



Bullying Prevention Toolkit For Students and Families

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit provides a comprehensive framework for identifying, preventing and addressing bullying within Princeton ISD. It is designed to promote a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students, staff and their families.

DEFINE BULLYING

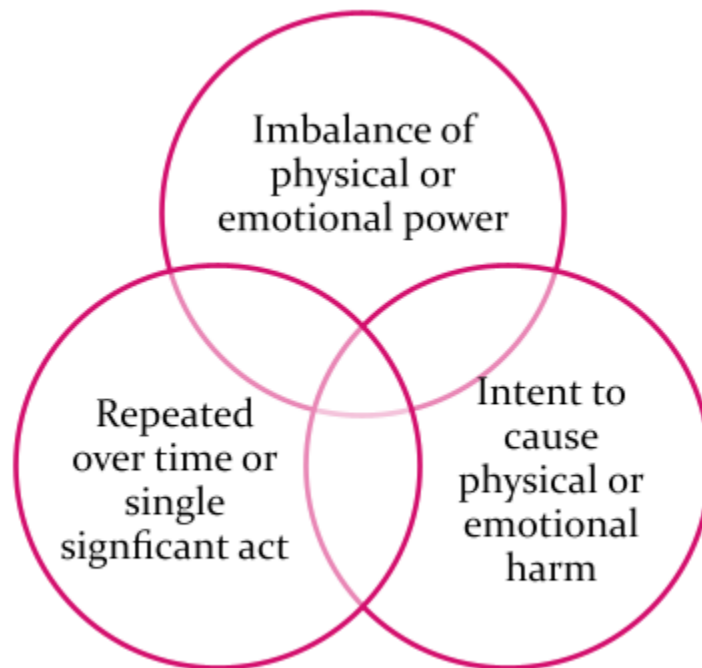
Texas Education Code (TEC 37.0832) identifies bullying as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student(s) that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means or physical conduct and that:

- has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging student's property or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student;
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school, or infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social or educational harm (Gladden et. Al., 2014, p. 7) Senate Bill (SB) 179, "David's Law" expanded authority to school districts to address cyberbullying off-campus and outside of school-related or school sponsored activities based on specific criteria.

Princeton ISD prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law as stated in Board Policy FFI (Local). Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of district policy and is prohibited. Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

THREE CONSISTENT COMPONENTS OF BULLYING



1. Imbalance of Physical or Emotional Power

- **Physical Capital** refers to the physical size or strength difference between a student who is bullied and the aggressor.
- **Symbolic Capital** refers to the items and belongings, typically sought after or favored, that separate a student who is bullied and the aggressor.
- **Economic Capital** refers to a personal or family financial difference between a student who is bullied and the aggressor.
- **Informational Capital** refers to the social knowledge difference (e.g., gossip or embarrassing information) between a student who is bullied and the aggressor.
- **Cultural Capital** refers to established cultural norms within a given environment that limits a bullied student's entry into preferred social groups, while enabling entry for the aggressor.

2. Repeated over Time

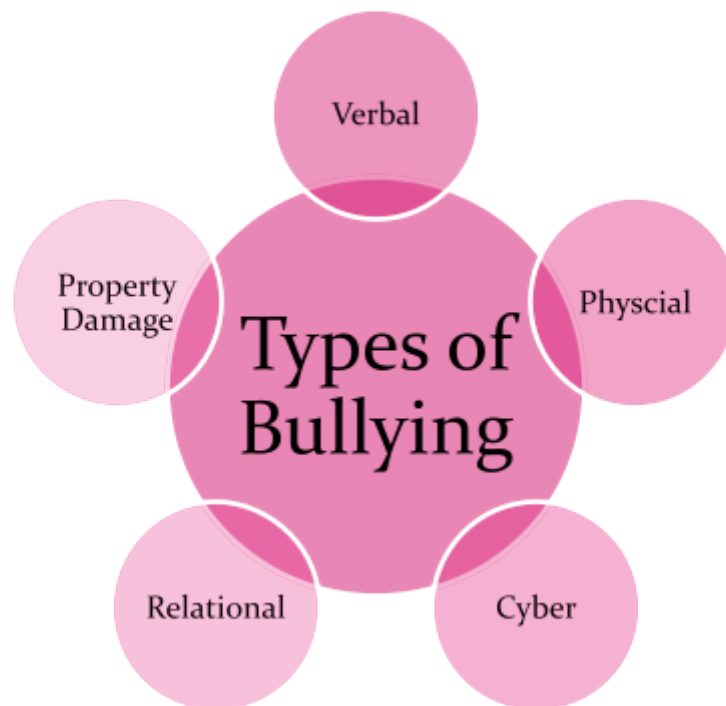
- Repetition refers to the frequency with which an individual is subject to bullying. Currently, there is no rule of thumb related to a specific timeframe with which aggression must occur to be considered bullying.
 - **Please note that bullying may also occur in a single significant act and may not involve a pattern.**

3. Intent to Cause Harm

- Bullying is a form of aggression that is grounded in the intent to cause physical, emotional or social harm.

