

Understanding Bullying

Bullying hurts a child's confidence and self esteem. Also, a target of bullying often misses school, develops bad behavior and disrupts the class. He feels unsafe if the school tolerates bullying and violence.

By State Law, every school must have a bullying policy and procedure. Parents need to know how the school handles bullying and offer to help.

What is bullying? Bullying is repeated behavior intended to hurt someone physically, emotionally, or socially. It involves an imbalance of power. We often think of bullying as physical. However, some of the most harmful bullying is verbal, emotional and cyber-bullying,

This Relational Aggression (RA) is defined as "emotional violence and bully behaviors focused on an individual's social connections within a peer group". It includes:

- exclusion,
- ignoring,
- spreading rumors,
- verbal insults,
- teasing,
- intimidation,
- eye rolling
- taunting, and
- fashion bullying.

This bullying is sometimes difficult to detect and can be difficult to stop. Yet, it is damaging and long-lasting.

With RA, the children involved often change roles. Parents need to know these roles in order to recognize if their child is part of this RA:

The Queenbee/Kingpin

chooses to hurt or damage a relationship. Their friends do what they ask them to do.

The Sidekick is second in command and supports the Queenbee/Kingpin. He can also be a target.

The Wannabee will do anything to be in the inner circle. She is a pleaser and will do almost anything to improve her position in the realm.

The Target is excluded and helpless to stop the behavior. He feels like a loser and is isolated.

It takes the whole school community to deal with bullying. Neither you nor your child can solve bullying problems alone.



Parents can help their child whether he is the target, the bystander, or the bully.

1. Spend time with your child. Find out who his friends are and what they are doing.
2. Teach her to have compassion for her peers.
3. Get him involved in extra-curricular activities.
4. Teach her to be a good friend.
5. Discuss behavior issues.
6. Let him know he is responsible for his actions, even if he is provoked.
7. Teach him to say "I'm sorry" if he hurts someone else.
8. Role-play how to deal with hurtful behavior.
9. Involve the school in the solution.

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