

Bullying Prevention & Intervention

March, 2012

US Departments of Education and Health & Human Services announce the launch of a revitalized Stop Bullying website – www.stopbullying.gov – to encourage children, parents, educators, and communities to take action to stop and prevent bullying.

Welcome

Whether you are a student, a parent, or a staff person working at a East Elementary, we are glad you are visiting the East Elementary Bullying Prevention and Intervention website. These pages contain the East policies and procedures in regard to preventing and responding to bullying behaviors. Additionally, as you explore these pages, you will find a wealth of information about bullying prevention, curriculum, and other resources.

The content of these pages is guided by the belief that all students of the school community deserve the opportunity to learn in an environment where they feel safe. Students, parents, and staff all have a role to play in building positive environments for youth, and in promoting acceptance and respect among all individuals.

Bullying is a form of youth violence. It is aggressive behavior, directed intentionally towards an individual or individuals and it involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying has a negative impact on other students at school who are bystanders or witnesses to bullying by creating a climate of fear and disrespect. Bullying of any kind, including cyberbullying – the electronic version of bullying – will not be tolerated in the Grandville Public Schools.

The most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), distributed to East's Elementary school students in 2012, tells us the following about bullying in our schools and out of school:

In School

- Fifty-four percent (27%) of 5–6th grade students students reported that they saw someone else bullied in school in the 30 days prior to the survey.

Out of School

- Student respondents were more likely to report being bullied when they were in school than when they were not in school.
- 18% of East 6th graders school students and 14% of 5th grade students reported that they had been bullied in school in the 30 days prior to the survey
- 1% of 6th graders and 2% of 5th graders were bullied on their way to or from school

Online

- 0% of 6th graders and 0% 5th grade students reported they had been bullied on the Internet in the 30 days prior to the survey.

Trends/Comments

- Respondents who been bullied in school in the 30 days prior to the survey were asked how they responded the last time it happened (multiple responses were possible). Respondents in all grades were generally most likely to report trying to get the person/people doing it to stop, followed by talking to a friend about it, telling a school adult, and telling a parent/guardian.
- Rates of reported bullying in all venues decreased between 2010 and 2012, continuing an overall pattern of decline since 2002

In order to create a school culture that is free of harassment and bullying, students, staff, and parents all have a responsibility to recognize and report bullying when they see it. We must also build a school environment that, by its very nature, prevents bullying before it occurs. By visiting these pages, you are taking a step to help make our community one that we can all be proud to be a part of. We encourage you to explore as we work together to continue to make our community one that is safe for all -- socially, emotionally and physically.

More information: <http://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org>

Before filing an incident report, we strongly encourage you to also explore other pages on this website to learn more about bullying prevention and intervention.

I want more information on how to report bullying!

Reporting Procedures and Forms

The purpose of this section of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention website is to help students, parents and staff understand the specifics of the reporting procedures and forms.

Before filing an incident report, we strongly encourage you to also explore other pages on this website to learn more about bullying prevention and intervention.

WHAT ARE THE RULES IN THE EAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WHICH PROHIBIT BULLYING? DOES IT INCLUDE ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

The East Elementary School prohibits bullying (including cyberbullying):

- At school and at all school facilities
- At school-sponsored or school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds
- On school buses and school bus stops
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, licensed or used by a school; and
- At non-school-related locations and through non-school technology or electronic devices, if the bullying affects the school environment

Encouraging others to target a student with any of the behaviors listed above may also be considered bullying.

WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL BE CONSIDERING IN DECIDING IF A REPORT IS ACTUALLY A BULLYING INCIDENT?

Every incident will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and treated seriously. That said, it's important to remember that not every situation is, in fact, bullying. Sometimes misunderstandings and miscommunications will result in one party feeling that they were a target of bullying. The principal, assistant principal, housemaster or other staff person reviewing the initial Bullying Incident report will determine if the incident warrants further investigation.

The Newton Public Schools, in determining if a behavior is bullying, will consider the following questions:

- Is there a pattern of repeated behaviors by one aggressor towards one or more target(s)?
- Has the behavior caused physical or emotional harm to the target student or damage to his or her property?
- Does the behavior put the target in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property?
- Does the behavior create a hostile environment at school for the target student?
- Is this situation infringing on the rights of the target student at school?
- Is this behavior substantially disrupting the educational process or the orderly operation of the school?

HOW DO I FILE A REPORT OF A BULLYING INCIDENT?

- You/your parents can contact a school by phone and report it to school personnel
- You/your parents can make a report in person at the school or house office
- You/your parents can complete the **Bullying Incident Reporting Form**
 - Ø This form can be downloaded, printed and returned to the school.
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 - Ø The schools also have copies of this form available for you to complete

CAN A REPORT BE FILED ANONYMOUSLY?

Yes. Each school has a box for anonymous reporting located in the main office of the school. However, keep in mind that while you do not have to give your name or email address when reporting, if you don't, we will not have a way to contact you to help or to fully investigate the incident. You should also be aware that false accusations, filling out a report to "get back at someone" or just because you don't like them will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary action.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN INCIDENT IS REPORTED?

1. Principal will acknowledge receipt of the report in writing.
2. A preliminary review of the incident may be conducted to determine need for the investigation.
3. If warranted, an investigation will be conducted and completed within 10 days
4. Parents of both the target and aggressor will be notified of the outcome and action plan in the event of a repeat behavior.
5. The school will take appropriate action to prevent repeated bullying.

