

Bullying is a serious problem generally defined as: an imbalance of power between bully and target, intent to harm, threat of further aggression, creation of an atmosphere of terror, identified as a step toward more serious violence.

Did you know that...

Bullying increases through elementary, peaks at middle school, and declines in high school, but while physical violence decreases with age, verbal attacks remain constant.

90% of bullied students experienced a drop in school grades...and victimization was related to school absenteeism and withdrawal.

Sexual-minority students were 4 times more likely to have attempted suicide and were 5 times more likely to have missed school because of feeling unsafe. These behaviors parallel the behaviors of students in the general school population who have experienced sexual harassment and bullying.

Approximately 81% of students experienced some form of sexual harassment during their school years.

The bully and accomplices make up 10-12% of kids; the victim (10-15% of children); and the bystander (75% of children) which tells us that **there are more kids who can potentially stand up for what's right than there are bullies.**

2 Portraits of a Bully	
<p>More Extreme cases</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. seeks power over others 2. uses abuse to get what they want 3. causes harm for their own pleasure 4. has little empathy toward victims 5. is in emotional pain themselves, 6. defiant towards authority, 7. often comes from homes where physical punishment is used & homes where parental warmth and validation are missing <p>Bottom line: the bully needs to stop hurting others, but also needs empathy shown to them in order to address the complete problem</p>	<p>More Common cases</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. has high self esteem which challenges the stereotype 2. someone who needs to learn social and emotional tools for dealing with problems and needs 3. someone who "jokes" with their friends and teases others 4. has relationships that are based on mutual dislike of a third party 5. is often unaware that the way they interact with their peer group can be defined as bullying <p>Bottom line: just about every student has exhibited bullying behavior at one time or another and needs to understand that sometimes, though unintentional, their behavior can be harmful to others</p>

Definitions of bullying that may surprise you...

- Physical aggression: physical harm or destruction of property
- Social aggression: rumors, racial slurs, or exclusion
- Verbal aggression: name calling, teasing with intent to harm (different from good-natured ribbing), or threats
- Intimidation: phone calls, dirty tricks, taking possessions (such as stealing lunches or school supplies)
- Written aggression: threatening notes or graffiti
- Sexual harassment: comments or actions of a sexual nature that make the victim uncomfortable (may escalate in middle school where physical changes and gender identity issues peak); is illegal
- Racial harassment: comments or actions containing racial overtones that make the victim uncomfortable
- Hazing: forcing a student to perform acts that make them uncomfortable in order to gain access to a group
- Cyberbullying: is unique in that the bully can be anonymous, recipients can be bystanders even if they do not forward info, target may not receive the message, quick, large forum (see our link on this topic in the tools section for specific information & strategies)

What can parents and kids do?

If your child is the victim	If your child is a bystander (we have listed low to medium risk responses)	If your child is a bully/ displays bullying behaviors
<p>Understand that your child may be fearful of attending school, which is why it's so important to report bullying to a trusted adult on campus. CVMS takes this matter seriously, and wants to act immediately to resolve the situation.</p> <p>Teach your child to clearly and assertively state how they want to be treated without getting emotional about the situation.</p> <p>Provide compassion as your child is likely to take bullying to heart. Reinforce their self worth and give hope that a peaceful resolution will be achieved.</p> <p>Model maintaining eye contact- it is the single best preventative body language.</p> <p>Encourage your child to join a group of friends or a club to foster a sense of belonging. Just saying hello to a new classmate can go a long way to building relationships.</p> <p>Take advantage of available peer mediation services on campus.</p> <p>Understand that academics may be temporarily affected by bullying. Communicate with teachers so that they are aware and can support learning.</p>	<p>Provide your child consistent support and encouragement in standing up for oneself and others. Have them identify other kids who display leadership qualities and join together to say, "We don't treat people like that at our school."</p> <p>Role play scenarios to help your child be prepared to appropriately handle potential bullying incidents.</p> <p>Model confident posture and tone of voice.</p> <p>Teach your child to refuse to watch bullying incidents, to lead the victim away from the bully and to report any bullying that they see.</p> <p>Have your child invite the person being bullied to join their group; there is safety in numbers. This will have a tremendously positive social effect all around.</p> <p>Make an effort to include students who are normally left out or rejected. Empathize with the victims acknowledging that the behavior they experienced was unfair and cruel.</p> <p>Teach your child that social status is not as important as helping someone in need.</p>	<p>Teach your child to take personal responsibility for his/ her actions. (Sometimes kids will use the excuse "I was just joking" or blame others "they made me do it.")</p> <p>Your child may be struggling to find his/her place in the social hierarchy. Teach your child to base relationships on personal connection and mutual respect, not to form relationships at the expense of others (teasing, exclusion).</p> <p>Developmentally, middle schoolers are self involved and might not see how their behaviors affect others. Help your child reflect on his/ her behaviors and evaluate what is acceptable.</p> <p>Teach and model empathy and how to negotiate a win-win solution to conflicts.</p> <p>Understand how important it is to stop bullying behaviors immediately. If left unchecked, severe academic, social, personal, occupational and legal problems are statistically likely to result.</p>

Empathy & Awareness Building Scenarios

#1: Your teacher asks you to divide into small groups for a class project. You notice one of your classmates is not being asked to join any group. How do you think this person is feeling? What could a caring classmate do to help?

#2: You're standing around with a group of friends. All of you have just received a party invitation except for one member of the group. How do you think this person is feeling? What could you do to help the situation?

#3: A student is yelling at another student in the restroom and threatens to beat them up after school. A bystander hears it all but walks away and doesn't mention the incident to anyone. The bystander could take action in the following ways:

#4 A person is purposefully shoved while exiting the lunch line. Several bystanders look the other way and pretend not to notice. The bystanders could take action in the following ways:

What does the school do?
*School rules and expectations make it clear that SDUHSD does not tolerate bullying of any sort
*Counseling presentations on anti-bullying strategies
*Teachers, counselors and administrators work together to stop bullying immediately upon learning about it
*Bullies are reprimanded and also given counseling
*Parents are involved and given strategies to use with their child
*Peer mediation program is available which provides tools on its website, anonymous assistance with problems, and live mediation of conflicts
*Is developing character education program as a proactive approach

Literature Connection

Finding the Green Stone by Alice Walker

Mitch and Amy by Beverly Cleary

Bullies are a Pain in the Brain by Trevor Romain

Fourth Grade Rats by Jerry Spinelli

Crash by Jerry Spinelli

Web Resources

Anti-Bullying Network www.antibullying.net

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence www.colorado.edu/cspv