

# Helping Children Protect One Another From Bullying

Parents, teachers, and students agree that bullying is a serious problem. In class, we defined *bullying* as something one or more people do to try to hurt someone they think won't stand up for themselves or tell an adult. Bullying includes teasing, spreading rumors, and keeping students out of groups. Violent acts like pushing, slapping, and hitting are also bullying.

Most children do not act like bullies, and most are not bullied. That means the largest group of students are the ones who probably know bullying is happening but might think they just have to put up with it. However, research shows that a group of students has a lot of power when they're watching someone who is bullying others. If those students refuse to accept the bullying, the person doing the bullying loses his or her audience. Half the time when a student tells the person doing the bullying to stop, he or she stops after just 10 seconds. So, the students who aren't bullying or being bullied have the greatest chance of changing a bullying situation.

## Today we practiced several nonviolent ways to deal with bullying:

- Tell a trusted adult about bullying.
- Tell the person doing the bullying to stop.
  - Calm down and manage feelings.
  - Build courage and self-confidence to stop bullying.
- Help one another.
  - Stick with positive friends who help each other.
  - Ask a trusted friend for help.
  - Distract the person who is bullying others.
    - Change the subject.
    - Make a friendly joke or say something funny.
    - Do something unexpected or goofy.
  - Stand up for one another.
    - Calmly stand up for the student who is bullied, without fighting the person doing the bullying.
    - Help the student being bullied pick up dropped belongings, get up if knocked down, or walk away from the situation.
    - Refuse to join in the bullying.
- Walk away from the situation.
  - Walk away from the person doing the bullying or the situation.
  - Avoid people, locations, and situations connected with bullying.

# Bullying



We told students they should always talk with an adult if a situation is dangerous, destructive, or disturbing. Your child might mention these “three D’s.” Bullying is dangerous and disturbing.

If your child talks with you about bullying, please listen seriously. He or she may feel scared, angry, lonely, sad, or guilty. Help your child recognize and talk about any feelings. Tell your child that you love him or her and will help with this problem. The most important thing your child can do is to tell an adult. Praise him or her for talking with you! Encourage him or her to use the ideas listed. Contact teachers or school administrators if you have any questions or concerns.

Even if your child doesn’t mention bullying, talk with him or her about examples of it on television, in movies, or in books. Help him or her recognize bullying. If your child were in that situation, what could he or she do to end it?

Praise your child when he or she tries the ideas listed or uses any of these related skills taught in school this year:

- Identifying and managing emotions
- Using positive self-talk
- Asking to be treated with respect and kindness
- Making healthy decisions
- Listening to others
- Handling conflict in nonviolent ways

## **Tell a trusted adult about bullying**



It takes courage and practice to protect one another from bullying. Helping students take a stand in bullying situations is the key to changing the unspoken acceptance of bullying among students. Remind your child that telling an adult about bullying is different from being a tattletale. When a child tattles, he or she is trying to get someone in trouble as a way to hurt him or her. When a child tells an adult about a bullying situation, someone is already being hurt. Telling an adult is one way to try to get help so the situation doesn’t become more dangerous. With your support, your child will learn the skills needed to stay healthy and help make our school safe for everyone.

Ask to see our school’s rules and policies against bullying if you are not familiar with them. Let people at school know you will support efforts to stop bullying and to create a caring school environment.

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### **For more information:**

Check out the “What You Can Do” page at the National Bullying Prevention Campaign’s website, [www.stopbullying.gov/what-you-can-do/index.html](http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-you-can-do/index.html)

