

# Bullying Prevention

Unity Day Promotes Kindness, Acceptance, and Inclusion



## Unity Day - Wednesday, October 21st

National Bullying Prevention Month in October is a campaign to prevent childhood bullying - and promote kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Unity Day is the signature event of National Bullying Prevention Month. This is a day when we can come together to send the message that bullying is never acceptable behavior.

The call to action is simple: wear and share the color **ORANGE**. This vibrant statement becomes a conversation starter, showing support for students who have been bullied and for bullying prevention.

Show your support of Unity Day, Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, by encouraging your students to get involved. See pages 4-5 for Unity Day information and activities.



### PREVENTION SERVICES

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## What is Bullying Behavior?

Bullying involves repeated acts of physical, emotional, or social behavior that are intentional, controlling, and hurtful. Bullying can also occur through e-mail, web sites, blogs, text messaging, digital video, and online chat rooms; this is called cyber-bullying. Be alert and consider the following:

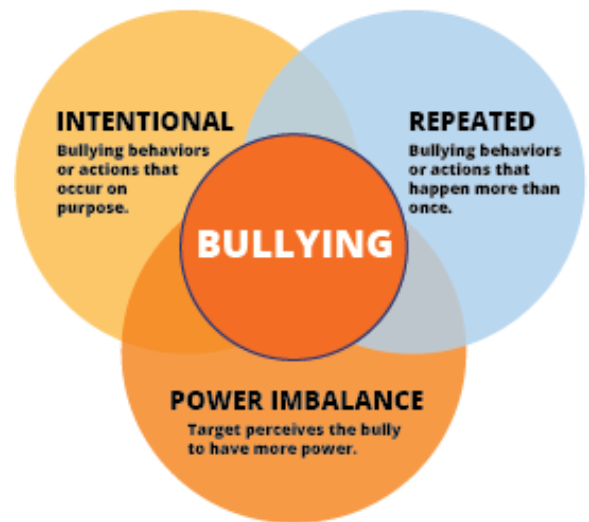
- Bullying is defined by a power imbalance between the bully and the target.
- A bully's power can be derived from physical size, strength, verbal skill, popularity, or gender.
- A bully's target feels tormented, helpless, and defenseless.
- Bullying can include hitting, name-calling, threatening, intimidating, kicking, spreading rumors, teasing, pushing, tripping, excluding someone from a group, or destroying someone's things.

Bullying must include all three criteria:

- **Intentional** - Bullying behaviors or actions that occur on purpose.
- **Repeated** - Bullying behaviors or actions that happen more than once.
- **Power Imbalance** - Students who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others.



More than one in five students report being bullied.



CONFLICT	RUDE	MEAN	BULLYING
Occasional	Occasional	Once or Twice	Is REPEATED
Not planned/in the heat of the moment	Spontaneous/often unintentional behavior	Intentional behavior	Is often planned and done on purpose
All parties are upset	Can upset and cause hurt feelings	Can hurt others deeply	Can cause serious, life-long emotional damage
All parties want to work it out	Often based in thoughtlessness or poor manners	Often based in anger; impulsive cruelty	The bully is trying to gain power or control over the target
All parties will accept responsibility	Rude person should accept responsibility	Behavior is often regretted	The bully often blames the target
An effort is made by all parties to solve the problem	Apology	Apology is often sufficient	The target wants the bully's behavior to stop
Can usually be resolved through mediation	Social skill building could be of benefit	Needs to be addressed/should not be ignored	Cannot be resolved through mediation, should be reported

Source: Adapted from Jennifer Astles, DASA Newsletter, January 2014, TST BOCES and modified by the School District of Lee County, Student Services

**Normal peer conflict, rude, or mean behavior are not the same as bullying.**

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves sending hurtful or threatening text messages and images with digital devices in order to damage the target's reputation and relationships. This form of bullying can be very difficult for adults to detect or track, and almost half of those victimized do not know the identity of the perpetrator. Bullying using digital technology most commonly involves the use of instant messaging, chat rooms, and e-mail. (Kowalski & Limber, 2007)

Cyberbullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

- **Persistent** - Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children experiencing cyberbullying to find relief. The information can be easily and quickly shared, which makes it difficult to contain or stop negative messages.
- **Permanent** - Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.
- **Hard to Notice** - Because teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.
- **Anonymous** - Cyberbullying can be done anonymously. Those being bullied might not even know who is perpetuating the behavior, which makes it easy for one child to hurt another and not be held accountable.

