

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING BULLYING

One out of every five students report being bullied. Bullying is NOT the same as normal peer conflict.

What qualifies as bullying?

Bullying is any form of aggressive behavior in which a person or group (a bully or bullies) intentionally and repeatedly causes another person (a victim) injury or discomfort. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or more subtle actions. The bully is perceived by the victim as being physically, intellectually, or status-wise more powerful and domineering. **Bullying always involves a power difference.**

Bullying is different from conflict

Conflict is a disagreement or argument in which both sides express their views. Conflict is usually accidental or unintentional. The students involved are more likely to feel remorse, change their behavior when asked, apologize and/or learn a lesson. Conflict is a normal part of growing up and building relationships.

Bullying is negative behavior directed by a person or group to exert power and control over another person. It is usually intentional and repeated and always harmful.



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The Five Types of Bullying

- **Physical** - Hitting, pushing, tripping, spitting, stealing from, and destroying possessions to hurt or humiliate.
- **Cyber** - Takes place over digital devices like cell phones, tablets, and computers, and can occur via text, social media, forums, and gaming. Sending, posting or sharing negative, harmful, false, or private information to humiliate or shame.
- **Indirect** - Emotional, leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors, making jokes about or embarrassing the other person in public.
- **Verbal** - Teasing, putdowns, criticism, name-calling to degrade and demean the victim.
- **Social Isolation** - Intentionally ignoring or shunning someone, getting other students to do so as well to exclude and reject.

What are the impacts of bullying on students?

Bullying harms each person involved - whether victim, bystander, or bully - and damages the school community.

Negative outcomes of bullying may include: low concentration, anxiety, low self-esteem, poor school performance, school avoidance, depression, involvement in violence, substance abuse, and poor social functioning.

What can families do?

- Listen, be supportive and patient
- Ask questions to get a better picture of whether this is peer conflict or bullying
- Make sure your child knows being bullied is not their fault
- Discuss ways your child can respond in the moment:
 - It is okay to walk away
 - Report bullying immediately to a trusted adult
- Take notes
- Contact your child's school. Ask who is the DASA coordinator for your school district and file a report with them.

Still have questions?

Contact us at (585) 546-1700 or starbridgeinc.org/contact-us



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Dignity For All Student Act (DASA)

"New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function."

DASA requires that each district have a policy specific to bullying and a DASA Coordinator. The DASA Coordinator is responsible for receive bullying and harassment complaints and doing a formal investigation. The Coordinator also provides any needed education and support for the student who did the bullying and follow-up with the family who submitted the incident report. The DASA Coordinator is also responsible for school employee training, school employee reporting and annual reporting.

Using the IEP as a tool to address bullying

If your child has an IEP and is being bullied, the IEP can be a tool to help. Your child's school team can identify supplementary aids and services, program modifications or supports to intervene with bullying. For example, the IEP could include goals and objectives that address the following: allowing the child early dismissal to and from class, preferential seating in class, staying near adults or groups of other kids, or designating a peer buddy.

Family Resources:

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/questions-answered/conflict-vs-bullying.asp>

<https://pacerkidsagainstbullying.org>

Free phone app and info: <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/knowbullying>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/videos-social-media>

Credits: National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/stats.asp>

(Rose & Monda-Amaya, 2012)

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/>

