

BULLYING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, March 2018

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Bullying is acting in ways that scare or harm another person. Bullying can be a one-time event, but more often occurs over time. Bullying usually starts in elementary school, becomes more common in middle school and in various forms in high school.

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Physical Harm, such as hitting, shoving, or tripping.
- Emotional harm, such as making fun of the way a person acts, looks, or talks. Writing mean things about someone in e-mails or online journals (blogs) is also bullying.

Girls who bully are more likely to do so in emotional ways. Boys who bully often do so in physical and emotional ways. For example:

- A girl may form a group and exclude another girl or gossip about her.
- A boy may shove another boy and call him names.

Both boys and girls take part in “cyberbullying”. This means using technology to spread rumours or to send hurtful messages or pictures.

If you think your child is being bullied or is bullying someone else, take action to stop the abuse.

Why is it important to stop the bullying?

Bullying is a serious problem for all children involved. Children who are bullied are more likely to feel bad about themselves and be depressed. They may fear or lose interest in going to school and withdraw from other social activities.

Children who bully others are more likely to dropout of school, have drug and alcohol problems, and break the law.

What can children do if they are bullied?

Children are often scared and angry when they are bullied. They may not know what to do. Teach them to :

- Respond assertively – Say “Leave me alone” or “You do not scare me”. Practice this with your child in a calm, strong voice.
- Walk away, don’t run, even if you are afraid.
- Tell an adult. A parent, teacher, coach can take action to stop the bullying.

Talk to your principal or vice principal if you suspect bullying at your child’s school. Discuss with your child that they can help other children from being bullied by speaking out, being an “upstander” rather than not doing anything, being a “bystander”. If someone sends you a mean e-mail about another person, don’t forward it to others. Print it out and show an adult.