



Bullying...not cool!

Bullying Definition

Bullying in schools is of increasing focus for Florida schools, districts, and for the Florida Department of Education. Florida Statute 1006.147, also known as The Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for All Students Act, requires school districts to adopt an official policy prohibiting bullying and harassment of students and staff on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and through school computer networks.

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involve a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- Bullying typically includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

How can I support my child if he or she is bullied at school?

Avoid blaming your child for the harassment. Think twice before giving advice - your child may have already tried the strategies you are going to suggest. Get as much information as you can. Talk with your child's teacher, principal, or counselor and ask them to help your child be safe. Their intervention may include consequences for the bully, increased supervision, and helping your child make more friends if he or she is isolated. Ask your child what she has already tried to resolve the problem. Praise her for all the things she has tried. Give him permission to stop doing the things that haven't worked to stop the bullying. Encourage him to keep telling you and other adults. Help him to think about what has worked- or what might work. If your child is isolated, help her make connections through activities, hobbies, or clubs.



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How to Talk about Bullying

Parents, school staff, and other caring adults have a role to play in preventing bullying. Research tells us that children really do look to parents and caregivers for advice and help on tough decisions. Sometimes spending 15 minutes a day talking can reassure kids that they can talk to their parents if they have a problem. Parents/Caregivers can:

- Help kids understand bullying. Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell kids bullying is unacceptable. Make sure kids know how to get help.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
- Encourage kids to do what they love. Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.
- Model how to treat others with kindness and respect.

Start conversations about daily life and feelings with questions like these:

- What was one good thing that happened today? Any bad things?
- What is lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with? What do you talk about?
- What is it like to ride the school bus?
- What are you good at? What would do you like best about yourself?

Talking about bullying directly is an important step in understanding how the issue might be affecting kids. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, but it is important to encourage kids to answer them honestly. Assure kids that they are not alone in addressing any problems that arise.

Resources

Office of Safe Schools
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Phone: (850) 245-0416
Fax: (850) 245-9978

stopbullying.gov
abilitypath.org
www.fldoe.org/safeschools/bullying.asp