How to prevent bullying:

How adults can help

Parents, school staff, and other caring adults have a role to play in preventing bullying. They can:

- Help kids understand bullying. Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up for it safely. Tell kids bullying is unacceptable. Make sure kids know how to get help.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
- Encourage kids to do what they love. Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.
- Model how to treat others with kindness and respect.

Help Kids Understand Bullying

Kids who know what bullying is can better identify it. They can talk about bullying if it happens to them or others. Kids need to know ways to safely stand up to bullying and how to get help.

- Encourage kids to speak to a trusted adult if they are bullied or see others being bullied. The adult can give comfort, support, and advice, even if they can't solve the problem directly. Encourage the child to report bullying if it happens.
- Talk about how to stand up to kids who bully. Give tips, like using humor and saying “stop” directly and confidently. Talk about what to do if those actions don’t work, like walking away.
- Talk about strategies for staying safe, such as staying near adults or groups of other kids.
- Urge them to help kids who are bullied by showing kindness or getting help.

Keep the Lines of Communication Open

Research tells us that children really do look to parents and caregivers for advice and help on tough decisions. Sometimes spending 15 minutes a day talking can reassure kids that they can talk to their parents if they have a problem. Start conversations about daily life and feelings with questions like these:
- What was one good thing that happened today? Any bad things?
- What does lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with? What do you talk about?
- What is it like to ride the school bus?
- What are you good at? What would you like best about yourself?

Talking about bullying directly is an important step in understanding how the issue might be affecting kids. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, but it is important to encourage kids to answer them honestly. Assure kids that they are not alone in addressing any problems that arise. Start conversations about bullying with questions like these:
- What does “bullying” mean to you?
- Describe what kids who bully are like. Why do you think people bully?
- Who are the adults you trust most when it comes to things like bullying?
- Have you ever felt scared to go to school because you were afraid of bullying? What ways have you tried to change it?
- What do you think parents can do to help stop bullying?
- Have you or your friends left other kids out on purpose? Do you think that was bullying? Why or why not?
- What do you usually do when you see bullying going on?
- Do you ever see kids at your school being bullied by other kids? How does it make you feel?
- Have you ever tried to help someone who is being bullied? What happened? What would you do if it happens again?
- There are simple ways that parents and caregivers can keep up-to-date with kids’ lives.

Read class newsletters and school flyers. Talk about them at home. Check the school website. Go to school events. Greet the bus driver. Meet teachers and counselors at “Back to School” night or reach out by email. Share phone numbers with other kids’ parents. Teachers and school staff also have a role to play.

Encourage Kids to Do What They Love

Help kids take part in activities, interests, and hobbies they like. Kids can volunteer, play sports, sing in a chorus, or join a youth group or school club. These activities give kids a chance to have fun and meet others with the same interests. They can build confidence and friendships that help protect kids from bullying.

Model How to Treat Others with Kindness and Respect

Kids learn from adults’ actions. By treating others with kindness and respect, adults show the kids in their lives that there is no place for bullying. Even if it seems like they are not paying attention, kids are watching how adults manage stress and conflict, as well as how they treat their friends, colleagues, and families.

- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Encourage kids to do what they love.
- Help kids understand bullying.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Encourage kids to do what they love.

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 who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:
- An imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.
October is Bullying Prevention month and this year Kentucky Safe Schools Week is focusing on...Kindness, Unity and Empathy. Kentucky Safe Schools Week is set for Oct. 20–26, 2019. This year’s theme is “Our Safety Story!” and the Kentucky Center for School Safety stands on the belief that everybody should enjoy school equally and be treated with respect. Community members, educators, students and parents are encouraged to get involved during Kentucky Safe Schools Week.

As school begins and schedules are in place the climate and culture of school becomes evident. Rules and guidelines of acceptable behaviors are set, discussion and modeling are great tools to reinforce wanted outcomes. KCSS encourages all Kentucky schools to take this opportunity to promote positive behaviors and encourage social, emotional wellness by taking the Ky. Safe Schools Week Pledge, and using the resources (lessons, videos, etc) while planning a week-long school campaign. www.kycss.org/ssw.php

The Kentucky “Our Safety Story!” campaign is sponsored by the Kentucky Center for School Safety. This observance coincides with the national campaign. America’s Safe Schools Week is sponsored by the National School Safety Center. “I encourage all Kentuckians to get involved and nurture kindness, unity and empathy across our Commonwealth and in our schools. Teaching tolerance and modeling kindness in our everyday lives will help build the safe communities and schools of tomorrow. Joining together, we can make "Our Safety Story" phenomenal.” said Jon Akers, executive director, KCSS.

Every school has its own cast of characters weaving the fabric of its own Safety Story. Our schools are composed of students/staff who are a host of likely characters with a variety of interests and talents. Join in with schools across Kentucky, as we embrace unity, kindness and empathy to enhance “Our Safety Story.”

