

PARENTS' ROLE IN PREVENTING BULLYING

Parents can play a pivotal role in assisting the school district in preventing bullying. School staff and parents can and should work together to create a school that is free of bullying.

There are certain behaviors a child may exhibit at home that may be a warning sign or symptom that they have been bullied at school.

Some examples of these behaviors may be:

Possible signs and symptoms of a bullied child:

1. Is the child afraid to walk to or from school?
2. Does the child not want to ride the school bus?
3. Does the child appear apprehensive about going to school, complain of headaches or feeling ill prior to leaving for school in the morning?
4. Does the child come home with clothing or personal items damaged?
5. Does the child appear sad or depressed about going to school?
6. Does the child come home from school with any physical injuries such as bruises, cuts, or scratches?
7. Does it appear the child is either losing money or frequently requesting money?
8. Does the child seem socially isolated with few, if any, friends?
9. Does it appear the child is sleeping more than usual, or does the child appear tired as if they have not gotten enough sleep?

Warning signs that child may be bullying at school:

1. Does the child have a strong need to dominate and subdue others?
2. Is the child intimidating his siblings or children in the neighborhood?
3. Does the child brag about his actual or imagined superiority over other children?
4. Is the child hot tempered, easily angered, impulsive with a low frustration level?
5. Does the child have difficulty conforming to rules and tolerating adversity or delays?
6. Does the child cheat on games or while playing with friends?
7. Is the child defiant or aggressive toward adults including teachers or their own parents?
8. Is the child anti-social?
9. Is the child hanging out with the "wrong crowd?"

Ways parents can respond to children who are bullied:

1. Parents should not over-react or under-react when being told by their child they have been bullied at school. The parent should not dismiss the child's experience. If a child has the courage to tell someone they have been bullied – it could be devastating to be told to "work it out for yourself" or "they are just teasing you."
2. Parents should not place the blame for the incident on their child.
3. Parents should expect the child to have a difficult time dealing with being a target of bullying.
4. Parents should encourage their child to keep talking about the incident if the child feels the need to discuss. They should also ask them how their days are going at school. Parents need to provide extra support and encouragement to the child during these times.
5. If a child is reluctant to talk to their parent, the parent should encourage the child to talk to another adult, such as a family member, or a trusted teacher.
6. Research indicates responding to a bully in an aggressive manner will **not** make the bully go away. The parent should encourage the child to stay away from the alleged bully and let the school investigate and remedy the problem.

What parents of an alleged bully can do:

1. A parent should be encouraged to take the problem as a serious matter.
2. Parents should question and listen carefully to their child in their investigations of the allegations.
3. A parent should try to find out the reasons for their child's bullying behavior and seek help from the school.
4. Upon receiving such a report that their child has been bullying at school, parents should make it clear that this conduct must stop immediately.

Tips to avoid/deal with cyber-bullying:

1. Parents should be advised to keep computers in an area of the home where the child's actions on the computer can be supervised.
2. Parents should establish and enforce reasonable limits for the amount of time children spend on the computer.
3. Parents should have access to their children's online accounts including passwords and other security measures for websites.
4. Parents should inform their children to report to them if they feel they are a victim of cyber-bullying.
5. Parents should have some basic knowledge of the internet sites their child uses.
6. Parents should discuss online chat rooms and what is appropriate for their child to post on these internet sites.
7. Parents should occasionally sit with their child while the child is working or communicating online.