TYPES OF BULLYING

- **Physical Bullying** involves the use of physical force (e.g., hitting, kicking, slapping, tripping, spitting) to victimize an individual or group of students.
- **Verbal Bullying** involves oral or written communication that causes harm to the victim including taunting, name calling, threats, offensive language or notes, and derogatory hand gestures.
- **Relational/Social Bullying** involves behaviors designed to socially exclude or damage the reputation of the victim, including rumor spreading, social isolation, ignoring, and encouraging others to not be friends with the individual.
- **Cyberbullying** involves behaviors with the intent of harming an individual through electronic means (e.g., social media, text message, gaming, mobile applications), including rumor spreading, posting compromising pictures, name calling, and encouragement of social exclusion.
- **Damage to Property** involves an aggressor intentionally damaging or stealing an individual's property with the intent of causing harm.



EXAMPLES AND NON-EXAMPLES OF BULLYING

Below you will find scenarios that are examples and non-examples of bullying involvement. These scenarios can be used to educate staff, students, and caregivers about the difference between bullying and other peer conflicts or forms of aggression. It is important to note that a non-example of bullying may still violate school rules and expectations for student conduct and, as such, may still result in a consequence or disciplinary action.

PHYSICAL BULLYING

Non-Example

Kevin and the rest of the third-grade class were walking down the hallway heading to recess. As they reached the end of the hallway, the students ended up taking a restroom break before heading outside. The boys and the girls lined up on opposite sides of the hallway waiting to use the restroom. While Kevin was standing in line, he started to fling and throw his arms around him and wasn't paying attention to who was around him. While he was doing this, he hit a student that was standing behind him in the stomach. Was this an act of bullying on Kevin's part?

Answer: No. Bullying requires intentionality, a power imbalance, and repetition of harm. While Kevin did harm the other student, this is not considered a situation in which there is a power imbalance between the two students and the harm was not intentional.

Example

Imagine a different scenario where Kevin used the restroom break as a time to push that student around. The third-grade students are even afraid to go to the restroom if he is in the area. Is this an example of bullying?

Answer: Yes. In this scenario there is a power imbalance, intention to cause harm, and repetition.

VERBAL BULLYING

Non-Example

Mika has Tourette syndrome, which commonly causes him to shout random words, jerk his head to the side, uncontrollably flail his arms or legs, click with his tongue, or chirp loudly. Mika experiences more frequent and intense tics when he is anxious or uncomfortable. During class he yells out expletives while facing a group of students in front of him. This group of students have informed the teacher that Mika has been doing this frequently to their group. Has Mika been bullying this group of students?

Answer: No. Mika's outbursts were not done with the intention of causing physical, emotional, or social harm. This is a situation where a student exhibits uncontrollable aggressive behaviors.

Example

The same group of students who complained about Mika's frequent outbursts toward them decide to take action. Nevaeh writes a note to Mika and uses expletives as well as makes a derogatory comment about his disability. Mika reads the note and instantly begins flailing his arms and jerking his head. The group of students are visibly laughing at Mika and giving Mika the middle finger when the teacher is not looking. The next day, this same group starts imitating the way Mika jerks his head and starts laughing. Mika begins to experience outbursts and yells expletives in the direction of the group of students. Is there verbal bullying happening here?

Answer: Yes. The group of students have exhibited verbal bullying. They used written communication that caused harm to Mika when writing the note. They also exhibited oral communicative bullying when laughing to taunt Mika. Lastly, there were derogatory hand gestures directed at Mika. Given that all of the above actions had intent, repetition, and an imbalance of power, the actions of the group of students toward Mika are considered verbal bullying.

RELATIONAL/SOCIAL BULLYING

Non-Example

Connor will do anything to be popular. He knows that Jayden is the most popular kid in high school. He decides that he is going to find a way to become more popular than Jayden. He decides to have a backyard party and invite all the kids from his class, except Jayden. He even has a famous local singer attend the event. On Monday, Connor's party is the talk of the school, and all the kids are saying how he would make a great class president. Jayden is upset that he was not invited to this event and is worried he may now lose his chance of becoming the class president. Is this an example of relational/social bullying?

Answer: No. Connor had the intention to cause harm to Jayden and excluded him. However, it must happen repeatedly and cannot be an isolated event. This is only one event that Jayden was not invited to. If Connor were to continue having events and not inviting Jayden, then it would be considered relational/social bullying.

