



Bullying & Harassment in Schools

Going to school should be a positive experience for all children, however, all too often a child falls victim to a bully which can be one of that child's most painful experiences. Unfortunately people dismiss bullying as a play ground rite of passage or simply don't realize it's happening. Take Action In Schools is a way to share some valuable information and offer possible solutions to curb bullying in your school and community.

WHAT IS BULLYING??

- Bullying is when a child is the target, overtime, of repeated negative actions (both verbal and physical)

Bullying means there is an imbalance of power where the victim cannot successfully defend themselves. This power can be physical size, strength, numbers, social standing, verbal skill, economic power, cultural or ethnic power, level of intelligence, popularity, gender etc.



CHARACTERISTICS OF A BULLY

- physical strength is greater than their victim
- usually older than their victim
- aggressive with peers, parents, teachers, and siblings
- lack of conscience. shows no remorse for their actions
- they have minimal anxiety and insecurity
- they have a skill at seeming innocent and talking their way out of situations when caught
- confident & impulsive
- lack of empathy and understanding for others
- interested in bullying for thrill, power, and sense of control

CHARACTERISTICS OF A VICTIM

Passive Victim:

- he/she is a loner
- anxious & unassertive
- may have a physical or learning disability
- weak or small
- sensitive & emotional
- insecure & lack self esteem

Provocative Victim:

- pesky & irritating
- clumsy & immature
- hyperactive, nervous & fidgety
- quick tempered, prone to fight back
- sometimes act like bullies themselves
- "egg on" bullies



WHAT CAN BULLYING INCLUDE??

1. Physical Violence (shoving, punching, tripping, kicking etc.)
2. Verbal Taunts
3. Put Downs
4. Threats, Extortion, & Intimidation
5. Stealing or Robbing of possessions
6. Making unfriendly gestures and/or spreading rumors
7. Purposely ignoring you in a mean way
8. Sexual unwanted physical contacts or abusive comments



HOW TO DEAL WITH A BULLY

The acronym “Ha Ha So” can be helpful for victims to remember when dealing with a bully.

- “H” = Help** if you’re being bullied get help, approach an adult and tell them exactly what is happening.
- “A” = Assert** stand your ground, look the bully straight in the eyes and tell him/her to stop
- “H” = Humor** sometimes a sense of humor can help to alleviate a bullying situation
- “A” = Avoid** walk away in order to avoid a bully situation, try not to be alone, there is safety in numbers
- “S” = Self Talk** self talk is used to keep feeling good about yourself “I am a good kid” “I try my best at school and I’m nice to other kids”
- “O” = Own it** if a bully says that your shirt is ugly, say something like “I know, but my mom gave it to me for my birthday and I didn’t want to hurt her feelings so I wore it”

IS MY CHILD A VICTIM??

If your child is a victim of a bully you may notice the following:

- a slip in school grades
- comes home in dirty disheveled clothes
- has reoccurring nightmares
- fears & skips school
- spends more time in their bedroom
- frequently asks for more money
- is missing belongings
- displays out of character behavior
- has unexplained injuries



These signs on their own do not necessarily mean your child is being bullied, but they should make you suspicious. Remember, some children have been know to commit suicide over being bullied. Talk to your child to determine if in fact the problem is a bully problem.

HELPING YOUR CHILD

1. Talk, but listen too, communicate openly but do not pry. Encourage your child to share information about school activities, including their walk to and from school
2. Inform school officials immediately, keep a written record of dates, times, names and circumstances of any bullying incident. This enables you to show school officials that a pattern may be developing
3. Teach your child to be assertive, but not aggressive. Teach your child to stand up for themselves verbally. Don’t tell your child to “fight back” or “just ignore them and they’ll go away”. Inquire about programs that will boost your child’s self esteem.
4. Assist your child in knowing who the safe people are in school to go to when bullied.

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS A BULLY??

Here are some tips for parents to help prevent their child from becoming a bully

1. Set clear limits, children are happy when they know what is acceptable and what is not. Notice and praise your child when they do the right thing and include consequences for negative behavior
2. Know where your child is at all times, and get to know their friends
3. Expect that your child will have some difficulties adjusting to changes such as a divorce or remarriage...be extra supportive at these times.
4. Develop a close relationship, encouraging your child to confide in you
5. Don't be a bully yourself
6. Monitor television programs,movies,and video games. Excessive exposure to violence can cause a child to resort to the use of violence themselves
7. Spend quality time with your child, children require time and attention, and they tend to reflect the care and thoughtfulness shown to them.



OTHER INFORMATION

If you wish more information or have any questions about bullying and harassment, please contact the Winnipeg Police Service Community Relations Unit at 986-6322.

INTERNET SITE: www.winnipeg.ca/police