

## Help Stop Bullying

Bullying is a widespread and serious problem that can happen anywhere. It is not a phase children have to go through, it is not “just messing around,” and it is not something to grow out of. Bullying can cause serious and lasting harm.

Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying involves: **1) imbalance of power** — people who bully use their power to control or harm others, and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves; **2) intent to cause harm** — bullying is not an accident; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm; and **3) repetition** — incidents of bullying often happen to the same person over and over by the same person or group. Bullying can take many forms. Examples include: **verbal** — name calling, teasing; **social** — spreading rumors, excluding people intentionally or breaking up friendships; **physical** — hitting, punching, shoving; or **cyberbullying** — using the internet, mobile phones or other digital technologies to harm others. To report a possible incident of bullying, immediately talk to your school’s administration.

## Your Rights as Parent

There are times when you may need to be an advocate for your child at school. You may need to speak up when you see that your child’s needs are not being met. Getting to know your child’s school and teacher is the first step in being a good advocate. According to the Florida Department of Education, you have the right to:

- Examine your child’s school records and look at test results and teacher comments. If you see things you don’t understand, ask the teacher or school principal for an explanation.
- Be a part of developing an individual educational plan to meet your child’s needs if your child is in a special education program.
- Request parent-teacher conferences during the school year. Write down your questions and concerns before the meeting. Remember you are in a position to share important information as well as ask questions.
- Ask for a review of the decision if your child is suspended from school.

## Volusia County School’s chain of support

If you have an issue with your child at school, first talk with your child’s teacher. If the teacher is unable to help you resolve the issue, seek assistance from others. The chain of support is as follows:

