

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a widespread and serious problem that can happen anywhere. It is not a phase children have to go through, it is not "just messing around", and it is not something to grow out of. Bullying can cause serious and lasting harm.

Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying involves:

- **Imbalance of Power:** people who bully use their power to control or harm and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves
- **Intent to Cause Harm:** actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm
- **Repetition:** incidents of bullying happen to the same the person over and over by the same person or group

Types of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms. Examples include:

- **Verbal:** name-calling, teasing
- **Social:** spreading rumors, leaving people out on purpose, breaking up friendships
- **Physical:** hitting, punching, shoving
- **[Cyberbullying](#):** using the Internet, mobile phones or other digital technologies to harm others

An act of bullying may fit into more than one of these groups.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

There are many warning signs that could indicate that someone is involved in bullying, either by bullying others or by being bullied. However, these warning signs may indicate other issues or problems, as well. If you are a [parent](#) or [educator](#), learn more about talking to someone about bullying.

Being Bullied

- Comes home with damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- Reports losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry
- Has unexplained injuries
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- Has changes in eating habits
- Hurts themselves
- Are very hungry after school from not eating their lunch
- Runs away from home
- Loses interest in visiting or talking with friends
- Is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers
- Loses interest in school work or begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed when they come home
- Talks about suicide
- Feels helpless
- Often feels like they are not good enough
- Blames themselves for their problems
- Suddenly has fewer friends
- Avoids certain places
- Acts differently than usual

Bullying Others

- Becomes violent with others
- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others
- Gets sent to the principal's office or detention a lot
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions
- Has friends who bully others
- Needs to win or be best at everything

STATE LAW

The Texas Education Code, Chapter 37 Section 37.001, requires each independent school district in Texas to have a local policy that prohibits bullying, harassment, and making a hit list and ensures that district employees enforce those prohibitions; and provides, as appropriate for students at each grade level, methods, including options, for:

- (A) managing students in the classroom and on school grounds
- (B) disciplining students; and

(C) preventing and intervening in student discipline problems, including bullying harassment and making hit list.

Under the requirements of 37.001(a)(8), the school district is also required to have specific options developed under local policy that are appropriate to each grade level that provide for preventing and intervening in student discipline problems, including bullying, harassment, and making hit list. Under Texas Education Code, Chapter 25, Section 25.0342 a parent has an opportunity to transfer their child to another campus if their child has been determined by the school to have been bullied.

We recommend that you review the local policy on bullying and harassment. Make sure that all staff are aware of the policy and have current training on how to recognize and prevent bullying and harassment.

REPORTING: It is important for each student to report any bullying or threats to the nearest teacher or adult at school as soon as possible so school officials may take appropriate action. Additionally, teachers and adults in the school should be aware of how students are treating each other and to intervene when inappropriate behavior is recognized. It is important that your staff are well trained and ready to take the appropriate action. Further, students should feel comfortable to approach staff with their concerns.

Elkhart ISD Policy on Bullying

“Students must not participate, either individually or in a group, in bullying or taunting behaviors toward another student. Such behaviors may include repeated teasing or ridicule, name calling, threats, theft, gossip and rumors, or physical intimidation of any kind. A substantiated complaint against a student will result in disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense and the Student Code of Conduct.”