

What if My Child Witnesses Bullying?

Coach your child to...

† Tell the bully to stop.

Most bullies stop within 10 seconds when someone tells him/her to stop, but if your child is not comfortable, he/she should use a different strategy.



† Support the victim. Encourage your son/daughter to comfort the victim and invite them out of a situation. Such as, say "Come and play basketball with us over there".

† Reduce attention to the bully. Encourage your son/daughter to walk away and not give the bully the audience they desire.

† Report the bully. Encourage your child to help the victim report the bullying and/or report the bullying him/herself.

Education.com, 2006-2010

How Do I Help Prevent Cyber-bullying?

- Supervise your child while on-line.
- Share your child's email.
- Set a precedence that phone texts, social networking sites and emails should be open for you to look at.
- Educate your child about the dangers of online chat rooms.
- Teach your child to never give out personal information.
- Teach your child to never pass along harmful or cruel messages or images.
- Encourage your child to tell you about any cyber bullying they're witnessing.
- Teach your child how to block communications with cyber-bullies.
- Teach your child about smart and savvy web behavior - i.e. never reveal passwords, last name, address or phone number.
- Pay attention.



Bullying

A Parent Guide



What is Bullying?

Bullying includes aggressive or hostile behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied. It is typically repeated over time.

Bullying takes many forms, including, but not limited to, physical or verbal assaults, nonverbal or emotional threats or intimidations, social exclusions and isolation, extortion, and the use of a computer or telecommunications to send embarrassing, slanderous, threatening or intimidating messages.

Bullying is a form of victimization and is not necessarily a result of or part of an ongoing conflict.

Bullying can also be characterized by teasing, put-downs, name-calling, cruel rumors, false accusations, and hazing.

What Does the Church Say?

† Because bullying is intentional and typically violent in word and action, it is an offense against the fifth commandment, "You shall not kill" (Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17).

† Deliberate hatred is contrary to charity and hatred of your neighbor is a sin when one deliberately wishes another evil. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2303).

† Physical, emotional, sexual and verbal bullying destroys the dignity of another human person. As noted, the fifth commandment "forbids the intentional destruction of human life". (CCC 2307)



Diocese of Superior
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Offices of Youth &
Young Adult Ministry
and Schools

Myths & Facts

Myth: Bullies are rejected by their peers.
Fact: Many bullies have high status in the classroom and lots of friends.



Myth: Bullies have low self-esteem.
Fact: High self-esteem can sometimes encourage bullies.

Myth: Being a victim builds character.
Fact: Bullying experiences increase children's vulnerabilities.

Myth: Many childhood victims of harassment become violent as teens.
Fact: Victims of bullying are more likely to suffer in silence than to retaliate.

Myth: There is a victim personality.
Fact: There are usually a combination of situational and social risk factors apart from certain personality traits that make children vulnerable.

Myth: Bullying involves only perpetrators and victims.
Fact: Bullying incidents are typically public events that have witnesses.

Sandra Graham

What If My Child is a Victim of Bullying?


- Provide emotional support. Let your child know that he/she is not to blame. Work with your child to find solutions.
- Discuss how to avoid situations. Talk with your child about ways to avoid situations where bullying occurs.
- Give your child ways to respond to bullies. Help your child develop ways to stand up for him/herself.
 - Try to ignore the bully.
 - Turn and walk away.
 - Try not to show anger or being upset.
- Let the school know. Keep a record of how often your child is bullied and let the school know about these incidents.
- Work with school officials. Determine if the incidents are occurring off of school property, if law enforcement should be contacted.
- Find a new activity for your child to focus attention away from the incidents. Help your child find alternative friends and activities not associated with those bullying.

The Parent Institute, Quick Tips, 2010

Warning Signs

By themselves, these problems may just be typical teen moodiness but several together could indicate your child is dealing with a bully.

- ⇒ Less self-confidence
- ⇒ Irritability, anxiousness or depression
- ⇒ Drop in grades or difficulty concentrating
- ⇒ Headaches or stomachaches as a way to avoid school
- ⇒ Sleep issues - either can't sleep or sleeps too much
- ⇒ Sudden lack of interest in school events or social activities
- ⇒ Changes route to school or doesn't want to ride the bus
- ⇒ Missing class - especially the same one
- ⇒ Unexplained injuries
- ⇒ Damaged items like books or clothes
- ⇒ Severely upset or tension on Sunday nights



- ⇒ Bullying starts in elementary school, peaks in middle school, then tapers off in high school.
- ⇒ 79% of incidents take place in hallways, cafeterias and classrooms, 23% outdoors, 8% on school buses, and 4% someplace else.
- ⇒ Emotional abuse is the most prevalent type of harassment, followed by pushing, shoving, tripping and spitting.
- ⇒ Sixth graders are the students most likely to sustain an injury from bullying. After that, the odds steadily decrease through 12th grade.

National Center for Education Statistics

What Do I Do if My Child is Bullying Others?

- Make sure your child knows that if he/she bullies others, it is harmful to all involved.
- Communicate to your child that you will help him/her find other ways to exert his/her personal power, status and leadership.
- Work with school staff to send a clear message to your child that his/her bullying has to stop.
- Stop any acts of aggression you see, and talk about other ways he/she can deal with the situation.
- Develop clear and consistent rules within your family.
- Spend more time with your child and carefully supervise and monitor his/her activities.
- Talk with your child about who his/her friends are and what they do together.
- Build on your child's talents by encouraging him/her to get involved in prosocial activities.
- Model respect, kindness and empathy.
- Be realistic.

Education.com, 2006-2010