Example

Connor now decides that he really wants to eliminate Jayden's threat of becoming popular again. So, he tells people at the party that if they want to continue to be invited to his events, then they can't be friends with Jayden. He tells them rumors about Jayden, one being that Jayden backed down from a fight with him because he was scared. When they get back to school on Monday, kids are laughing at Jayden for not being invited and being scared to fight. Connor then invites his class to an arcade next weekend for his brother's party and again, excludes Jayden. As Connor invites friends, he says loudly to Jayden, "Still scared?" Everyone starts laughing, but Jayden just walks away, angry that lies are being told about him. Is this an example of relational/social bullying?

Answer: Yes. In this scenario, all the requirements for bullying were present. There was an imbalance of power, repetition, and intention to cause harm. Repeatedly excluding someone, encouraging others not to be friends with someone, and spreading rumors are all examples of relational bullying.

CYBERBULLYING

Non-Example

Ava is considered one of the prettiest girls on the cheerleading team. She loves posting pictures of herself and getting tons of likes from her friends. Sometimes Ava will use filters to enhance her appearance to achieve the perfect snapshot. During cheerleading practice, she takes pictures with some of the other girls on the team. She filters the photo so that she looks great but the other girls' faces look distorted. Many of the comments are people laughing at how the other girls look in the photo. Her teammates are upset and want the picture taken down. Are the other girls on the cheerleading team being cyberbullied?

Answer: No. Ava did not have intention or repetition. Ava's only concern was looking her best, not to make the other team members look bad. There was also no repetition in this scenario. If Ava were to continue to post unflattering pictures of her teammates with the intention to cause harm, then it can be considered cyberbullying.

Example

Ava is upset that she did not get team captain as she always had. Brianna got the position instead. Ava decides that she is going to prove she is better fit for the position by posting videos of Brianna falling and missing steps during practice. Ava posts several videos of Brianna making mistakes while cheering. Again, she gets lots of likes and comments. Is Brianna being cyberbullied?

Answer: Yes. Ava has the intention of causing harm, she is in a position of power by being popular and influential, and she has shown repetition by posting several times. Using social media to target victims is classified as cyberbullying.

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

Non-Example

Jared has been noticing that Kevin has not been playing Xbox with him anymore. Kevin acted like he did not even see Jared at lunch. Jared also saw Kevin looking sad when Jared showed off his new sneakers to the class. Then, Kevin stepped on Jared's sneakers by accident but refused to say sorry. Now, there is a huge scuff mark on Jared's new sneakers. Jared is convinced that this was no accident, and that Kevin is bullying him. Is Jared being bullied?

Answer: No. The requirement of intention is not definite in this scenario. Jared believes Kevin did it intentionally, but he was told it was by accident. It could be the case that Kevin just wanted to be rude to Jared because he was mad at him. However, even if Kevin did scuff up Jared's sneakers intentionally, there is still no repetition present in this scenario.

