



**KENTUCKY CENTER  
for SCHOOL SAFETY**

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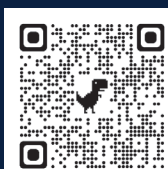
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# What is bullying?

**Bullying Happens** when a person with greater power takes unfair advantage of a less powerful person and these negative actions are repeated into a pattern of behavior. Bullying means there is an imbalance of power so that the victim cannot successfully defend himself or herself. Power can be physical size, strength, numbers, social standing, verbal skill, economic power, cultural or ethnic power, level of intelligence, popularity, gender, etc. Bullying is the persistent abuse of an underdog. The child who bullies watches for opportunities to pick on the victim and the victim feels tormented and defenseless.

## Characteristics of those who bully

1. Strong desire for power and control over others.
2. Physical strength greater than average for own age, and greater than victims.
3. Age usually older than victim's.
4. Average or above average self-esteem.
5. Charming manipulators.
6. Low-average to above-average popularity outside of own group of followers.
7. Remorseless.
8. Continual tormenting of victims.
9. Lack of empathy or understanding for others, lack of conscience.
10. Defiant attitude toward authority, refusal to follow rules sometimes violent behavior toward parents and teachers.
11. Actions become worse when a victim fights back.
12. Thrive on dominance and control.
13. Enjoyment in bullying others.

## Alarming Stats:

Nationwide, about 19.2% of students ages 12-18 in grades 6-12 reported being bullied, with approximately 15.4% of students reporting being bullied with a power imbalance, 14.5% being bullied repeatedly, and 12.7% being bullied with both a power imbalance and repetition. ([National Center for Education Statistics, 2022](#))

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/what-is-bullying>

41.3% of students who reported being bullied at school indicated that they think the bullying would happen again. ([National Center for Education Statistics, 2022](#))

<https://cyberbullying.org/what-is-bullying>

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What is bullying?

# Who are the victims?

Generally, children who are bullied have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Are perceived as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or being unable to afford what kids consider “cool”
- Are perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- Are depressed, anxious, or have low self-esteem
- Are less popular than others and have few friends
- Do not get along well with others, are seen as annoying or provoking, or antagonize others for attention

However, even if a child has these risk factors, it doesn't mean that they will be bullied.

**In order for your child to heal from bullying,** there are several important steps you must take. These include not only changing the way your children think about the situation, but also how they view themselves after being bullied.

You want to be sure your child does not allow the bullying they experienced to define them.

It's also important to help your child find closure for the situation.

And as counterintuitive as it sounds, forgiving the bully goes a long way in freeing your child from the pain of the experience.

## Remember...

Research shows that the effects of bullying last well into adulthood.

Victims of bullying behavior often suffer from feelings of helplessness and hopelessness

Low Self-Esteem: Bullying can do a lot of damage to an individual's self-esteem.

Victims of bullying may begin to believe the negative things they are told and feel like they're not good enough.

Victims of bullying may end up becoming bullies themselves as a result of the trauma and pain that they have experienced.

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## Myths of Bullying

# Shattering the myths of bullying

- ▶ **Myth:** Bullying behavior can't be changed.
- ▶ **Reality:** Use a positive approach to change behavior by awarding good behavior in students.
- ▶ **Myth:** Children bully because they have poor control of their anger.
- ▶ **Reality:** Children bully other children in order to gain or maintain social power in their peer group.
- ▶ **Myth:** Bullying is a natural part of childhood.
- ▶ **Reality:** There is nothing natural about being bullied. Bullying is often considered a normal part of childhood because it is such a common experience. Physical or emotional aggression toward others should not be tolerated as a normal part of childhood.
- ▶ **Myth:** You can always tell a bully from a victim.
- ▶ **Reality:** Children engaging in victim behavior and bullying behavior is actually quite common, especially in younger grades. The same child may be excluded from a playground activity one day and be the child name-calling the next. This blurring of roles between victim and bully behavior makes it challenging to figure out who started the problem.
- ▶ **Myth:** Ignoring bullying will make it go away.
- ▶ **Reality:** This solution sounds easy, but ignoring the problem will not make bullying behavior go away.
- ▶ **Myth:** Children and youth who are bullied will almost always tell an adult.
- ▶ **Reality:** Most studies find that only 25 to 50 percent of bullied children talk to an adult about the situation.
- ▶ **Myth:** Bullied kids need to learn how to deal with bullying on their own.
- ▶ **Reality:** Adults have critical roles to play in helping to stop bullying, as do other children who witness or observe bullying. Some children have the confidence and skills to stop bullying when it happens, but many do not.

## You Can Help

We exist in a world that quietly condones bullying behaviors. Most of the time, no one is there to intervene. You could say that **everyone in the community suffers when bullying behavior occurs**. Bullying is terrorism on a local level.

