

Bullying Prevention

It's Up to All of Us



**Information Guide
for Parents
and Guardians**

2010



Halton
District
School
Board



Preventing Bullying

What is bullying?

Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

Bullying can be engaged in by individuals or groups and can include many different behaviours such as:

Physical Bullying

Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, beating up, stealing or damaging property.

Verbal Bullying

Name-calling, mocking, hurtful teasing, humiliating or threatening someone, racist or sexist comments.

Social Bullying

Excluding others from the group, gossiping or spreading rumours, setting others up to look foolish and damaging friendships.

Cyber Bullying

Using e-mail, cell phones, text messages and the Internet to threaten, harass, embarrass, exclude or damage reputations and friendships.

How can parents/ guardians help?

Watch for signs of your son/daughter being bullied. They may include:

- A fear of going to school or participating in other activities.
- Appearing anxious or fearful.
- Complaining of feeling unwell.
- Losing things, needing money and reporting being hungry.
- Appearing isolated from their peer group.



Tips For Sharing



If you're being bullied...

If you're standing by...

If you're bullying...

If your son/daughter is being bullied, sharing these tips with him/her may help:

- If it's difficult for you to stand up for yourself, ignore the bullying and walk away...**then tell an adult.**
- If you're scared to talk to an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you.
- Go to areas where you feel safe.
- Stay close to students who will stick up for you.
- Be assertive, not aggressive...fighting back often makes the bullying worse.
- Remember, no one deserves to be bullied.

If your son/daughter is standing by to watch someone being bullied, sharing these tips with him/her may help:

- Talk to someone who can help like a parent or a teacher...remember, telling is not tattling.
- If you walk away and get help, you are part of the solution...if you stay and watch, you are part of the problem.
- The best thing you can do for children/youth who are bullied is to be their friend and supporter.
- Speaking out helps. Bullying back doesn't help.

If your son/daughter bullies others, sharing these tips with him/her may help:

- Talk to someone who can help like a parent, teacher, or coach. They can help you find ways to stop bullying behaviour.
- Understand you may not like everyone around you but you must treat them with respect.
- Some children/youth join in on bullying because their friends are doing it. Put yourself in the shoes of the child/youth who is being bullied. Imagine their hurt, fear, embarrassment and anger. Bullying is destructive – these feelings can cause serious and long-lasting harm.



You're Not Alone

Other important ways for parents/ guardians to become involved:

- Encourage your son/daughter to report incidents of bullying. Given the hidden nature of bullying and the fact that children/youth are usually afraid to come forward, parents are often unaware of bullying situations.
- Let your son/daughter know you want to hear about every incident of bullying and encourage them to talk to you or another adult they trust.
- Explain the difference between tattling and telling: tattling is what you do to get someone into trouble, telling is what you do to get someone out of trouble.

Be ready to listen:

- If your son/daughter reports being bullied, be ready to listen right away. Don't put it off.
- Thank your son/daughter for being brave enough to come forward and explain it is his/her right to feel safe.
- Be willing to respond to all reports, even the seemingly trivial ones such as name calling. Consistency matters!

Speak Up!



Be your son's/daughter's champion.

Once your son/daughter has come forward, it's your turn to take action:

- Arrange a meeting for you and your son/daughter with the teacher and/or principal/vice-principal.
- Bring with you the specific information you've gathered about the bullying incident(s) (e.g., who, what, where, when, how).
- Work with your son/daughter and school personnel on a plan to address what your son/daughter needs right now in order to feel safe; what he/she can do to avoid being bullied and to stand up to any future bullying; and who he/she can go to for help.
- Recognize the school may need some time to investigate your concerns.
- Keep the lines of communication open between school and home. Arrange a follow-up meeting or phone call.

The information in this pamphlet has been adapted from PREVNet: Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network
web resources: www.prevnet.ca



The Kids Help Phone Line has trained counsellors to answer student and parent questions and provide advice about bullying.

1-800-668-6868

<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/en/home.asp>

Ontario Ministry of Education Bullying Prevention
brochure is available in 22 languages:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying.html>