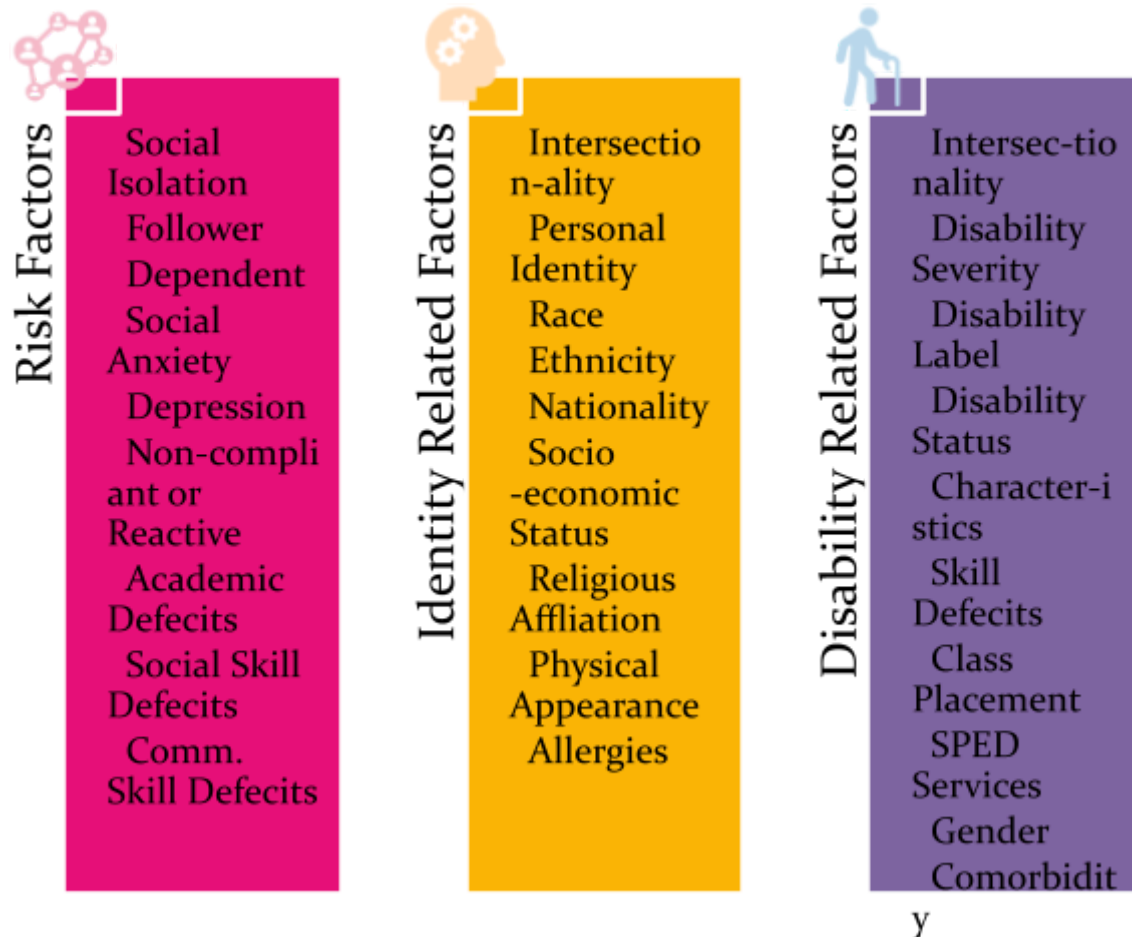
Example

Kevin now decides to wait until gym time to find Jared's sneakers. He has always wanted a pair like them, and he doesn't think it is fair that other kids have all the cool stuff. Once Jared puts his sneakers in the locker room, Kevin quickly puts them in his backpack and leaves the gym. The next day when Kevin sees Jared in the cafeteria, he sees that Jared has an even better pair of sneakers on. Kevin becomes enraged, walks over to Jared, and pours juice all over his sneakers. Was there any bullying here?

Answer: Yes. Kevin intentionally caused harm and did so with repetition. He demonstrated this both by stealing Jared's property and spilling juice on his sneakers. The intention is clear in this scenario.

RISK FACTORS

There is individual risk, identify-related, disability-related, and intersectionality factors that can make an individual vulnerable to bullying victimization. Being aware of these risk factors and how they may impact a student's vulnerability to bullying is important in the approach to bullying prevention and providing clear responses.



Bullying Facts

Bullying directly affects students' ability to learn.

- **Victims of Bullying:** According to the Center for Disease Control (2014), students who are bullied are more likely to experience low self-esteem and isolation, perform poorly in school, have few friends in school, have a negative view of school, experience physical symptoms (such as headaches, stomachaches, or problems sleeping) and to experience mental health issues (such as depression, suicidal thoughts, and anxiety).
- **Witnesses/Bystanders:** Bullying affects witnesses as well as targets. Witnesses are more likely to use tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs; have increased mental health problems; and miss or skip schools according to Stop Bullying.gov website.
- **Aggressor:** Youth who bully others are at increased risk for substance use, academic problems, and experiencing violence later in adolescence and adulthood. Youth who bully

others and are bullied themselves suffer the most serious consequences and are at greater risk for mental health and behavioral problems (Center for Disease Control, 2024).

Bystanders can be powerful allies.

- **Bystander help:** Since student bystanders can often intervene most effectively, it's important for campuses to encourage bystander intervention by teaching skills and offering resources that support this behavior. Campuses should also seek to ensure that bystanders are protected and students know not to put themselves in danger. There are many different ways that a bystander can help.
- **Different types of bystanders:**
 - **Hurtful bystanders:** Those who encourage the bullying by laughing, cheering, or making comments, and other bystanders join in the bullying once it has begun.
 - **Passive bystanders:** Most bystanders passively accept bullying by watching and doing nothing. Without realizing it, these bystanders also contribute to the problem. Passive bystanders provide the silent acceptance that allows people who bully to continue their hurtful behavior.
- **Why don't more bystanders intervene:**
 - They think, "It's none of my business."
 - They are afraid of getting hurt or becoming a victim.
 - They feel powerless to stop the bully.
 - They don't like the victim or feel that the victim "deserves" it.
 - They don't want to draw attention to themselves.
 - They fear retribution from the bully.
 - They think that telling adults won't help or it may make things worse.
 - They don't know what to do.

Bullying is not a "rite of passage" but a serious threat to student safety and well-being.

- **Negative effects:** Some say bullying makes children tougher and is not a serious problem, but the reality is that students who are bullied are more likely to report increased negative effects to their emotional and physical health.
- Areas of concern include:
 - **Education:** School avoidance, loss of academic achievement and increase in dropout rates
 - **Health:** Physical and emotional including stomachaches, headaches, sleeping issues, depression, fear or anxiety
 - **Safety:** Harm to self and others, including self-isolation, increased aggression, alienation, and retaliation

Anyone can bully, and anyone can be bullied.

