

Targeting Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

Grades Pre-K through 5



What is Bullying?

Bullying is being mean to another child or other children on purpose. Children who are bullied have a hard time defending themselves; therefore, the bully keeps being mean.

What is Harassment?

Harassment happens when the bully is being mean to another child or children because they are different. The law states that harassment happens when the bully is being mean because the person has a different skin color, comes from a different country, has a different religion, speaks a different language, or is a different sex. Harassment also happens when the person is being mean because a child is different in the way he or she speaks, walks, or looks. If actions make a child not want to attend school or feel scared, it is **very serious**.

What is Intimidation?

Intimidation is to create fear of harm in individuals for themselves, others or their personal properties.

All three of these behaviors are done on purpose to hurt someone. Sumter School District will not tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.

If someone is being mean to you, tell an adult at home or school.



At our school, we show respect and kindness to each other.



For Parents

Your child's education is valuable to his or her future.

Our schools are safe, positive learning environments that offer our students opportunities for a quality education. Since you, your child, and your child's teachers are a part of this environment, everyone has a role to report these intentional, harmful behaviors that cause pain and affect the ability of students to perform well in school.

Reports can be made to school staff when the behaviors:

- occur on school premises, on a school bus or other; school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop, or at a school-sponsored activity or event;
- disrupt or could disrupt the school;
- interfere with a student's right to an education; or,
- create an unsafe environment because of bullying, harassment or intimidation.

Things to know about reporting

- Confidential reports may be submitted face-to-face, via phone, or written report to any teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator. Report forms are on the Sumter School District's web-page and are available upon request.
- Reports can be made anonymously and the investigator will not reveal who provided the information.
- The more details given about the bullying—the who, when, where, and how—the better the investigation will be.
- Schools prohibit retaliation or reprisals to the victim/target or to the witnesses.
- Notify staff if the bullying continues for additional steps to correct the problem.
- False reporting is prohibited.

The **BULLY** has power or social support, but he or she is more likely to commit a criminal offense in the future if the bullying behavior continues.

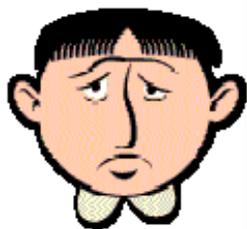
The **VICTIM/TARGET** has less power and social support, and may be harmed physically and/or emotionally. The victim/target may feel helpless, hopeless, ashamed, or even blame himself or herself.

BYSTANDERS are one or more students who witness the acts and might actively provide support to the bully. Bystanders might not intervene or seek help because they **fear for their safety**, think that they will lose friends, or become a bully's target.

Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying is “Peer Abuse.”

Signs That a Student Is Being Harassed or Bullied:

- Is easily distressed
- Shows drop in grades
- Becomes preoccupied and cannot seem to concentrate
- Appears unwilling, reluctant, or afraid to attend school
- Has missing or damaged property
- Denies that bullying is happening
- Has few, if any, friends
- Prefers to be alone or is withdrawn
- Has unexplained bruises or cuts
- Complains of not feeling well
- Exhibits poor self-esteem
- Seems depressed or sad



Report to a counselor, administrator or parent immediately:

- If student talks about suicide
- If a crime is committed
- If a student is in immediate risk of harm

What Ways Can “Peer Abuse” Happen?

Physical: Examples include biting, kicking, pushing, pinching, hitting, tripping, or pulling hair.

Verbal: Examples include sarcasm, teasing, putdowns, name calling, phone calls, spreading rumors, or hurtful gossip.

Emotional: Examples include nasty notes, using hand gestures or facial expressions, saying mean things using e-mails, text messaging, social media, or other electronic communication.

Sexual: Examples include unwanted grabbing, touching someone's body, sexual teasing, suggestions, rumors, jokes, threats, obscene gestures, or displaying obscene sexual material.

Racial: Examples include racial slurs, name-calling, making fun of skin color, customs, or accent.

Disability: Examples include teasing, socially excluding, name calling, or teasing a person because of a physical, educational, or psychiatric disability.