**Bullying will only be stopped by the intervention of adults in authority positions, such as educators and parents.**


Parents have the power to make a difference and reduce bullying behaviors, and the Kentucky Center for School Safety wants to help you do just that.

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## Myths of Bullying

# Who's the bully...not my child!

Studies on bullying have been done around the world. Norway, Sweden, France, Ireland, Japan, Denmark, United States, Canada, England and Germany have all conducted research into the problems of bullying and its effects on education and on society in general. There are conclusions that we can make from this research.

**Bullying will only be stopped by the intervention of adults in authority positions, such as educators and parents.**

**The roles kids play in bullying are not limited to those who bully others and those who are bullied.** Some researchers talk about the "circle of bullying" to define both those directly involved in bullying and those who actively or passively assist the behavior or defend against it.

**Those who bully cannot be allowed to continue bullying.** They need immediate consequences so that they know that their school has no tolerance for bullying behavior. Consequences should be non-hostile and nonphysical.

**Children who bully can be affected as much as those they target.** Statistically, they are significantly more likely than others to experience school failure, depression, violence, crime, and other problems. The message is clear: bullying is too important to ignore.

Even if kids are not bullied or bullying others they can be affected by bullying. Many times, when they see bullying, they may not know what to do to stop it. **They may not feel safe stepping in in the moment, but there are many other steps they can take.**

**We are encouraged. Research shows that adult interventions work.**

## Why don't kids ask for help?

**Kids don't tell adults they're being bullied for many reasons:**

- ▶ Bullying can make a child feel helpless. They may fear being seen as weak or a tattletale.
- ▶ Kids may fear backlash from the kid who bullied them.
- ▶ Bullying can be a humiliating experience. They may also fear that adults will judge them or punish them for being weak.
- ▶ Kids who are bullied may already feel socially isolated. They may feel like no one cares or could understand.
- ▶ Kids may fear being rejected by their peers.

**For more information:**  
[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

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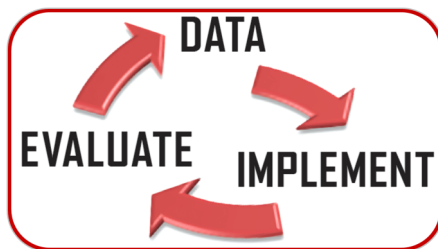
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# Educators: What is bullying?

## Suggestions for Educators

- ▶ **Educate your students, teachers, and other staff members** about the clear definition of bullying (not just conflict and teach the difference).
- ▶ **Revise anti-bullying policies** so they clearly define bullying and the consequences (if revision is necessary). Communicate this information to all stakeholders before school starts and throughout the year.
- ▶ **Form or use an existing school climate committee to review and evaluate the data** and existing plan used to combat the “bullying” problem in your school.
- ▶ **Collect data from multiple sources** through-out the year to define a clear picture of the scope of the “bullying” problem in your school.
  - Survey students, staff and parents about perception of “bullying” in your school
  - Utilize guided questions to determine where and when incidents are happening in your school
  - Access safe schools reporting data from office management systems
  - Use a uniform incident reporting form and be consistent
- ▶ **Develop and implement a comprehensive “data driven” plan** to decrease bullying on your campus.
- ▶ **Evaluate** and revise your Comprehensive Plan to decrease bullying by reviewing the data annually.



## Definition


- ▶ **Bullying is** unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
- ▶ **The behavior** is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.
- ▶ **Bullying includes** actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.


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Suggestions for Students

# Students: What is bullying?

► Bullying happens when a person with greater power takes unfair advantage of someone less powerful. These negative actions are often repeated, becoming a pattern of behavior.

► Bullying means there is an imbalance of power so that the victim cannot successfully defend himself or herself. Power can be physical size, strength, numbers, social standing, verbal skill, economic power, cultural, social or ethnic power, level of intelligence, an ability, popularity, gender, etc.

► Bullying is the persistent abuse of someone who is weaker. The student who bullies watches for opportunities to pick on the victim and the victim feels tormented and defenseless. There are certain individuals who are most often targeted for bullying. Traditionally, we have thought of these victims as the passive type. However, research doesn't follow that ideology and anyone can become a victim of bullying.

## Are you bullying others?

Have you been guilty of bullying someone else? Place a check in the box next to the bullying action you have participated in.

- ☐ Hit, kick, or push to hurt someone
- ☐ Use words to call names, tease, or scare people
- ☐ Said or written mean things about someone
- ☐ Grabbed or broken another kid's property
- ☐ Made fun of someone
- ☐ Left a classmate out of a group on purpose
- ☐ Sent an angry email/text message that offended a classmate
- ☐ Feel good when putting down others

If you checked more than one box, you might be bullying others. If so, you should go talk to your teacher, or school counselor and work a plan.

