



Bullying Definition

Bullying must meet three criteria to meet the legal definition:

- R** – it must be a **repeated** behavior
- I** – with the **intent** to harm
- P** – and there must be an imbalance of **power** (real or perceived)

Types of Bullying

1. Physical (ex. Hitting, pushing, stalking)
2. Verbal (ex. Threatening, demeaning)
3. Social (ex. Isolating from group, spreading rumors, relational aggression)
4. Sexual (ex. Sexual gestures, unwanted advances, physical contact)
5. Cyber (ex. Using digital technology, including internet or phone, spreading rumors, posting false information, harassing online)

Bullying is not: rough play with friends, a one-time fight with a peer, mutual teasing or teasing that is not repeated or is done by someone of equal power. While social interaction and conflict are a natural part of growing up and attending school, all behaviors should be addressed, whether bullying or not.

Bullying Statistics

- » 13 million students will be bullied in the U.S. this year
- » 160,000 students miss school daily for fear of being bullied¹
- » 1 out of 4 children is bullied² (US Dept of Justice)
- » Every 7 minutes a child is bullied on a playground
- » Between 50% and 77% of students report having been bullied
- » 85% of bullying is not responded to appropriately, or at all
- » 70.6% of young people say they have seen bullying in their schools; 70.4% of school staff have seen bullying; 62% witnessed bullying two or more times in the last month; and 41% witness bullying once a week or more²
- » When bystanders intervene, bullying stops within 10 seconds 57% of the time²
- » In one large study, 49% of children in grades 4–12 reported being bullied by other students at school at least once during the past month, whereas 30.8% reported bullying others during that time²
- » Only 20% to 30% of students who are bullied notify adults about the bullying²
- » 60% of kids characterized as bullies in 6th through 9th grades had at least one criminal conviction by age 24³
- » School-based bullying prevention programs decrease bullying by up to 25% (McCallion and Feder, 2013)⁴

Sources:

¹https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/themes/51172dcc1ad07a63d6000002/attachments/original/1361410989/1_FramingBullyingforEducators.pdf?1361410989

² <http://www.stopbullying.gov/news/media/facts/#listing>

<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/bullying-statistics.html>

³ Brewster, C., & Railsback, J. (2001). Schoolwide prevention of bullying. Portland, OR:

Northwest Regional Education Laboratory.

⁴<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/about/media-kit/stats.asp>





Cyberbullying Statistics

- » 1 out of 5 children is cyberbullied (US Dept. of Justice)
- » 43% of teens, ages 13 to 17, have experienced cyberbullying in the past year
- » One million children were harassed, threatened, or subjected to other forms of cyberbullying on Facebook during the past year
- » More girls are cyberbullies than boys (59% girls and 41% boys)

Source: *Enough is Enough*: <http://www.internetsafety101.org/cyberbullyingstatistics.htm>

Reporting Bullying and Cyberbullying

Many children never report bullying or cyberbullying. Failure to report is often caused by:

- » Embarrassment
- » Fear of escalation
- » Fear of being seen as a snitch
- » Fear of loss of technology and freedom

Impact of Bullying and Cyberbullying

- » Depression
- » Anxiety
- » Isolation/Loneliness
- » Low self-esteem
- » Absenteeism
- » Feeling of being sick
- » Suicidal thoughts

Recognizing Indicators of Bullying and Cyberbullying

Physical Indicators

- » Unexplained injuries upon return from school
- » Frequent cuts/bruises or injuries without good explanation
- » Voices frequent physical complaints and/or not wanting to go to school
- » Changes in sleeping/eating patterns
- » Ripped/torn clothing upon return from school

Behavioral Indicators

- » Suddenly reluctant to go to school
- » Frequently loses lunch money or other possessions
- » Social isolation – spends a lot of time alone
- » Loss of long time friends/change in friends or a change in social habits
- » Change in personality or deviation in normal behavior
- » Eating or sleeping disturbances
- » Seems sad or depressed, talks about suicide or hurting self
- » Change in online behavior (or frequently on computer cell phone/ shuts off cell phone or computer when parent or adult approaches)