**26.3% of Florida high and middle school students reported being cyberbullied.**

**10.9% reported cyberbullying others.**

**(2019 Florida Youth Survey)**

View Prevention Services' Cyberbullying Parent Presentation at <https://youtu.be/ABAf3dLr4Dk>

## Bystanders and Upstanders



Bullying situations usually involve more than the person who bullies and the target. They also involve bystanders - those who watch bullying happen or hear about it. Unfortunately, bystanders often do nothing to intervene in a bullying situation. This is known as the bystander effect, or bystander apathy, which is a social psychological phenomenon in which individuals are less likely to offer help to a victim when other people are present. The greater the number of bystanders, the less likely it is that any one of them will help.

Teaching students to be upstanders, which are bystanders that stand up for the bullying target and have the power to play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying, is important. Some upstanders directly intervene by discouraging the bully, defending the target, or redirecting the situation. Some upstanders provide an escape for the target. Other upstanders get help, by rallying support from peers to stand up against bullying or by reporting the bullying to adults.

**57%** of bullying situations STOP In 10 seconds when 1 peer intervenes

**80%** of bullying situations STOP In 10 seconds when 2 peers intervene

**90%** of bullying situations STOP In 10 seconds when 3 peers intervene

## Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is how children and adults learn to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Students with greater social and emotional competency are less likely to be aggressors, targets of bullying, or passive bystanders. Social and emotional learning starts at home. Parents and families are critical partners in helping their children develop social and emotional know-how. They can model the kinds of skills, attitudes, and behaviors we want all students to master. And they can be important advocates for SEL at school.

Schools that include SEL programs with other bullying prevention efforts are more likely to succeed in reducing bullying behaviors. By fostering an overall climate of inclusion, warmth, and respect, schools can promote the development of core social and emotional skills in students and staff alike. Many of our schools utilize Second Step or Sanford Harmony SEL programs.

**School-based  
bullying  
prevention  
programs  
decrease bullying  
by up to 25%**

**(McCallion & Feder, 2013)**

**Students who experience bullying are at increased risk for poor school adjustment, sleep difficulties, anxiety, and depression. CDC, 2015**

### Unity Day: Together Against Bullying

#### United for Kindness, Acceptance, and Inclusion

Show your support of Unity Day by encouraging your children or students to get involved! Below are activities and resources to help promote National Bullying Prevention Month and Unity Day at your home or school.

- ✓ Download the Unity Day Guide at <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/pdf/unity-day-guide.pdf>
- ✓ Wear **orange** – choose clothing, jewelry, or accessories that you already have. T-shirts, shoelaces, socks, earrings, and sunglasses are some ideas.
- ✓ Create your own inexpensive **orange** item to wear like a bracelet or hat made from orange construction paper, ribbons, or beads.
- ✓ Download and print “Why I’m Wearing **Orange**” badge at <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/pdf/why-wearing-orange-flyer.pdf>
- ✓ Go **orange** on social media. Visit <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/unity-day.asp#> for downloadable photos and content to share on social media.
- ✓ Download, print, and share the free two-sided Unity Day flyer. <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/pdf/nbpm-unity-day-flyer.pdf>
- ✓ Order a free Unity Day poster in English or Spanish, to display in your home, school, or community. <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/posters.asp>



## Is Your Child Being Bullied?

If your child exhibits one or more of these warning signs, he/she may be experiencing bullying.

- Withdraws socially, has few or no friends
- Loses interest in favorite activities
- Frequently complains of illness
- Doesn't want to go to school
- Avoids some classes or skips school entirely
- Brings home damaged possessions or reports them lost
- Cries easily; displays mood swings and talks about hopelessness
- Talks about running away; talks of suicide
- Threatens violence to self or others
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Takes, or attempts to take, "protection" to school (a stick, knife, gun, etc.)
- Hangs head, hunches shoulders, and avoids eye contact

**The reasons for being bullied reported most often by students include physical appearance, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation.**

**(National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019)**

## SDLC Bullying and Harassment Policy

Bullying is an unacceptable behavior that adults and students have a responsibility to stop. The School District of Lee County will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment between students and/or adults on our school campuses. Our goal is protection of our students, and provision of a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of our students and staff.

The School Board of Lee County's Policy 4.14, created to comply with the Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act, s 1006.147, F.S., describes what type of behavior is considered bullying, harassment, and cyberbullying. This policy also explains employee requirements for reporting and investigating complaints.

### How Do I File a Bullying Report?

There are several methods for reporting suspected bullying incidents:

- You can contact a school by phone and report it to school personnel
- You can make a report in person
- You can complete the Bullying Report Form

The reporting form can be downloaded at <https://www.leeschools.net>, printed, and returned to the school's Administrative Office or to the Lee County Public Education Center - Student Services Department. Your child's school also has copies of this form available for you to complete.