## Students: What's with those who bully?

There are a lot of reasons **why some people bully**. They may see it as a way of being popular, or making themselves look tough and in charge. Some who bully do it to get attention or things, or to make other people afraid of them.


- Those who bully might be jealous of the person they are bullying.
- They may be being bullied themselves.
- Some who bully may not even understand how wrong their behavior is and how it makes the person being bullied feel.


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Suggestions for Students

# Students: What you can do

## Bystanders to Bullying

Someone who witnesses bullying, either in person or online, is a bystander. Friends, students, peers, teachers, school staff, parents, coaches, and other youth-serving adults can be bystanders. With cyberbullying, even strangers can be bystanders.

[Bystanders](#) have the potential to make a positive difference in a bullying situation by becoming an upstander. An upstander is someone who sees what happens and intervenes, interrupts, or speaks up to stop the bullying.

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/bystanders-to-bullying>

## Safe on Social Media!

Social media is an increasingly important part of students' lives. In fact, the average teen spends nearly an hour and a half a day using social media.

Keep your social profile strictly private... the best settings are where only friends can see what you post because you never really know who your friends are friends with online, so the "Friends of Friends" setting can leave you exposed and vulnerable.

Even if you think you are being careful about what you post, it's common for teens to post sensitive information without even realizing it. It could be something as simple as an identifying background in one of your pictures... but online predators find easy prey in public profiles.

## Why don't kids ask for help?

**Kids don't tell adults they're being bullied for many reasons:**

- ▶ Bullying can make a child feel helpless. They may fear being seen as weak or a tattletale.
- ▶ Kids may fear backlash from the kid who bullied them.
- ▶ Bullying can be a humiliating experience. They may also fear that adults will judge them or punish them for being weak.
- ▶ Kids who are bullied may already feel socially isolated. They may feel like no one cares or could understand.
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# CONFLICT VS. BULLYING

## CONFLICT

- ▶ Equal power (peers)
- ▶ Happens occasionally
- ▶ Equal emotional reaction
- ▶ Not seeking power or attention
- ▶ Remorse
- ▶ Effort to solve problem
- ▶ Intent on restoring relationship

## BULLYING

- ▶ Imbalance of power (or perceived imbalance of power)
- ▶ Happens repeatedly (or has the potential to be repeated)
- ▶ Deliberate Act
- ▶ Strong emotional reaction on part of the victim
- ▶ Seeking power, control
- ▶ No remorse – blames victim

Situations with both, Conflict or Bullying need to be addressed and a plan devised with consequences to fit the behavior.

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# TELLING VS. TATTTLING

**There is a difference between telling and tattling.**

► **Telling is done to protect yourself or another student from harm.**

► **Tattling is done to get the person in trouble.**

**Understand that it's okay to tell an adult when you see or hear about bullying, violence or risky behavior.**

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Suggestions for Educators

# Cyber-Bullying: Suggestions for Educators

- ▶ **Educate your students, teachers, and other staff** members about cyber-bullying, its dangers, and what to do if someone is cyber-bullied.
- ▶ Be sure that **your school's anti-bullying rules and policies** address cyber-bullying. (AUP and Student Code of Conduct, Board Policies)
- ▶ **Use filtering and tracking software** on all computers, but don't rely solely on this software to screen out cyber-bullying and other problematic on-line behavior.
- ▶ **Investigate reports of cyber-bullying immediately.** If cyber-bullying occurs through the school district's Internet system, you are obligated to take action. If the cyber-bullying occurs off-campus, ***consider what actions you might take to help address the bullying:***
  - ▶ Notify parents of victims and parents of cyber-bullies of known or suspected cyber-bullying.
  - ▶ Notify the police if the known or suspected cyber-bullying involves a threat.
  - ▶ Closely monitor the behavior of the affected students at school for possible bullying. Remember — cyber-bullying that occurs off-campus can travel like wildfire among your students and can affect how they behave and relate to each other at school.
- ▶ Investigate to see if the victim(s) of cyber-bullying could use some support from a school counselor or school-based mental health professional.

## Survey Says

- ▶ Approximately 55% of students reported that they experienced cyberbullying at some point in their lifetimes ([Cyberbullying Research Center, 2024](#)).

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Suggestions for Educators

# Cyber-Bullying: Suggestions for Educators

When cyberbullying happens, it is important to document and report the behavior so it can be addressed.

## ► Steps to Take Immediately

- Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.
- Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers and social media sites.
- Block the person who is cyberbullying.

