Bullying is any unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time. Bullying includes:

• **Direct** bullying is physical or verbal, such as hitting, kicking, teasing, racial or sexual comments, and threatening gestures.

• **Indirect** bullying often involves the bully provoking others, such as encouraging violence, spreading rumors, and purposely excluding someone.

• **Cyberbullying** involves the use of electronic media (computers, cell phones, tablets) and includes mean texts or emails, rumors sent by email or on social media, embarrassment pictures or videos, websites, and fake profiles.
In reality, bullying can happen to anyone – for any reason – at any time. So it’s important to know the signs of bullying so you can quickly identify bullying behavior, investigate it, and stop it.

Bullied children often:

- Come home with damaged personal items or clothing, or frequently “lose” or “forget” items;
- Have unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches;
- Have few friends;
- Seem afraid to go to school or other activities with peers;
- Suddenly lose interest or perform poorly in school;
- Seem sad, moody, or depressed;
- Complain of a variety of physical ailments, especially on school days;
- Can’t sleep or complain of bad dreams;
- Avoid using the telephone or Internet;
- Seem anxious or have low self-esteem; and
- May talk about suicide.

Note that these behaviors may indicate other problems, such as abuse, serious physical illness, or problems in a child’s life outside of school. It is important that you investigate the reasons for these behaviors fully, and keep an open and non-judgmental mindset when discussing these with your child.
Contrary to popular belief, bullying is preventable. It does not have to be a part of “normal” childhood – nor should it be. To help prevent bullying, you and your children can start with your most valuable asset: you.

Here are 7 actions you can begin right now to help combat bullying:

1. Treat others, as you would have them treat you, with respect and kindness.

2. Talk with your kids about bullying – what it is, why it hurts, and how they can stand up to it safely.

3. Check in with your children often. Know their friends, their interests, ask about school, and understand any concerns they may have. Assure them that they can talk to you openly and honestly, without judgment.

4. Establish rules about technology use and talk to your children about Internet safety. Show them how to remain safe online. Ask them not to share anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others.

5. Be aware of what your kids are doing online. Know the sites they visit and what they do. Tell your kids that, as a responsible parent, you may review their online communications and install parental control filtering or monitoring software.

6. Ask to “friend” or “follow” your kids on social media sites, or ask another trusted adult to do so and report any suspicious or malicious behavior to you.


What are the characteristics of bullies?

- Likely to argue and get angry very quickly when confronted;
- Angers easily;
- Is often very bossy towards peers;
- Rarely shows empathy;
- Is good at convincing others to follow;
- Wants to win, sometimes at any cost;
- Likes rough physical activity;
- Often refuses to cooperate; and
- Is likely to deny his or her involvement in bullying.
How do I respond to bullying?

If Your Child is Being Bullied:

• Make it clear that being bullied is not her fault.
• Encourage your child to talk about the experience. Listen and do not criticize your child for how she is responding to the bullying.
• Contact your child’s teacher, counselor, or other supervisor and tell them about your concerns. Find out if the school has an anti-bullying program.
• Teach your child ways to stay safe at school, such as telling an adult if she feels threatened. Identify safe areas and tell your child to go to one of these if she feels threatened. Make sure your child has a phone number of an adult who can help.

If Your Child is Bullying Others:

• If your child has been reported as engaging in bullying, listen to your child but check the facts. Children who bully are very good at manipulating others.
• Talk to your child’s teacher, counselor, or principal. If necessary, seek professional health from community mental health providers.
• Make it clear to your child that bullying is not okay.
• Set up clear rules and follow through with logical consequences, such as withdrawing privileges. Reward your child for positive behavior.
• Support your child’s talents and skills by encouraging positive activities, like sports and clubs.

What about Cyberbullying?

It is often harder for children to get away from cyberbullying. Here are five steps to take when cyberbullying happens:

1. Don’t respond to or forward any messages received.
2. Keep evidence – save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages.
3. Block the person who is cyberbullying.
4. Report the person to online service providers. Many social media sites have methods to report behaviors that violate their terms of use.
5. If the bullying involves the threat of violence, sexually explicit images or messages, stalking, or hate crimes, contact local law enforcement for guidance.
How do I respond to an act of bullying?

A quick, consistent response to bullying behavior sends the message that bullying is not acceptable. Research shows that this can stop bullying behavior over time.

If you witness or become aware of bullying behavior, intervene immediately. Stay calm and model respectful behavior. Separate the kids involved and make sure everyone is safe. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.

Get police help or medical attention immediately if there is a weapon involved, threats of serious physical injury, threats of hate-motivated violence (such as racism or homophobia), serious bodily harm, sexual abuse, or accusations of illegal acts such as robbery or extortion.

Once any immediate needs have been met, question the children involved separately, in a safe space. Don’t force other kids to say publicly what they saw or question the children involved in front of the other kids.

When talking with each child, listen and focus on the child. Learn what has been going on and show you want to help.

For children who are bullied, ask the child what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Know that kids who are bullied may struggle with talking about it. Do not ignore, blame, or tell the child to physically fight back.

For the bully, make sure the child knows what the specific problem behavior is and why it is wrong. Talk with the child to understand the reasons he or she bullied, such as trying to fit in or because of issues at home, abuse, or stress. Involve the child in making amends or repairing the situation, such as a letter of apology, a good deed, or repairing any property damaged.

Once you have gathered the facts, talk with other adults involved (such as teachers, counselors, etc.) and develop a plan to address the specific instance of bullying and what will be done if the bullying continues.

Maintain open communication. Make consequences of bullying actions clear and logical to the children. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop.

Also, Do Not:

- Ignore the behavior.
- Blame or shame the children.
- Contact other parents involved – let school or other officials do that and act as mediators.
- Implement “Zero tolerance” or “three strikes, you’re out” policies, as those do not reduce bullying behavior.
- Attempt conflict resolution and peer mediation, as bullying is not a conflict between equals.
- Send the bully to group treatment, as it tends to reinforce bullying behavior.
We are the first and only online museum about girlhood. We exhibit, educate, and raise awareness about the unique experience of being born and growing up female around the world in the past and present.

As a community of passionate and creative individuals, we acknowledge and advocate for girls as forces for collective responsibility and change in the global context, not as victims and consumers.

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization.

Learn more and get involved in our many projects at GirlMuseum.org

Girls Guide to End Bullying
http://www.girlsguidetoendbullying.org

StopBullying.gov  http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/

PBS It’s My Life
http://www.pbs.org/parents/itsmylife/resources/bullies.html

Movies about Bullying include:

- Hercules and Beauty and the Beast (Disney),
- Billy Elliott,
- cyberbully (ABC Family),
- The Karate Kid, and
- The Next Karate Kid.