

# ***Bullying Information for Parents***

**Definition of bullying:** Bullying is repeated forms of aggression toward another individual. It can take many forms. There is an imbalance of power where the victim/target cannot defend himself.

## **Did you know....**

Sooner or later your child will be challenged, socially, emotionally or physically. It is critical that parents do all they can to sustain a good relationship and open communication with their children. Children frequently do not tell their parents or another adult they are being bullied. They fear retaliation, embarrassment or fear of being blamed. Often they believe an adult will not take their problem seriously or will handle it inappropriately. It is imperative parents and educators ensure children feel safe in school in order for them to perform to the best of their ability and achieve academically.

Unfortunately our children's concerns are legitimate. All adults, particularly parents and school staff need training to spot and handle bullying, while respecting a child's confidentiality and keeping him/her safe.

Adults may be unaware of bullying because it is hard to detect, usually taking place in areas that are not well supervised by adults. The bullying can also be taking place very quietly and subtly.

## **Signs your child may be a target or victim of bullying**

- **Physical signs** include unexplained injuries, bruises ripped, torn or missing clothing.
- **Social, emotional and behavioral signs** include a falling out with previously good friends, not wanting to interact with peers, sad sullen or angry with no apparent reason, a change in behavior pattern, self-mutilation or abuse, frequent visits to the school or camp nurse and repeated headaches, vomiting, stomach aches or other physical complaints, particularly in the morning.

## **What to do if your child is being bullied**

- **Be supportive.** First focus on your child. Don't assume your child did something to provoke the bullying.
- **Listen carefully** and ask your child to explain where, when and what happened.
- **Empathize** with your child and ask if he/she has any ideas on how the problem should be handled.
- **Ask** your child if he has reported the incident. If he has not, contact your child's teacher, school or camp only after discussing it with your child. It is imperative the person you contact has been trained to handle the situation properly and will respect your child's confidentiality and safety. **Never** encourage your child to hit back. Physical retaliation is not likely to end the problem and is more likely to make it escalate.

- **Ask what is being done** to address bullying and harassment in your school. Volunteer to help.

### **How to help the child that bullies**

- Always maintain open lines of communication with your child. Talk to your child using open ended questions. Listen carefully without being judgmental.
- Make sure your child isn't witnessing violence between members of your family. Sibling rivalry can lead to reactive bullying. Adults must treat each other with respect, dignity and without violence. Children model what they see not necessarily what they are told.
- Talk to your child, his teachers and school administrators. Work with your school to help your child. Ask for suggestions. This may include talking with your family doctor, social worker or psychologist. If the behavior continues a comprehensive evaluation may be suggested to help uncover the root cause of the poor behavior.
- Make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated at home or in school. Support your school in dealing with this problem.
- Have your child walk in the victim's shoes. Many children bully because they lack the empathy to see the pain they cause.
- Increase your supervision of your child's activities and whereabouts. Encourage group organized activities.
- Praise the efforts your child makes toward becoming nonviolent and responsible.

[antibullyingprograms.org/Information-for-Parents.html](http://antibullyingprograms.org/Information-for-Parents.html)