## ► Report Cyberbullying to Law Enforcement

When cyberbullying involves these activities it is considered a crime and should be reported to law enforcement:

- Threats of violence
- Child pornography or sending sexually explicit messages or photos
- Taking a photo or video of someone in a place where he or she would expect privacy
- Stalking and hate crimes

Resource: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/how-to-report>

### Surf Smart

- Explore the internet with skill and direction!

### Share Less

- Keep your personal information private!

### Think First

- Interact online appropriately!

- Cyberbullying is related to low self-esteem, suicidal ideation, anger, frustration, and a variety of other emotional and psychological problems ([Patchin, J. W. & Hinduja, S., 2024](#)).

Resource: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying>

## Fact

- Cyber-bullying is a serious issue and the Internet's "Virtual Society" is not going away. We have to learn to live in it as responsible global cyber-citizens.

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# Cyber-Bullying: Suggestions for Students

## ► What to do if you are Cyber-bullied

- Tell a trusted adult
- Don't open messages from people you don't know
- Don't open or read messages from cyber-bullies
- Don't react to the bully
- If it is at school, tell a trusted adult at school
- Don't erase the message or images
- Block the bully
- Report cyber-bullying to ISP's
- If you are threatened, inform the police

## ► How to Prevent being Cyber-bullied

- Don't give out private information such as passwords or PINs
- Practice restraint
- Apply problem-solving skills
- When something doesn't seem just right, leave the site or app

## Think First!


- If you  
wouldn't say  
it to their face,  
then don't email  
or text it!  
It hurts just  
the same...


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Suggestions for Students

# Cyber-Bullying: Suggestions for Students

## ► How to Prevent being a Cyber-bully

- Don't email when you are angry
- Don't email with friends and target someone for entertainment
- Don't forward an email that someone sent as a private message
- Don't post "questionable" pictures of others on your social network sites

### Surf Smart

- Explore the internet with skill and direction!

### Share Less

- Keep your personal information private!

### Think First

- Interact online appropriately!

Contact the police immediately if known or suspected cyber-bullying involves acts such as:

- Threats of violence
- Harassing phone calls or text messages
- Stalking or hate crimes

## Fact

- Cyber-bullying is a serious issue and the Internet's "Virtual Society" is not going away. We have to learn to live in it as responsible global cyber-citizens.


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Selfies and Self Esteem

# Selfies and Self Esteem...



- ▶ Taking a picture of yourself and posting it has become a virtual phenomena. Celebs are doing it, athletes are doing it and the President is doing it!
- ▶ The problem is when you post and ask for virtual judgment of your facial beauty
- ▶ Instagram is exploding with games using hashtags such as #beautycontest, #rankme, #rateme and #amipretty
- ▶ Consider who is commenting on your photo
- ▶ The comments are mostly for shock value and they may be lewd and damaging to your self-worth
- ▶ When you need advice about hair, make-up or eyewear ask someone you trust who will give you a fair assessment

## Remember


- ▶ **Don't randomly place selfies on the web and ask for comments from contributors you don't know and will never see or face in real life**


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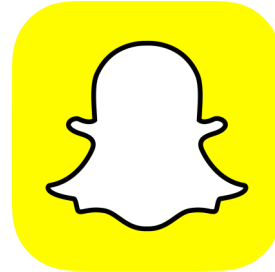


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**Snapchat**

# Snapchat



## Reporting is easy!

If you come across something upsetting, or if anyone asks you to do something inappropriate or that makes you uncomfortable, please report the Snap.

You can easily report inappropriate content to us right in the app! Just press and hold on the Snap, then tap the "Report Snap" button.

Safety is a shared responsibility.

Friends will only see the things that you send them directly or choose to post publicly to your Story.

Check your privacy settings to choose who can send you Snaps, or view your Stories and location on Snap Map.

Snapchat is also partnered with the Crisis Text Line to provide additional support and resources to Snapchatters in the US. Just text KIND to 741741 to chat with a live, trained crisis counselor at Crisis Text Line. This service is free and available 24/7!

**IP address  
is your  
digital  
fingerprint**





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**TikTok**

# TikTok



With Family Pairing, parents or guardians can link their TikTok accounts to their teens' to manage a variety of content, privacy, and well-being settings. These include features such as:

Setting a screen time limit, which is customizable by the day of the week.  
Customize your teen's For You feed using keywords. TikTok will filter out posts that contain the keywords that you choose by checking for them in the description of the post.

Customize your teen's comment controls or completely turn off comments.

Decide who can send messages or message requests to your teen.

View who your teen is following on TikTok, and who follows them, along with accounts they blocked.

Get an overview of your teen's privacy settings, such as their account visibility and who can comment on their posts.

You can support the community by reporting any video, comment, or account you believe violates our Community Guidelines.


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