POSITIVE ACTIONS

Stop and think before you say or do something that could hurt someone.

Think: “Would I want a family member or friend to be treated this way?”

Find something else to do if you feel like being mean to someone. For example, play a game, listen to music, talk to a friend or an adult, etc.

Keep in mind that everyone is different, not better or worse. People are **different**.

Apologize to anyone whom you have bullied in the past. Everyone feels better.

GET INVOLVED:

- Determine where and when bullying happens at your school.
- Decide what you can do to help.
- Discuss your ideas with the principal.
- Join the safety committee at your school.
- Write a blog or tweet about bullying.
- Write a letter for the school's newspaper.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED:

- Make eye contact and tell the bully to stop in a clear, calm voice.
- Laugh or use humor if that is easy for you.
- Walk away and stay away.
- Do not fight back.
- Report the bullying behavior.

TO STAY SAFE IN THE FUTURE:

- Make a plan to stop the bullying with the support of a wise friend or an adult.
- Avoid places where bullying happens or remain with a group that will support you
- Stay in supervised areas.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WITNESS BULLYING:

- Interrupt the dynamics of the incident. For example, tell the victim that a teacher is looking for him/her.
- Offer to go with the student to report the bullying.
- Treat the student who is being bullied with kindness. For example, include the target of the bullying in your activities to show you care.
- Do not remain silent because it often creates more problems for everyone. The bully believes it is okay to treat others badly.

Bullying and harassment are “contagious” if not confronted effectively. Reporting bullying is not tattling. When you report bullying, you are protecting others from harm.



**WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD
MAY BE A TARGET OF BULLIES**

- Is frequently teased, taunted, belittled, ridiculed, intimidated, threatened, dominated or subdued
- Has a derogatory nickname
- Has bruises or injuries that cannot be explained
- Has belongings taken or damaged
- Has few or no close friends at school
- Isolates frequently from social activities
- Appears less assertive or lacks the skills to respond to others' teasing or harassment
- Appears weak or easily dominated
- Tries to stay close to a teacher or other adult at recess or breaks.

WHAT TO DO

If you suspect your child is being bullied:

Talk with your child

- If your child is being bullied, he or she needs to have a voice in how the situation is handled.

Contact the school

- Set up a meeting with your child's teacher(s) or counselor.
- Develop a plan for keeping your child safe, particularly during vulnerable times (class breaks, lunch, recess, etc.)
- Ascertain what activities or counseling options are available for your child.

If severe, contact law enforcement

RECOMMENDATIONS

If you suspect your child is being bullied:

- Do not encourage your child to fight back—two wrongs do not make a right!
- Listen to your child and do not ignore your child's plea for help
- Do not confront the parents or the other child directly.
- Avoid bringing your child and the bully together to elicit an apology or resolve the issue.

**WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD
MAY BE BULLYING OTHERS**

- Engages in frequent name-calling
- Brags on a regular basis
- Has a need to always get his/her own way
- Spends more time with younger or less powerful kids
- Shows a lack of empathy for others
- Has a defiant or hostile attitude; easily takes offense
- Misbehaves frequently at school (e.g. name-calling, teasing, intimidating, physical aggression)

WHAT TO DO

**If you suspect your child may be
bullying others:**

Talk with your child

- Never condone bullying behavior and inform your child that the behavior he or she is unacceptable.

Encourage empathy for others

- Remind your child that everyone has a right to be themselves, to choose their own friends, and to feel safe at school.

Review consequences of bullying behavior

- Discuss consequences pertaining to discipline and relationships.

How Bullying is Different from Normal Peer Conflict/Mean Behavior?

Normal conflict/mean behavior



Bullying

Equal power or are friends

Imbalance of power

Happens occasionally

Repeated negative actions

Accidental

Intentional

Not serious

Physical or emotional harm

Equal emotional reaction

Unequal emotional reaction

Not seeking power

Seeking control/material things

Remorse, both participants will take responsibility

Bully has no remorse and will blame target