

# ELEMENTARY REPORT TO PARENTS

## Bullying

Whether as direct as a punch or as subtle as a smirk, bullying is a serious problem in American schools, where many children have been bullied, and many children bully others. Bullying can leave permanent physical and emotional injuries.

### Here are things to consider about bullying:

#### *Know what bullying looks like.*

Most bullying is verbal, not physical, like teasing, mocking, name-calling, and spreading hurtful rumors. Boys do the majority of the bullying and are more physical. Girls tend to bully by using verbal abuse and by excluding others. This form of bullying can be equally as devastating as physical bullying because it is quick and often invisible to others.



#### *Bullies need help too.*

Research indicates (1) that the underlying causes of bullying are rooted in the environment, namely, behavior learned through the home, school, peer group, or media; (2) that bullies can be helped to understand that their behavior is unacceptable; and (3) that bullies can learn that they have the power to change, even though some bullies rationalize their acts, saying the targets provoked them in some way. It is therefore important to make sure that the child who bullies has consistent and firm consequences for his or her behavior and is also taught positive ways of treating others.

#### *Children “go along to get along.”*

Targets of bullying are often avoided and rarely defended by their classmates because they don't want to chance becoming the bully's next target.

#### *Targets keep silent.*

Children who are bullied usually suffer in silence because they feel that nothing can be done to help them. Some become isolated and depressed and may even resort to violence against themselves and others.

#### *Never be a bully, and don't allow your kids to be.*

Bullying often begins at home. Parents who bully model behavior that may lead to children doing the same. If you observe your child being cruel to others, including siblings, explain why their actions were wrong and require change.



### **Schools are aware of bullying and are always looking for ways to reduce or eliminate it. There are ways for parents to help as well. Teach your children to:**

#### *Be assertive.*

Every child should be taught how to respond to malicious comments. It works better to tell bullies to stop than to just laugh like it is funny, a natural reaction from embarrassment. If it still does not go away, they need to get help. Bullies thrive on the results they get by hurting others. Help your children to understand that they can deprive bullies of satisfaction by not openly reacting to their taunts and insults.

#### *Be a friend in need.*

Stress to your children the importance of looking out for their friends and supporting students who are being bullied. Encourage them to notify a responsible adult when they know of a child who is being seriously bullied, either physically or verbally.

#### *Have strong self-esteem.*

Children who feel good about themselves and show it, aren't as likely to become targets of bullies, who prefer easier targets. Build children's self-esteem by genuine praise, unconditional love, and character education to help them “walk tall.”



**Finally, let your children know that you are always available to discuss problems such as bullying with them. Ask if they or their friends are experiencing bullying at school. Talk to them about how to cope with bullying and the dangers of letting bullies “get away with it,” and don't hesitate to alert the school as well.**

**Created from a revision of the publication by National Association of Elementary School Principals. Permission to reprint not required.**

# SECONDARY REPORT TO PARENT

## Bullying

Whether as direct as a punch or as subtle as a smirk, bullying is a serious problem in American schools, where many children have been bullied, and many children bully others. Bullying can leave permanent physical and emotional injuries.

### Here are things to consider about bullying:

#### *Know what bullying looks like.*

Most bullying is verbal, not physical, like teasing, mocking, name-calling, and spreading hurtful rumors.

Boys do the majority of the bullying and are more physical. Girls tend to bully by using verbal abuse and by excluding others.

This form of bullying can be equally as devastating as physical bullying because it is quick and often invisible to others.



#### *Bullies need help too.*

Research indicates (1) that the underlying causes of bullying are rooted in the environment, namely, behavior learned through the home, school, peer group, or media; (2) that bullies can be helped to understand that their behavior is unacceptable; and (3) that bullies can learn that they have the power to change, even though some bullies rationalize their acts, saying the targets provoked them in some way. It is therefore important to make sure that the child who bullies has consistent and firm consequences for his or her behavior and is also taught positive ways of treating others.

#### *Children “go along to get along.”*

Targets of bullying are often avoided and rarely defended by their classmates because they don't want to chance becoming the bully's next target.

#### *Targets keep silent.*

Children who are bullied usually suffer in silence because they feel that nothing can be done to help them. Some become isolated and depressed and may even resort to violence against themselves and others.

**Finally, let your children know that you are always available to discuss problems such as bullying with them. Ask if they or their friends are experiencing bullying at school. Talk to them about how to cope with bullying and the dangers of letting bullies “get away with it,” and don't hesitate to alert the school as well.**

*Never be a bully, and don't allow your kids to be.*

Bullying often begins at home.

Parents who bully model behavior that may lead to children doing the same. If you observe your child being cruel to others, including siblings, explain why their actions were wrong and require change.



**Schools are aware of bullying and are always looking for ways to reduce or eliminate it. There are ways for parents to help as well. Teach your children to:**

#### *Be assertive.*

Every child should be taught how to respond to malicious comments. It works better to tell bullies to stop than to just laugh like it is funny, a natural reaction from embarrassment. If it still does not go away, they need to get help. Bullies thrive on the results they get by hurting others.

Help your children to understand that they can deprive bullies of satisfaction by not openly reacting to their taunts and insults.



#### *Be a friend in need.*

Stress to your children the importance of looking out for their friends and supporting students who are being bullied. Encourage them to notify a responsible adult when they know of a child who is being seriously bullied, either physically or verbally.

#### *Have strong self-esteem.*

Children who feel good about themselves and show it, aren't as likely to become targets of bullies, who prefer easier targets. Build children's self-esteem by genuine praise, unconditional love, and character education to help them “walk tall.”

