

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Physical

Perhaps the most obvious sign that your child is being bullied are unexplained physical marks on his body, such as bruises, scrapes, and other injuries. Physical ailments such as headaches and stomachaches are other possible indicators.

Emotional

All children have their highs and lows, but a dramatic change in your child's personality and self-esteem should raise some concern. A child who continually comes home sad, depressed, or teary-eyed could be facing some form of emotional or verbal harassment at school .

Lost or Damaged Personal Items

Kids can be clumsy and sometimes careless — we all know that. But, if your child frequently comes home with torn clothing, missing personal items (such as shoes, glasses, or jewelry), or damaged school items (such as his backpack or textbooks), something else might be going on.

Emotional Response to Going Online

In this era of constant communication, kids who are bullied no longer get a break once school lets out for the day. Bullying can continue online and over text messaging, social media, etc.

Sudden Loss of Friends

Chances are you know your child's friends. Take note if your child suddenly stops talking to her closest friends and avoids social situations. It may be a red flag that her friends have formed a clique and excluded her, or that she's become a target.

Change in Eating Habits

Most kids come home from school ready for a snack, but if you child continuously comes home absolutely ravenous, it could be that she didn't eat lunch. Bullying may be occurring in the lunchroom.

Decline in School Performance

Be aware if your child continuously wants to skip school or fakes illnesses, something more may be going on that she isn't telling you. Slipping grades, trouble focusing could also sound an alarm.

Changes in Routine or Interests

Keep an eye out for sudden changes in interests or commitments, such as skipping sports practices or suddenly dropping out of an after-school activity.

Difficulty Sleeping

Inability to sleep, frequent nightmares, and bedwetting could all be indications that something is troubling your child. If sleep issues are coupled with the other signs mentioned, it could mean something serious is going on.

Unusual Bathroom Habits

Does your child wait until she gets home from school to use the bathroom? Although it may seem unusual, it's a possible indicator of bullying. School bathrooms may be a hot spot for bullying to occur.

Self-Destructive Behaviors

The low self-esteem and depression that stems from bullying can cause a child to start engaging in self-destructive behaviors. Any talk of self-harm or suicide is a major red flag and should be addressed immediately.

Online Anti-Bullying Resources for Parents

STOMP OUT BULLYING

<https://www.stompoutbullying.org/what-do-if-your-child-being-bullied-and-resources>

STOP BULLYING

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/what-you-can-do>

CYBERBULLYING RESEARCH CENTER

<https://cyberbullying.org/what-to-do-when-your-child-is-cyberbullied>

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/bullying/conditioninfo/help>

EMPOWERING PARENTS

<https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/is-your-child-being-bullied-9-steps-you-can-take-as-a-parent/>