Recognizing Bullying Behaviors

- » Aggressive and/or disobedient behavior
- » Threatens others; acts dominant or superior to peers
- » Difficulty controlling temper; angry outbursts
- » Has difficulty following rules
- » Is disruptive and frequently in trouble at school
- » Enjoys aggressive video games and TV shows
- » Shows very little emotions and empathy toward those closest to him or her
- » Has been in trouble at school for fighting
- » Steals or vandalizes things
- » Parents or caregivers are overly permissive or extremely harsh

Responding to Bullying and Cyberbullying

- » Listen, document details, and take reports of bullying seriously.
- » Understand with suspicions of bullying, children will often deny it because they fear adult intervention will escalate the situation.
- » Be supportive while seeking details; do not accuse the target of bullying of any wrongdoing such as, “you should stand up for yourself,” or “you should have told someone sooner.”
- » Help the target brainstorm strategies to deal with bullies effectively such as using resistance strategies (saying “stop” confidently, buddying up with a friend, using humor), or seeking out a safe adult who will intervene. Ignoring the bully or allowing the bullying to continue will not make it stop; this usually has the opposite effect.
- » If cyberbullied, save all correspondence. Encourage the target not to respond, to unfriend, and block the bully.
- » Do not respond by taking away technology.
- » If the bullying involves a physical assault, document injuries, seek medical care, and contact law enforcement.
- » Parents should report bullying to their child's school if the bullying is happening at school, or on the way to or from school. Make sure the school is involved and acting appropriately. (You can ask to see their bullying policy.)
- » Report other social conflict if intervention is needed to address it, however realize the school is only required to follow their policy on bullying when the behavior meets the definition of bullying.
- » Remember, some social experiences, such as teasing and choosing certain friends over others, are developmentally normal behaviors for school-aged children and are not necessarily bad experiences. School is not only for academic learning, but also for learning about social relationships and choosing friends wisely.
- » Involve the district department that handles bullying if you feel the school is not acting appropriately.
- » Encourage the targeted child to get involved in activities they enjoy to meet new people, both within and outside of school.
- » Seek counseling for the targeted child. Children often hide how devastating the effects of being bullied are; it is beneficial to have them speak with a professional.





Responding to Bullies

- » Do not deny or minimize the problem; respond with a firm but kind response that bullying is not tolerated.
- » Check the facts for yourself; do not believe everything the bully says.
- » Try to understand why a child is bullying others to target interventions toward that behavior. Children bully others for a variety of reasons:
 - They may want to be the leader, want power and control, or want other children to look up to them.
 - They may have witnessed abuse or dominance by one parent over another, or they themselves may be the victim of abuse or harsh punishment.
 - They may lack empathy for others and may need to be taught this skill as they are maturing.
 - They may possess feelings of entitlement.
 - They may want to be the popular student in school or want everyone to know them and like them. They may feel pressure from home to be a popular kid.
 - They may possess feelings of jealousy or inadequacy, or have low self-esteem.
 - They may be acting based on behavior witnessed at home or in their environment; all adults need to model good social behavior and empathy.
- » Seek professional help if the bullying does not stop immediately upon intervening or if there are additional concerns about the child's behavior or environment.

School Response to Bullying

- » Ensure the proper policies and procedures are in place and that all staff are trained to recognize and respond appropriately to bullying.
- » Provide increased supervision in places where supervision is low and social interaction is high, such as playgrounds, cafeterias and bathrooms.
- » Ensure students know how to report bullying and cyberbullying. Provide a means for reporting anonymously.
- » Implement prevention programs that incorporate bullying prevention and include Bystander education. In 57% of cases when Bystanders get involved, the bullying stops within 10 seconds.

Additional Resources

Additional resources for recognizing and responding to bullying and cyberbullying, as well as other types of maltreatment and victimization, are available at www.mbfchildsafetymatters.org, or on the mobile app, "Child Safety Matters," available at the App Store or Google Play.

Every child deserves to be safe!