- **Identity crisis:** Bullying is a behavior, not an identity. Labeling a student as a “bully” can have a detrimental effect on their future and often limits their ability to change their behavior (StopBullying.gov, 2016).
- **Multiple roles:** Students can have multiple roles: they can be the one subjected to bullying and the one who bullies at the same time. Strategies that focus on holding students accountable for their behavior, but also empower them to change that behavior, are more effective than punitive punishments and peer mediation in bullying situations (StopBullying.gov, 2016).
- **Any student:** Any student can exhibit bullying behavior – male or female, popular or unpopular, students with academic success and those that struggle with grades. Campuses need to focus on a student’s behavior, not their profile, when determining if bullying occurred.

Bullying isn’t about resolving conflict; bullying is about control.

- **During conflicts:** In conflict, most children have the ability to self-monitor their behavior and generally stop when they realize they are hurting someone.
- **During bullying:** When engaging in bullying, children continue their behavior when they realize it is hurting someone, and are satisfied by a feeling of power and control.

Foundational Behavior Information

Conflict	Rude	Mean
Occasional	Occasional	Once or twice
Not planned, in the heat of the moment	Spontaneous; unintentional	Intentional
All parties are upset	Can cause hurt feelings; upset	Can hurt others deeply
All parties want to work things out	Based in thoughtlessness, poor manners and/or narcissism	Based in anger; impulsive cruelty
All parties will accept responsibility	Rude person accepts responsibility	Behavior often regretted
An effort is made by all parties to solve the problem		
Can be resolved through mediation	Social skill building could be of benefit	Needs to be addressed / should NOT be ignored

RESOURCES

- StopBullying.gov
- PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center
- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) – Best practices for intervention
- American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
- Texas School Safety Center
- Youth Equipped to Succeed (YES)
- Princeton ISD Board Policy FFI (Local
- Holocaust Museum Houston Education Department – “Young Upstanders Toolkit”

APPENDICES

A. Family Resources

- a. Bullying: A Guide for Caregivers
- b. Bullying Prevention Tips for Families
- c. Online Safety – 10 Online Scenarios & How to Respond

B. Student Resources

- a. Students: Know the Facts Tip Sheet
- b. Student Action Plan Against Bullying – adapted from PACER

FAMILY RESOURCES

Bullying: A Guide for Caregivers

Bullying: A Guide for Caregivers

Talking to your child about bullying can be difficult to navigate. It is important for caregivers to maintain an open and trusting line of communication with their children, especially when it comes to bullying involvement. When establishing trusting communicative habits, caregivers should make sure that they are genuine, allow their child to take the lead, and set aside time to talk without distractions. The following are signs that your children may be experiencing some social and emotional challenges, including bullying. Also included are some talking points to initiate conversations.

WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs that your child may be bullying others:

- ❖ Gets into physical or verbal fights
- ❖ Has friends who bully others
- ❖ Has unexplained extra money or new belongings
- ❖ Is sent to the principal's office or detention frequently
- ❖ Shows increasingly aggressive behavior
- ❖ Blames others for their problems
- ❖ Doesn't accept responsibility for their actions
- ❖ Is overly competitive and worries about their popularity
- ❖ Displays self-destructive behaviors

Warning signs that your child may be a target of bullying:

- ❖ Unexplained injuries
- ❖ Lost or destroyed personal items
- ❖ Frequent headaches or stomachaches
- ❖ Changes in eating habits
- ❖ Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- ❖ Decreased self-esteem
- ❖ Declining grades or loss of interest in school
- ❖ Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- ❖ Display self-destructive behaviors

TIPS

These are general tips to help you be successful when communicating with your child.

Tips to communicate with your child:

- ❖ Affirm your child for sharing their feelings or asking for help.
- ❖ Being open, relaxed, and genuine will help your child to be the same way.
- ❖ If you don't know an answer, be willing to find the answers for your child.
- ❖ Let your child take the lead on a conversation.
- ❖ Do not lie about important topics.
- ❖ Do not dismiss your child or their feelings about things.
- ❖ Set specific times to intentionally talk to one another (e.g., family meal time or fun activity).

- ❖ Stay focused on your child by decreasing any distractions.
- ❖ Communication should be a two-ways street; talk to your child about your day too.
- ❖ Pay attention to nonverbal body language.
- ❖ Build off of what your child is telling you; it will let them know that you're actively listening.
- ❖ Regularly talk about healthy coping skills and safety protocols.

Conversation Starting Examples

- ❖ What made you laugh today?
- ❖ Tell me one thing that was exciting today.
- ❖ What did you play at recess?
- ❖ Who did you play with at recess today?
- ❖ Who decided what you played at recess today?
- ❖ Tell me one thing that you read today.
- ❖ What made today a good day at school?
- ❖ Did you talk to anybody new today?

