

Watch for Bullying Behavior in Your Middle School Child

Despite anti-bullying campaigns in schools, bullies continue their mean behavior. During middle school, pre-teens and young teens report a peak in this meanness. You can help your child avoid bullying behavior if you understand your middle-school child.


Peers and friends are important to middle-school kids. Young teens:

- Are often insecure. Sometimes, hurting others makes them feel better.
- Need friends and do not want to be alone. Adopting a group's behavior makes kids feel like a part of the group.
- Want to be like others. Children reflect this when they dress, talk and act like their peers.
- Lack self-control. If a child is part of a group of kids bullying someone, she may not know when to stop.
- Are impulsive. This makes them vulnerable to the mob mentality. "If my friends are doing it, so will I".
- Live in the "here and now." They do not consider the long-term consequences of their actions.

- Are often unable to cope with their emotions. Anger, sadness or depression may be a part of a child's decision to bully someone weaker. It makes him feel powerful – important.

Parents do not want their child to bully others. Yet, bullies continue to cause hurt. Parents often ignore signs that their child is a bully. Many make excuses for their child. "It's her friend's fault". "That boy is weird. It is no wonder kids pick on him".

Some parents have no idea of their children's thoughts and feelings. Most targets and bystanders do not share feelings or acts of bullying with an adult. Unaware of daily school threats, parents believe all is well. Problems go unnoticed and unresolved.

 For more information on bullying, log onto www.parenthelpline.org and find the Bullying section.

Decrease your child's risk for being a bully or a bystander who supports bullying.

- **Be a good role model.** Treat your child and others with respect.
- **Teach empathy.** Discuss how words and actions affect others – hurt or help them.
- **Have chats** about school and friends.
- **Ask your school counselor for help** if you suspect your child is involved in bullying.



Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org

Revised 2017

 **Children's**
HSHS St. John's Hospital