



## BULLYING ABUSE: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



### What is Bullying Abuse?<sup>1</sup>

- Bullying abuse is **unwanted** acts of aggression that are mean or hurtful to another person from a peer or group of peers
  - Is repeated multiple times or is likely to be repeated
  - Involves one person thinking they have power over someone else
- Bullying can be:
  - Direct forms of aggression that occur face to face. This includes:
    - Physical acts that hurt people, such as kicking, punching, hitting, or shoving; or physically damaging a person's belongings to cause harm
    - Verbal acts that hurt people, such as calling people names
  - Indirect forms of aggression that occur behind the person's back
    - Relational acts that hurt people by hurting their friendships with others, such as spreading rumors or gossip
  - Cyberbullying: bullying that occurs on the internet, such as spreading rumors or posting harmful pictures to make fun of someone
- Bullying is NOT where two people have a disagreement or misunderstanding. It is different from playful teasing where both people see it as fun.

### Who is Impacted by Bullying?

- About **1 out of 5** children and adolescents are victims of bullying.<sup>2</sup>
- The most common form of bullying is being made fun of or insulted, followed by having rumors spread about them.<sup>4</sup>
- Only about half of students report being bullied to an adult.<sup>2</sup>
  - But other students see 85% of bullying! Bystanders sometimes join in or ignore what is happening, but a small number stand up!
- Bullying can happen in school, during events, on the bus, in the neighborhood, on the Internet, or a combination of all of these.<sup>1</sup>
- Bullying most often happens in school hallways or the stairwell, followed by the classroom and cafeteria, and on the school grounds, the bus, or in the bathroom or locker room.

## What are Some Signs a Child May be Bullying Others?<sup>5</sup>

- Getting into fights, getting detention, or getting in trouble frequently
- Have unexplained money or new belongings
- Have friends who bully
- Are overly competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity
- Are increasingly aggressive
- May feel a strong need to get their way
- Are easily angered or frustrated

## What are Some Signs a Child May be Bullied?<sup>5</sup>

- Unexplainable injury
- Somatic symptoms: frequent headaches or faking sick, change in eating habits, sleep disturbance, stomachaches
- Lost or destroyed property (e.g., backpacks, notebooks, lunchbox)
- Loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness, decreased self-esteem
- Declining grades or avoidance of school

## What are the Effects of Bullying?<sup>3,5</sup>

### Children who are bullied

- Are at increased risk for social and emotional distress, and lower self esteem
- Are more likely to have depression, anxiety, or somatic problems such as stomachaches or sleep disturbances
- Are more likely to have academic problems and school avoidance
- Have potential risk to retaliate violently

### Children who Bully

- Are more likely to get into fights, get into trouble more frequently, or more frequently get detention
- Are at an increased risk for substance abuse later in life
- Are at risk for depression and anxiety
- May become angered more easily and act out violently later in life

Children who are both bullied and bully others are at the highest risk for both behavioral and mental health problems.

### REFERENCES

[1] Gladden, R.M., Vivolo-Kantor, A.M., Hamburger, M.E., & Lumpkin, C.D. (2014). *Bullying Surveillance Among Youths: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Education. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf>

[2] Indicator 10: Bullying at School and Electronic Bullying. (2019, April). [nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/ind\\_10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/ind_10.asp)

[3] Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). *Preventing Bullying*. [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-factsheet508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-factsheet508.pdf)

[4] Musu-Gillette, L., Zhang, A., Wang, K., Zhang, J., & Ouwerkerk, B.A. (2017). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016* (NCES 2017-064/NCJ 250650). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017064.pdf>

[5] [stopbullying.gov/](https://stopbullying.gov/)

## What can Parents do to Prevent Bullying?<sup>3,5</sup>



**Be a role model!** Talk with and listen to your child, treat others with **respect and dignity**

**Get involved** in the school, community, and at home

**Know the school's bullying prevention policies**

**Teach children good habits** early and consistently; have high expectations for behavior and low tolerance for being mean

**Teach responsible use of technology;** supervise and limit electronic activities

**Intervene** to lessen harm and prevent future risk, and **teach kids how to intervene** and be upstanders!

**Encourage kids to do what they love!**