WILL I BE TOLD THE DISCIPLINARY OR OTHER ACTION TAKEN AFTER THE INVESTIGATION?

Confidentiality laws prohibit educators from telling a student or parent specifics about any action taken against another student. But this doesn't mean we are not working on it. No report will be ignored. And, though it might mean that you won't get specific information, the person investigating the incident will keep you informed.

Definitions

These definitions, adapted from "Matt's Safe School Law" www.MattEpling.com and other sources, will help you to understand the language on this website and on the Newton Public Schools reporting forms.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, and includes the distribution of electronic communications or the posting of electronic material that may be accessed by one or more persons. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Aggressor is the student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Target is the student against whom the bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

Bystander(s) is the person or people who witness an act of bullying.

Hostile Environment refers a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support and paraprofessional staff.

School grounds is property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school, or collaborative school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: WHAT IS CONSIDERED BULLYING?

A: Every incident will be evaluated on a case by case basis and treated seriously. That said, it's important to remember that not every situation is, in fact, bullying. Sometimes misunderstandings and miscommunications will result in one party feeling that they were a target of bullying. Generally, an action is considered bullying if it:

- demonstrates a pattern of repeated behaviors
- causes physical or emotional harm to the target student or damage to his or her property
- is based on an imbalance of power in the relationship between aggressor and victim

Q: WHAT ABOUT TEASING? HOW DOES THAT FIT IT?

A: It's sometimes hard to know when a behavior crosses the line from "teasing" to bullying. Is eye rolling bullying? What about name-calling? We all need to learn to discern between teasing/joking/talking back kind of behaviors and actual bullying behaviors. Sometimes it's hard to tell and often depends on the situation. However, parents and teachers alike should continue to go back to the points above when evaluating: if there is a power imbalance and repeated acts of aggressive, belittling and/or shunning behavior, it is bullying. It is important to keep in mind age and gender differences as well. Sometimes children are simply experimenting with their own social power. It's okay, as a parent or educator, to say to a child, "Hey, what was that? I'm not sure I liked that look (that comment, etc.)." There's nothing wrong with having a discussion about it, even if you are not sure what you think: it helps kids learn what the boundaries of acceptable behavior are.

Q: WHAT ARE THE RULES AT EAST AGAINST BULLYING?

A: In keeping with the Michigan Law regarding bullying (including cyberbullying), bullying is prohibited:

- At school-sponsored or school-related functions
- At school and at all school facilities
- On school buses and school bus stops
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, licensed or used by a school; and
- At non-school-related locations and through non-school technology or electronic devices, if the bullying affects the school environment

Encouraging others to target a student with any of the behaviors listed above may also be considered bullying.

Q: DOES IT INCLUDE ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

A: Yes. Whether on or off school grounds, in person, in writing, by text, email, or on the computer, if an action creates a hostile environment at school or infringes on the rights of another person at school, it is considered bullying.

Q: WILL I BE TOLD THE DISCIPLINARY OR OTHER ACTION TAKEN AFTER THE INVESTIGATION?

A: Confidentiality laws prohibit educators from telling a student or parent specifics about any action taken against another student. But this doesn't mean we are not working on it. No report will be ignored. And, though confidentiality requirements might mean that you won't get specific information about how East has followed up on your report, the person investigating the incident will keep you informed.

Q: WHAT IS THE POLICE INVOLVEMENT IF BULLYING HAS OCCURRED?

A: Filing a Bullying Incident Report triggers an investigation into the specific incident(s) which occurred. In the event that the act is considered to be bullying, the school will determine the consequences or action plan. Police will only be called if the incident has specifically violated a law (such as discrimination, stalking or assault).

Q: MY CHILD HAS SPECIAL NEEDS? HOW DOES THIS LAW EFFECT HIM/HER?

A: If a child has a disability that affects social skills development or the child is vulnerable to being involved in bullying (be it as a target or aggressor) because of the his/her disability, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and/or respond to bullying behaviors.

Resources for PreK- Grade 6 Students

This page contains some additional resources geared toward elementary school aged students. If you are a kid, please be sure to check with your parent/guardian before visiting these sites. Click on the title to link to the resources.

[be nice. - The Mental Health Foundation](http://www.themhf.org/education/be_nice1)

www.themhf.org/education/be_nice1

Mental Health Foundation of West Michigan | 107 Oaks SE **Grand Rapids**, MI 49503 | 616.389.8601

[Pacer Kids Against Bullying](#)

This site has games, videos, and commonly asked questions about bullying.

[StopBullying.gov](#)

This site was created by the US government for kids, parents, and teachers to learn about bullying. There are games, cartoons, and quizzes for you to test your problem-solving skills!

[Netbullies.com](#)

This site has information about the electronic form of bullying (cyberbullying).

[PBS Kids Webonauts](#)

Webonauts Internet Academy is a web-original game for having some fun while exploring what it means to be a citizen in a web-infused, information-rich world.

[Herotopia](#)

This website takes place in the virtual land of Herotopia, where kids can meet the Herotopia superheros who are part of the Bully Bunch. Site contains games, information and secure on-line discussion groups for kids, as well as information for parents.

[Stop Bullying: Speak Up \(Cartoon Network\)](#)

This site has lots going on and is worth a visit! You can play games, enter contests, watch video clips and even download wallpaper for your/your family's computer.

If you think you are being bullied at school or elsewhere, please talk to a parent or another trusted adult. At home, your parents can help you think about what to do. And at school, your teacher, teacher's aide, specialists, and any other adult in your school building will know what to do to help.