



What Parents Can Do to Help End Bullying

Understand what bullying is and what it is not.

- Allen ISD Board Policy and the Allen ISD Student handbook states: *Bullying is engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the district and that: (1) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student. [See FFI (Local).]*
- For further clarification: Bullying occurs when a student intentionally assaults, batters, threatens, harasses, stalks, menaces, intimidates, extorts, humiliates, or taunts another student including cyber bullying. Bullying also occurs when a student or a group of students organize a campaign of shunning against another student or when a student or group of students maliciously spread rumors about another student. In most circumstances, bullying does not include a mutual fight between students of roughly equal strength who are angry with each other. Such fights are subject to discipline as a violation of school rules prohibiting fighting. Also, in most cases, it does not include students who participate in a mutual argument or exchange in name calling. If severe enough, a onetime event can be categorized as a bullying behavior.
- Help your child understand that bullying is harmful and not acceptable.

Talk with and listen to your kids every day.

- Know who your children play with or hang around with in the neighborhood. Connect names and faces of those children.
- Have conversation with your children about their social lives by asking open ended questions about what they do with their friends, what happens in the neighborhood during their social time as well as what happens on the way to and from school.
- Explain to your child what bullying is and is not.
- It's important for children to know that they should tell their parents if they are bullied because parents want to make sure their child is safe.

Establish household rules about bullying.

- Children need to hear from their parents explicitly that bullying or watching bullying and doing nothing is not acceptable – this includes bullying, being bullied, or to standing by and watching other kids being bullied. This includes sibling bullying.
- Discuss possible consequences for bullying behavior.

Be a good example of kindness and leadership.

- Your kids learn a lot about relationships and power from watching how you interact with others. You have a great opportunity when you get angry at another driver on the road, a

waiter, a sales clerk or even your child to model effective communication skills by not blowing up or name calling.

- Any time a child sees someone speak to another person in a mean or abusive way, they are being taught that bullying is ok.

Be able to recognize potential signs when children may be being bullied.

- Most children don't tell anyone when they are being bullied – especially adults.
- Signs may be: complaints of not feeling well, frequent loss of belongings, avoiding school, wanting to go to school late or wanting to leave early, not enjoying or wanting to attend social activities, frequent injuries or damage to clothes or property, appears to be alone most of the time, obtains an excessive or insufficient amount of sleep.
- Additional symptoms may be: depression, anxiety, safety concerns, aggression, grades dropping, low self-esteem, deficits in peer relations and substance use.

Create healthy social skills and anti-bullying behaviors.

- Coach your children what not to do – hitting, pushing, teasing, name calling and being mean to others.
- Help your child to understand how these kinds of actions might feel to the child on the receiving end (“How would it feel if that happened to you?”).
- Teach your children what to do – being kind, having empathy, playing fair, taking turns, etc.
- Teach your children what to do if other kids are mean – get an adult, tell the child who is teasing or bullying to stop, walk away and ignore the bully, and/or help others who are being bullied.

Know some of the common signs of children who bully.

- Children who bully tend to have: average or above average self-esteem, impulsive personalities, lack of empathy, difficulty conforming to rules, positive attitudes toward violence.
- Some bullies are quite popular, enjoying high status and esteem from their peers, and even teachers. These are called “Hidden bullies” – popular children who exhibit aggressions (persistent arguing, fighting, getting in trouble).