

Bullying

What You Need to Know

Verbal Bullying



Saying or writing mean things

- teasing or taunting
- inappropriate sexual comments
- name calling
- threatening to cause harm

Physical Bullying

Hurting a person's body or possessions



- tripping or pushing
- spitting
- making mean or rude hand gestures
- hitting or pinching
- taking or breaking someone's property

Cyberbullying



Bullying by use of any electronic communication device including mobile phones, online games and websites

- spreading rumors about people online
- sending mean texts, emails or IMs to someone
- posting, sharing, or sending inappropriate pictures or videos

Social Bullying

Sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships.



- spreading rumors about someone
- leaving someone out or ignoring on purpose
- telling other children not to be friends with someone
- embarrassing a student in front of others

Students are at risk if they

- appear to have low self-esteem
- have difficulty getting along with others
- are viewed as different based on:
 - clothes they wear
 - their weight or appearance
 - being new to the school
 - a disability
 - sexual orientation
 - race



Bullying is when a student, staff member, or parent does one or more of these things repeatedly to someone offline or online hurting a person emotionally or physically. The act must be severe, unwanted, and occur over a period of time creating an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

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Families Together, Inc.
(800) 264-6343
www.familiestogetherinc.org



www.ksdetasn.org/smhi

Kansas Parent Information
Resource Center
(866) 711-6711
www.ksdetasn.org/kpirc



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What do you do if your child is being bullied?

1. Focus on your child. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying

- Never tell your child to ignore the bullying. What the child may hear is that you are going to ignore it. Often, trying to ignore bullying allows it to become more serious.
- Don't blame the child who is being bullied. Don't assume that your child did something to provoke the bullying. Don't say, "What did you do to bother the other child?"
- Listen carefully to what your child tells you. Ask him or her to describe who was involved and how and where the bullying happened.



- Learn as much as you can about the type of bullying that was used, and when and where the bullying happened. Can your child name other children or adults who may have seen the bullying?
 - Tell your child that bullying is wrong, is not their fault, and that you are glad he or she had the courage to tell you about it. Ask your child what he or she thinks can be done to help. Assure your child that you will think about what needs to be done and what you plan to do next.
- If you disagree with how your child handled the bullying situation, don't criticize him or her.
 - Do not encourage physical retaliation ("just hit them back") as a solution. Hitting another student is not likely to end the problem, and it could get your child suspended or expelled or make the situation worse.
 - A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Although it is difficult, a parent is wise to step back and consider the next steps carefully.

Do children report bullying to their parents?

Children frequently do not tell their parents that they are being bullied because they are embarrassed, ashamed, frightened of the children who are bullying them, or afraid of being seen as a "tattler." If your child tells you about being bullied, it has taken a lot of courage to do so. Your child needs your help to stop the bullying.

2. Contact your child's teacher or principal

- Parents are often reluctant to report bullying to school officials, but bullying may not stop without the help of adults.
- Keep your emotions in check. Give facts about your child's experience of being bullied including who, what, when, where, and how.
- Emphasize that you want to work with the staff at school to find a solution to stop the bullying, for the sake of your child as well as other students.
- Do not contact the parents of the student(s) who bullied your child. This is usually a parent's first response, but sometimes it makes matters worse. School officials should contact the parents of the child or children who did the bullying.
- Expect the bullying to stop. Talk regularly with your child and with school staff to see whether the bullying has stopped. If the bullying continues, contact your school principal again.



3. Help your child become more resilient to bullying

- Help to develop talents and interests of your child. Suggest and provide music, athletics, and art activities. Doing so may help your child be more confident with other students.
- Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in his or her class. Your child's teacher may be able to suggest students with whom your child can make friends, spend time, or work on school projects together.
- Help your child meet new friends outside of the school environment. A new environment can provide a fresh start for a child who has been bullied repeatedly.
- Teach your child safety strategies. Teach him or her how to ask for help from an adult when feeling threatened. Talk about whom he or she should go to for help and role-play what he or she should say. Tell your child that reporting bullying is not the same as tattling.
- If your child has a disability, it's important to work with the school to help your child learn self-advocacy skills and to develop strategies to help prevent bullying. A team approach can foster peer relationships, and help all students develop empathy and build resiliency.

Strategies to prevent bullying

- help kids understand bullying
- create an atmosphere where your child can communicate openly
- encourage kids to do what they love
- model how to treat others
- if your child has a disability, help peers understand their unique needs and strengths
- learn about your school's social-emotional learning activities
- ask the teacher about the bullying prevention program the school is using

How do you work with your child's school to solve the bullying problem?

If your child tells you that he or she has been bullied or if you think your child is being bullied, what can you do?

- Keep a written record of all bullying that your child reports to you. Record the names of the children involved, where and when the bullying occurred, and what happened.
- Immediately ask to meet with your child's classroom teacher and explain your concerns in a friendly, non confrontational way.
- Ask the teacher about his or her observations:
 - Has he or she noticed or suspected bullying?
 - How is your child getting along with others in class?
 - Has he or she noticed that your child is being isolated, excluded from playground or other activities with students?
- Ask the teacher what he or she intends to do to investigate and help to stop the bullying.
- If you are concerned about how your child is coping with the stress of being bullied, ask to speak with your child's guidance counselor or another school-based mental health professional.
- Set up a follow-up appointment with the teacher to discuss progress.
- If there is no improvement after reporting bullying to your child's teacher, speak with the school principal.
- Keep notes from your meetings with teachers, principals, and others.



What are the effects of bullying?

Kids who are bullied can experience negative physical, social, emotional, academic, and mental health issues.

Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience:

- depression and anxiety
- changes in sleep and eating patterns
- loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- health complaints
- decreased academic achievement

Kids who are bullied are more likely to:

- miss, skip, or drop out of school, or
- think about suicide

What causes bullying?

There is no single reason that explains why bullying happens.

Children and adults can be bullies for a number of reasons.

- struggle expressing anger or frustration related to problems at home or school
- were bullied in the past
- are in a position of power without skills to use it wisely
- attention seeking
- tendency toward aggressive behaviors, combined with physical strength or weakness



How do I know if my child might be a bully?

If one or more of the items below apply to your child, he or she may need your help to correct patterns of bullying behavior. The more of these that apply, the more serious the issue of bullying may be for your child.

- doesn't care about hurting others' feelings
- shows disrespect for authority and rules
- shows disrespect for the opposite sex and people of different racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds
- enjoys fighting
- doesn't trust others
- won't admit mistakes
- believes "everything should go my way"
- lies frequently to get out of trouble
- deliberately hurts pets or other animals
- uses anger to get what he or she wants

How do I help my child stop bullying behaviors?

Home is the best place for children to learn the values and attitudes necessary for healthy peer relationships. Children look to their parents as role models for appropriate behavior. Positive social skills aren't so much taught as they are "caught" when children observe them in practice in their parents' behavior.

Resources

stopbullying.gov
www.stopbullying.gov

Center for Parent Information & Resources
www.parentcenterhub.org/bullying

Teens Against Bullying
www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org

Kids Against Bullying
www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org

For more information visit the Kansas State Department of Education's

- Implementation Guidance for Bullying Taskforce Recommendations - <https://bit.ly/3td0TXX>
- Kansas Blue Ribbon Task Force on Bullying Final Report - <https://bit.ly/3rUnAA0>
- Bullying Awareness and Prevention - <http://bit.ly/3trtPvD>

For additional information contact **Families Together, Inc.** at (785) 233-4777 or www.familiestogetherinc.org or the **Kansas Parent Information Resource Center** at (866) 711-6711 or www.ksdetasn.org/kpirc