

# Bullying



- Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.
- The three types of bullying are verbal (e.g., saying or writing mean things), social (e.g., hurting someone's reputation or relationships), and physical (e.g., hurting a person's body or possessions).
- Bullying can lead to difficulties later in life for both the child who is bullied and the child who bullies.
- Parents are encouraged to talk with their child about bullying before an incident occurs, so that the child feels comfortable telling their parents when something happens.

## What Is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and those who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

## Three Types of Bullying

There are three types of bullying:

- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. It includes teasing, taunting, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, and threatening to cause harm.
- **Social bullying** involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. It includes leaving someone behind on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, and embarrassing someone in public.
- **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. It includes hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, and making mean or rude hand gestures.

## Children Who Are More Likely To Bully Others

There are two types of kids who are more likely to bully others:

- Some are well-connected to their peers, have social power, are overly concerned about their popularity, and like to dominate or be in charge of others.
- Others are more isolated from their peers and may be depressed or anxious, have low self-esteem, be less involved in school, be easily pressured by peers, or not identify with the emotions or feelings of others.

Children who have these factors are also more likely to bully others:

- Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- Have less parental involvement or having issues at home
- Think badly of others
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way

## Children At Risk of Being Bullied

Generally, children who are bullied have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Are perceived as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or being unable to afford what kids consider "cool"
- Are perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- Are depressed, anxious, or have low self-esteem
- Are less popular than others and have few friends
- Do not get along well with others, seen as annoying or provoking, or antagonize others for attention

However, even if a child has these risk factors, it doesn't mean that they will be bullied.



**CONNECTICUT  
Clearinghouse**  
a program of the Connecticut Center  
for Prevention, Wellness and Recovery

**800.232.4424 (phone)**

**860.793.9813 (fax)**

**[www.ctclearinghouse.org](http://www.ctclearinghouse.org)**

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

## Warning Signs Of Bullying

Some signs that may indicate a **child is being bullied** include:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

**Kids may be bullying others** if they:

- Get into physical or verbal fights and/or are increasingly aggressive
- Have friends who bully others
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions or blame others for their problems
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

## Effects Of Bullying

**Kids who are bullied** can experience negative physical, school, and mental health issues. Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience:

- Depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. These issues may persist into adulthood.
- Health complaints
- Decreased academic achievement—GPA and standardized test scores—and school participation. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.

**Kids who bully others** can also engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood. Kids who bully are more likely to:

- Use alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults
- Get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school
- Engage in early sexual activity
- Have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults
- Be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults

## How To Help

Parents can talk with their child about bullying. Opening lines of communication before a child is involved in bullying makes it easier for them to tell parents when something happens. If parents know or suspect that bullying has occurred, they should find out what has happened. Knowing what has occurred will make it easier to communicate with school and community officials. If bullying is occurring at school, parents can learn about what their state requires schools to do in the state's anti-bullying law. Parents can also learn about federal laws that require schools to address harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, and disabilities and ways to report situations that have not been adequately addressed to the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice.

## Connecticut Resources

**CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**  
<https://portal.ct.gov/DMHAS>

**CT Statewide 24/7 Treatment Access Line**  
1.800.563.4086

**CT Department of Children and Families**  
<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF>

**CT State Department of Education**  
<https://portal.ct.gov/Services/Education>

## National Resources

[stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)  
[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)



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Mental Health & Addiction Services