

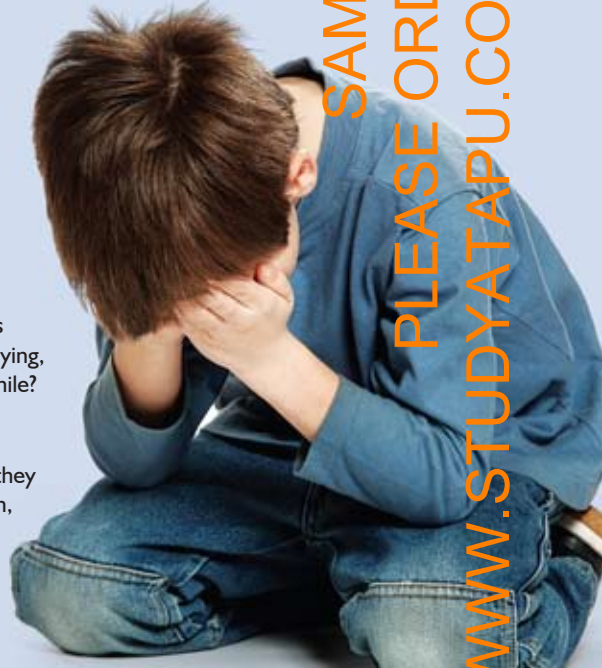
Bullying is aggressive behavior that is persistent, intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Traditionally, bullying has involved actions such as: hitting or punching (physical bullying), teasing or name-calling (verbal bullying), or intimidation through gestures or social exclusion. In recent years, technology has given children and youth a new means of bullying each other. Cyberbullying is bullying behavior that involves the use of the Internet, cell phones, and other electronic media. **Always report incidences of bullying in accordance with your local school authority guidelines.**

When you see or hear bullying

- Immediately stop the bullying: Stand between those who bullied and those who were bullied, preferably blocking eye contact between them. Don't immediately ask about or discuss the reason for the bullying or try to sort out the facts.
- Use a matter-of-fact tone of voice to state what behaviors you saw/heard. Let students know that bullying is unacceptable and against school rules.
- Support the bullied child in a way that allows him or her to regain self-control and to feel supported and safe from retaliation.
- Include bystanders in the conversation and give them guidance about how they might appropriately intervene or get help next time.
- If appropriate, impose immediate consequences for students who bully others. Do not require students to apologize or make amends during the heat of the moment.

Helping a child or adolescent who is bullied

- Don't do further damage by lending too much support in public.
- Speak with the student privately. Learn about what's been going on. Listen, get the facts and assess the student's feelings about the bullying. Is this the first time he or she has been hurt by bullying, or is this something that's been going on for a while? Assure the student that it's not his or her fault.
- Praise the student for their courage to discuss bullying incidents with you. Explain how helpful they are being by providing this important information, not only for themselves, but also for the rest of the students and staff.



SAMPLE

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Helping a child or adolescent who is bullied (cont.)

- Those who are bullied may feel powerless, scared, and helpless. Emphasize the confidential nature of your discussion and be clear about who will and will not be given this information. Get additional facts about the incident(s) from other adults or students, so the bullied student doesn't feel that he or she could be easily identified as the sole reporter of the abuse. Protect this student in conversations with the student(s) who bully.
- Communicate with colleagues about the bullying incident. Other staff members who have contact with the student who was bullied can also lend support and assistance. Ask them to continue their observations to be sure that the bullying has stopped.
- Do not require the students to meet and "work things out." Unlike conflicts, bullying involves a power imbalance, which means this strategy will not work. Forced apologies don't help. Instead, encourage the student who bullied to make amends in a way that would be meaningful for the child who was bullied.
- Provide as much information as you can about your "next steps". Information is helpful for the student who is bullied to regain a sense of safety and control. Urge the student to report any further incidents of bullying.
- Encourage and support the student who is bullied in making friends. One of the most important bullying prevention tools is helping each student at school to have a good friend to be with and talk to.
- Many children keep incidents of bullying to themselves. Explain that if their parents know, more support may be available. Talk with parents, if appropriate, about your concerns.
- Make a referral, if needed. Bullying can be traumatic, just as other forms of abuse can be. Talk with your school counselor about a counseling or mental health referral.
- Make sure you follow up with a student who has been bullied. Let the student know that you are a resource for him or her and that you plan to "check in" with them in two to three days and beyond.

Cyberbullying, can involve:

- Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images
- Posting sensitive, private information about or pictures of another person
- Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad
- Intentionally excluding someone from an online group

Cyberbullying suggestions for Educators

- Be sure that your school's anti-bullying rules and policies address cyberbullying.
- Closely monitor students' use of computers at school.
- Investigate reports of cyberbullying immediately. If cyberbullying occurs through the school district's Internet system, you may be obligated to take action. If the cyberbullying occurs off-campus, have an administrator consider what actions might be taken to help address the bullying.

This information is intended for general summary purposes only and is not intended to take the place of local policy, procedure, or law.