



Dear Parents,

You can probably remember being picked on or teased when you were young. It was generally seen as part of growing up. But today's world is more complicated, and now children are dealing with bullies not only at school, but also online — and the online bullying can take place 24/7.

As a parent, it's important to talk to your child about bullying. Make it clear that you believe that bullying is wrong, and that it is never justified.

Let your child know that you are open to hearing about problems, and that you want your child to come to you if he/she is ever singled out unfairly. Assure your child that you understand how difficult it can be to deal with bullies, and that you will work with your child to ensure that whatever you do will help the situation.

## How you can help stop/prevent bullying

- ❑ Bullies often target students who are passive or quiet. Encourage your child to stand tall, walk confidently, look people in the eye, and use body language that shows self-confidence. (A self-defense class or martial arts training can often help a child feel more confident.)
- ❑ Be aware of what's happening online, and set limits. Keep your home computer in a common space, such as the family room. Set a time at night when all cell phones must be turned off and docked in a central location.
- ❑ Encourage your child to be involved in school activities. They will help your child develop friendships and feel more connected.
- ❑ Spend one-on-one time with your child, and regularly talk about what's happening at school and with friends.

## If Your Child Is a Target

### Be observant

Young people are often afraid or embarrassed to tell their parents they are being bullied. If your child exhibits any of the following, ask if anyone is bothering him/her.

- Suddenly more anxious, quiet, or insecure
- Refusing to go to school
- Drop in grades
- Loss of appetite
- Complaints of illness
- Unexplained injuries

### Listen to your child

When children are being bullied, it's critical that their parents believe, support, and empower them.

Parents should ask their child to explain what has happened, who was involved, how often it has occurred, when, and where. Also, make a printout of anything that has been sent or posted online.

Talk to your child, and together decide how to best handle the situation.

### Monitor online activity and cell phone use

Have clear cut rules and guidelines for Internet and cell phone use.

### Communicate concerns

Sharing information and working with school officials is the best way to stop bullying at school.

## Is Your Child a Bully?

If you learn that your child is bullying others, here are some suggestions.

- ❑ Take it seriously and don't make excuses.
- ❑ Listen to your child's reasons, but emphasize that there are always other options, no matter what the situation.
- ❑ Avoid lecturing, criticizing, and blaming. Be loving and firm, and focus on solutions.
- ❑ Discuss the consequences of bullying, and hold your child accountable. Allow your child to experience the consequences.

