of trying to avoid a bully.
- Increased irritability, lack of sleep and nightmares are signs something is just not right with your child.
- Lost or damaged clothing or possessions, although part of life at times, can be a signal of bullying if the explanation doesn’t match the degree of loss or damage, or if it becomes a frequent event.
- Falling grades, depression and stomach aches may be linked to distress. Talk to the school where marks are affected, and to your child’s doctor in the case of depression or stomach problems.



What can parents do if their child is being bullied?

A child who is being bullied needs to hear the following messages:

- I hear you and believe you.
- We will work together to solve this problem.
- This is not your fault.

Report the bullying to school personnel immediately if it happens at school or involves a student from the school. Report it to coaches or group leaders if it is happening in a sports or social grouping. They need facts - the dates, times, places, students involved, students who may have seen or heard it, specifics about the incident and the impact on your child.

What if your child has witnessed bullying?

In most bullying incidents, witnesses are present, so there is a good chance your child has seen and heard bullying. Encourage your child to walk away and report bullying. Teach your children that there is a difference between tattling, which is just to get someone in trouble, and reporting, which is to get someone help. Help your child feel comfortable telling you about bullying.