Tips for caregivers to prevent bullying:

- ❖ Realize that your involvement matters!
- ❖ Start discussions early.
- ❖ Be aware of what's going on in your child's life.
- ❖ Promote taking different perspectives and empathy.
- ❖ Ask your child how you can support them the best and if necessary, how you can intervene in situations.
- ❖ Empower your child with confidence.
- ❖ Process your own emotions.
- ❖ Collaborate with schools.
- ❖ Involve more than one caregiver.
- ❖ Avoid authoritarian parenting.

Cyberbullying: A Guide for Caregivers

Talking to your child about cyberbullying can be difficult to navigate. It is important for caregivers to maintain an open and trusting line of communication with their children, especially when it comes to cyberbullying. The digital space is a space in which your child, a digital native, inhabits with ease. Due to this, it is vital to establish trusting and communicative relationships and habits. Caregivers should make sure that they are genuine, allow their child to take the lead, and set aside

time to talk without distractions. The following are signs that your children may be experiencing some social and emotional challenges, including cyberbullying. Also included are some talking points to initiate conversations.

WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs that your child may be cyberbullying others:

- ❖ Quickly switches screens or hides device when adult is near
- ❖ Gets unusually upset if they cannot have their device
- ❖ Demonstrates increased insensitivity towards others
- ❖ Increased disciplinary actions due to behavior problems
- ❖ Appears overly concerned about popularity
- ❖ Appears overly conceited about technology skills
- ❖ Seems to be using multiple online accounts
- ❖ Increasingly withdrawn from family

Warning signs that your child may be a target of cyberbullying:

- ❖ Unexpected changes in device use
- ❖ Appears nervous about attending school
- ❖ Changes in mood, behavior, or performance
- ❖ Becomes abnormally withdrawn
- ❖ Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- ❖ Frequently asks to leave school
- ❖ Avoids discussions about what they are doing online

- ❖ Desires to spend more time with caregivers than peers
- ❖ Becomes secretive, especially when it comes to online activity

TIPS FOR ONLINE SAFETY

These are general tips to help you be successful and informed when talking and making decisions about the online space.

Tips to prevent cyberbullying:

- ❖ Have device screens visible.
- ❖ Have meaningful conversations about their time online.
- ❖ Monitor their online activity in a respectful manner.
- ❖ Establish joint rules and guidelines with mutual trust.
- ❖ Inform yourself on currently used apps.
- ❖ Don't underreact to your child sharing their feelings.
- ❖ Encourage activities away from electronics.
- ❖ Keep the line of communication open.
- ❖ Use parental controls.

Discussion tips for talking about online socialization:

Be intentional about having meaningful conversations! Building regular communication and a trusting relationship will yield the best and most successful results.

- ❖ How do you spend time online?
- ❖ How much time do you spend online?
- ❖ How do you spend your time when you're not online?
- ❖ Do you have any close friends online?
- ❖ Has someone ever asked you for any personal information online?
- ❖ Have you ever felt uncomfortable talking to someone online?
- ❖ Who do you trust at school to talk about cyberbullying?

Bullying Prevention Tips for Families

Talk to your child about bullying

Make sure your children know what bullying is. If they know what bullying is, they will know what not to do and will be able to recognize a bullying incident. Teach empathy and respect. Keep communication open and set clear expectations around behaviors.

Ask for a copy of the school's bullying policy and procedures. Every PISD campus will have these to share. Make sure you and your student(s) know how to report an incident, whether it is your child being bullied or someone else.

Take bullying seriously

Encourage and listen to your student(s) when they talk about their day. Are they telling you about a bullying incident? Children may be embarrassed or afraid to acknowledge that they are being bullied. Let them know they can come to you without fear or judgement or punishment.

Encourage your children to report incidents of bullying. Let them know that you will support them through the reporting process.

Report the incident to school personnel

Share your student's concerns and specific information about bullying incidents with appropriate school personnel. Ask how the school plans to deal with the incident as well as their plans for preventing future bullying incidents along with the stopping of any retaliation. Work in partnership with your school to develop a plan. If you feel the problem hasn't been addressed, follow-up with the school administration to ensure they are aware of your concerns.

What not to do

- Do not ignore your child's report.
- Do not advise your child to physically fight back. Bullying lasts longer and can become more severe when children fight back.
- Do not confront the child who is engaging in bullying behavior.
- Do not confront the family of the child who is engaging in bullying behavior.

Recognize warning signs

- Look for changes in behavior: withdrawal, aggression, anxiety, reluctance to go to school.
- Unexplained injuries, missing belongings, or frequent complaints of headaches, stomachaches and changes in sleep patterns can also be signs.
- Avoidance of technology, changes in online behavior, threatening messages or hiding devices could signal cyberbullying.

Monitor digital behavior

- Know which apps, games and other platforms your student is accessing.
- Teach your child about cyberbullying and digital safety.
- Keep devices in common areas and establish boundaries around screen time.
- Utilize monitoring services or child protection settings.

