



Parents' Responsibility

If you are told your child is a bully:

Your first response will probably be defensive; disarm the situation and buy yourself some time to process what's being said. Ask for a thorough explanation of why your child is being labeled in this way and then **really listen**. Remember this discussion is ultimately about the well-being of your child, regardless of how it's being framed. Look



for what is going on in your child's interaction with others and what is going on internally, causing your child to behave that way. In talking with your child, **do not blame**. Do not get into a discussion about the "whys" of what happened.

Your discussion should include, but not be limited to the following topics:

- Bullying is never acceptable.
- Alternative solutions to use when your child is feeling frustrated, angry or aggressive.
- The consequences if the aggression or bullying continues.
- How you, as a parent, can help your child deal with the problem.
- Who your child can talk to at school.
- How you can help them stop the behavior, and how they will be rewarded for more appropriate behavior.

Mission Statement

The Kern County Sheriff's Office is committed to work in partnership with our community to enhance the safety, security, and quality of life for the residents and visitors of Kern County through professional public safety services.



Helpful Web Sites!

- National Crime Prevention Council
www.ncpc.org
- www.bullyfreekids.com
- <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov>

To contact the Kern County Sheriff's Office:

Emergency: 9-1-1
Non-Emergency: (661) 861-3110
Non-Emergency Outlying Areas: (800) 861-3110
Sheriff's Report Desk (Bakersfield area) (661) 391-7471

BULLYING



AN OUTLINE FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

This brochure is a publication of the Kern County Sheriff's Office
Crime Prevention Unit
(661)391-7559
www.kernsheriff.com
crimeprevention@kernsheriff.com

Bullying

Bullying is an aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength—and usually occurs without provocation. Children struggle with being called names, being picked on, being excluded, not knowing how to make friends or being the ones acting unkindly or aggressively toward others. Bullying is something most children encounter in one form or another. All forms of bullying are abusive and all are opportunities to teach children how to get along,

how to be considerate people and how to be a positive part of a community or group.



Facts and Stats

Being a victim of school bullying causes students to feel less connected with the school, which often leads to truancy, poor physical health, decreased participation in extra-curricular events, violence, substance abuse, and suicide. The ability to form natural relationships is often impaired and this rejection by peers often leads to emotional disturbances in adulthood. Victims of bullying are often more angry, sad, or anxious in childhood. They show higher rates of depression, headaches, sleep problems, and abdominal pain. Teasing and alienation can lead to school violence. It is estimated that as many as 20-30% of students report frequent involvement in bullying incidents as either the victim or the bully. A recent study found that peers were present in 85% of bullying episodes, but intervened in only 10%. Mobilizing bystander reaction is an important approach to preventing bullying.

The Dynamics

There are three components that make up the “Bully Triangle”

The Bully

- May think he/she is cool, funny, powerful
- Likes or gets pleasure out of intentionally hurting someone else
- May be aggressive or constantly attempts to take over or to dominate
- Usually doesn't have a sense of guilt for hurting others or take responsibility for their actions
- Will usually wimp out when questioned about their actions and blame it on something or somebody else (even the victim).

The Victim/Target

- May have low self-esteem and feel or act insecure
- May lack certain social skills
- May look and/or dress differently
- May have a physical or emotional disability
- May be unable to defend or stand up for themselves

The Witness

- Observes what is going on
- May be afraid to tell someone because the bully may, or may not, retaliate
- May not want to tell because the person they told before did not listen and take them seriously
- May even participate by laughing at what is going on



- May do nothing because he/she doesn't think it is a serious matter

Different Forms of Bullying

- Physical—pushing, shoving, poking, pulling hair, hitting, tickling, abusing, taking personal property.
- Verbal—name calling (referring to ethnicity, social status), teasing gossip, spreading rumors.
- Emotional—rejecting, extorting, blackmailing, isolating, peer pressure, exclusion.
- Sexual/inappropriate behavior—propositioning, sexual harassment, sexual assault (grabbing, pinching), sexual remarks.
- In contrast to boys' bullying behavior, which is often overt and easily visible, girls' aggression is usually indirect and covert. Less research has been conducted on the types of bullying that girls usually engage in. Girls reported using exclusionary behaviors, such as ignoring others, and indirect harassment—such as leaving hurtful messages. Reasons given for participating in this behavior include alleviating boredom and to be part of a group.
- Assess the level of bullying by conducting student surveys.
- Establish clear-cut anti-bullying policies at school

The School's Responsibility

- Supervise students outside the classroom and intervene when you observe bullying behavior.
- Avoid talking to the bully and victim at the same time.
- Treat all students consistently.

When pre-schoolers begin to call people names or use unkind words, intervene immediately and consistently. In kindergarten children learn the power of exclusion.

In the early elementary grades, cliques and small groups develop which can be quite exclusionary and cruel. Children need to hear clearly from teachers and be supported by the school administration that it is not all right to treat other people this way.