Tips for parents dealing with a child who engages in bullying behavior

It can be difficult for any parent to learn that their child is engaging in bullying behavior. The sooner you address the problem, the better chance you have of avoiding the long-term effects this behavior can have on a child.

People who engage in bullying behavior

- Are more likely to get into fights, vandalize property and drop out of school.
- Have a higher risk of abusing alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults.
- Are twice as likely as their peers to have criminal convictions as adults and four times more likely to be multiple offenders.
- Are more likely as adults to be abusive toward their own families.

Warning signs your child may be engaging in bullying behavior

Your child:

- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others.
- Gets sent to the principal's office a lot.
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained.
- Is quick to blame others.
- Does not accept responsibility for his or her actions.
- Has friends who bully others.

What to do if your child is engaging in bullying behavior

- **Educate your child about bullying.** Foster empathy by encouraging your child to look at his/her actions from the victim's perspective. Remind your child that bullying can have legal consequences as well.
- **Remember you are a model for your children.** Kids learn from adults' aggressive and mean-spirited behavior as well as from acts of kindness and respect.
- **Establish consistent rules of behavior.** Make sure your child understands your rules and the consequences for breaking them.
- **Set limits with technology.** Let your child know you'll be monitoring his or her use of computers, email and all other platforms.
- **Seek support.** Talk to school personnel, mental health providers, etc. about ways to address the issue.
- Adapted from stopbullying.gov (<http://www.stopbullying.gov/parents/index.html>)

Online Safety and Cyberbullying

Online Safety

10 Online Scenarios + How to Respond

You know your child best. Whether you want to get ahead by having a plan for how you'll respond, or your child comes to you with something that's already happened — this guide can help.

Use it however it works best for your family. Each scenario gives you an example of what to say (and what not to say) when tough online moments come up.

Someone Sends or Shows Your Kid Explicit Content

Parent Should Say:

"I'm so sorry that happened. That kind of stuff can show up when you don't expect it. You did the right thing by telling me — we'll handle it together."

What Not to Say:

"Why were you looking at that?" or "You know better than that."

Someone Asks for a Nude or Private Picture

Parent Should Say:

"That's never okay for someone to ask. I'm really glad you told me — you're not in trouble. Let's block and report them together."

What Not to Say:

"You better not have sent anything!" or "Who were you talking to?"

Your Kid Is Bullied or Harassed Online

Parent Should Say:

"I'm really sorry that happened. No one deserves to be treated that way. Let's save what happened and report it — I'll help you through it."

What Not to Say:

"Just ignore it." or "Don't be so sensitive."

Your Kid Sees a Post About Self-Harm or Suicide

Parent Should Say:

That's really heavy to see. I'm proud of you for bringing it up. When we see something like that, it's important to tell a trusted adult or report it — that can make a difference.

What Not to Say:

"It's not your problem." or "Don't get involved."

Your Kid Encounters a Stranger Online Who Seems Friendly

Parent Should Say:

"I know it can feel nice when someone online is kind, but people aren't always who they say they are. Let's look at ways to stay safe together."

What Not to Say:

"Oh, that's probably harmless." Or "You're old enough to tell the difference."

Your Kid Accidentally Clicks or Shares Something Inappropriate**Parent Should Say:**

"It's okay – mistakes happen online all the time. Let's look at what happened and figure out what to do next."

What Not to Say:

"Why would you click that?" or "You just ruined your reputation."

Your Kid Feels Left Out After Seeing Friends' Posts**Parent Should Say:**

"I know that can really hurt. Remember, what you see online isn't the whole story. Want to talk about how it made you feel?"

What Not to Say:

"Don't worry about it." or "That's just how life is."

Your Kid Spends Too Much Time Online and Gets Defensive**Parent Should Say:**

"I get it – it's fun to scroll or talk with friends. Let's find a good balance so it doesn't take over your time or mood."

What Not to Say:

"You're addicted to your phone." Or "You never listen to me."

Your Kid is Tempted to Post Something Mean or Embarrassing About Someone**Parent Should Say:**

"Before posting, take a breath and think about how it might make someone feel. Words online can stick – let's choose kindness."

What Not to Say:

"You better not embarrass me online." Or "That's just how teens act."

You Discover Your Kid Has Been Watching Explicit Content Online**Parent Should Say:**

"I get that you might be curious, and that's normal. But what you watched isn't healthy. It shows people in ways that aren't real or respectful, and it can mess with how you see others and yourself. You're not in trouble, I just need you to know that what's out there online isn't what real love or real relationships look like."

What Not to Say:

"That's disgusting!" or "You should be ashamed of yourself."

Remember:

These conversations don't have to be perfect – just intentional. What matters most is that your child know they can come to you with anything. You're doing an incredible job showing up and guiding them through today's digital world.

Visit justsayyes.org for more parenting resources.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Students: Know the Facts (Tip Sheet)

Bullying can result in physical injuries, social and emotional problems, and lead to poor academic outcomes for all students involved in these types of situations. Harmful effects of bullying can often be felt by friends, families and can impact the climate and culture of the school, making others feel less safe in the environment and in society as a whole.

What to Do if You are Being Bullied

Tip #1: How to respond as bullying is happening

- **Walk away** – Bullies want to know they have control over your emotions, so don't react with anger or retaliate with physical force.
- **Protect yourself** – If you can't walk away and are being physically hurt, protect yourself so you can get away. Your safety is the first priority.
- **Report the bullying to a trusted adult** – It's scary to report and no one wants to be seen as a snitch or tattle-tale, but you have a right to be safe at school. Adults are responsible to help with the problem without letting the bully know it was you who reported them.
- **Repeat as necessary** – Report each bullying incident until it stops. There is no reason for you to ever put up with bullying.

Tip #2: How to deal with a cyberbully

- **Do not respond** – to cyberbullying messages.
- **Document and report cyberbullying** – Save or print out emails, text messages or screenshots for reporting the incident to adults.
- **Block the cyberbully** – On your phone, websites, games and/or social media pages. Report inappropriate messages to an adult, the internet service provider or website moderator. Report threats against your safety to the police.

Tip #3: Avoid isolation

- **Let people know** – Talk to a parent, counselor, coach, religious leader or trusted friend. Expressing what you're going through can make a huge difference to the way you feel, even if it doesn't change the situation.
- **Don't blame yourself** – It is not your fault. No matter what someone says or does, you should not be ashamed of who you are or what you feel.

Student Action Plan Against Bullying

Designed for youth to complete with or without an adult

Bullying affects everyone and every student can play an important role in preventing bullying. That means YOU can take charge of what is happening around you! Use this plan to think through a difficult situation and take steps to change what is happening to you or someone else. Whether you are the target of bullying, a witness, or the person who bullies, this plan can help you think through potential responses and come up with next steps to help prevent the bullying.

What you can do

Become an advocate or self-advocate. An **advocate** helps others get what they need. A **self-advocate** communicates their own needs.

It's important to understand that being a self-advocate does not mean you need to take next steps on your own. Self-advocacy is about being a part of the process, expressing your opinion, and ensuring that you are comfortable with the action steps taken toward that solution.

How to use the Student Action Plan Against Bullying

1. Read through the examples on pages two and three of the plan document.
2. Decide if you want to start this on your own or if you would like to involve an adult.

Note: Even if you start this on your own, it's important to share with a trusted adult and provide them with information on the best way to support you. This is important because sometimes adults aren't aware that the bullying is happening, and many bullying situations won't get resolved until a caring adult is involved.

3. Complete the "My Personal Action Plan Against Bullying," on page four with your own experience as a target of bullying, a witness, or the person who is bullying.
By completing this plan, you are taking action toward a solution.

What's next?

- ✓ If you haven't shared your plan with an adult you trust, now is the time.
- ✓ Let the adult know how important it is to have their help and support.
- ✓ Talk through your ideas together.
- ✓ Decide which steps to take and who will help.
- ✓ Write down your notes in your action plan.

Please find and download the entire document at the following address:

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/publications/student-action-plan/>

Bullying Checklist for Schools - document is housed on the Texas School Safety website

<https://txssc.txstate.edu/videos/bullying-and-the-law/#checklist>

Stop, Speak Get Help Strategy Sheet

The Stop, Speak, Get Help strategy is a structured approach for students to follow when they encounter difficult social situations, including bullying. Implementing this method as a schoolwide initiative creates a shared strategy that all students can utilize. Below is a detailed breakdown of each step.

Step One: STOP

Students pause and think before reacting impulsively in a challenging or emotional situation. The step aims to engage the prefrontal cortex (responsible for decision-making and problem-solving) while calming the amygdala, which triggers fight, flight or freeze responses during stress or conflict.

STOP in Action

When a student feels hurt or threatened, they STOP, take a deep breath and ground themselves so that they can focus on the present and avoid reacting out of anger or fear.

Step Two: SPEAK

Students use assertive communication to express their feelings and set boundaries. Speaking up in a respectful yet firm way helps students take control of the situation while advocating for themselves.

SPEAK in Action

After they pause and feel calmer, a student uses an “I statement,” such as “I feel upset when you tease me,” to express their emotions and establish boundaries.

Step Three: GET HELP

If speaking up doesn't resolve the situation and the bullying or conflict continues, students get help. This step encourages students to seek support from a trusted adult, such as a teacher, school counselor or parent, to address the issue.

GET HELP in Action

If students' boundaries are ignored, they seek out a trusted adult for help knowing that the adult will listen and provide support.

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