Our Safety Story Pledge...Kindness-Unity-Empathy

By taking the pledge we are embracing unity, kindness and empathy to enhance “Our Safety Story!” and create a feeling of community and friendship throughout Kentucky's schools.

To keep Kentucky schools safe places in which to learn and work, I pledge to be:

Strong enough to show empathy for others who need help at school.

Awesome, as I strive to use tolerance to create unity at school.

Friendly, showing kindness to others of all ages.

Encouraging, promoting a feeling of community and friendship throughout my school.

www.kysafeschools.org/sswpledge

During Safe Schools Week (and through-out the year) the KCSS website supplies a variety of teaching aids along with the online pledge and Kentucky Safe Schools Week Tool Kit loaded with resources such as daily announcements, activity pages, PowerPoint presentations, lessons, videos, scenarios, interactive websites and much more. Resources will also be available for school administrators, parents and community involvement at www.kysafeschools.org/ssw.php

There are three types of bullying:

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

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WE CAN END BULLYING

Stand together & Stop Bullying

Types of Bullying
Effects of Bullying

Bullying can affect everyone—those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying. Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental health, substance use, and suicide. It is important to talk to kids to determine whether bullying—or something else—is a concern.

Kids Who are Bullied
- 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
  - 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.
- A very small number of bullied children might retaliate through extremely violent measures. In 12 of 15 school shooting cases in the 1990s, the shooters had a history of being bullied.

Kids Who Bully Others
- Kids who bully others can also engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood. Kids who bully are more likely to:
  - Abuse 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

Bystanders
- Kids who witness bullying are more likely to:
  - Have increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
  - Have increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety

The Relationship between Bullying and Suicide
- Media reports often link bullying with suicide. However, most youth who are bullied do not have thoughts of suicide or engage in suicidal behaviors.
- Although kids who are bullied are at risk of suicide, bullying alone is not the cause. Many issues contribute to suicide risk, including depression, problems at home, and trauma history. Additionally, specific groups have an increased risk of suicide, including American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian American, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. This risk can be increased further when these kids are not supported by parents, peers, and schools. Bullying can make an unsupportive situation worse.

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What Is Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over electronic devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can participate in or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter
- SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
- Instant Message (via devices, email providers, as well as social media messaging features)
- Email

Special Concerns

With the prevalence of social media and digital forums, comments, photos, posts, and content shared by individuals can often be viewed by strangers as well as acquaintances. The content an individual shares online—both their personal content as well as any negative, mean, or hurtful content—creates a kind of personal space where people control their views, activities, and behavior. This public sharing also affects others through an online reputation, which may be accessible to schools, employers, colleges, clubs, and others who may be researching an individual now or in the future.

Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone in the future. Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone in the future. Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone in the future. Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone in the future.

Permanent – Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.

Hard to Notice – Because teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.

Laws and Sanctions

Although all states have laws requiring schools to respond to bullying, many states do not include cyberbullying under these laws or specify the role schools should play in responding to bullying that takes place outside of school. Schools may take action either as required by law, or with local or school policies that allow them to discipline or take other action. Some states also have provisions to address bullying if it affects school performance. You can learn about the laws and policies in each state, including if they cover cyberbullying.

Frequency of Cyberbullying

The 2015 School Crime Supplement indicates that, nationwide, about 21 percent of students ages 12-18 experienced bullying. The 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) notes that an estimated 14.9 percent of high school students were electronically bullied in the 32 months prior to the survey.

When adults bully adults, kids suffer

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. “Every day thousands of young people experience bullying from their peers while at school, after school in their neighborhoods, and even when they are at home,” through social media and text, “PACER points out.” Founded in 2005, PACER is a National Bullying Prevention Center. www.pacer.org.

But, here’s my question. How do we adults hope to prevent bullying among our youth when adults caniacle some of the worst verbal word-williams? A 2019 article in The Ledger Independent Thursday, October 24, 2019

- Melissa Blake wrote a recent anti-Trump op-ed piece for CNN. A mob of mean mugs hurted hurtful names: fat, potato, blobfish.
- Blake tweeted back with such dignity and grace—she’s my new heroine. She showed 45 some pitiful pixels and eviscerated the mob-mugs about Ferguson-Sheldon Syndrome, a genetic bone and muscular disorder. She’s experienced 26 surgeries. Says lovely to her melissablakeblog.com.
- I’ll admit that I wanted to smear Sorina (Spay Epsy on the cyber-bully’s muzzle. Look! And dip their foul fingertips in battery acid.
- "Most of us encounter adult bullies at certain points in our lives. An adult bully can be an intimidating boss or co-worker, a controlling romantic partner, an unruly neighbor, a high-pressure sales/business representative, a condescending family member, a shaming social acquaintance, or other types of abusive relationships,” summarized a 2006 online article at Psychology Today.
- An adult bully can also be a president, a politician, a professor, a physician, a police officer, a TV producer, preacher; a parent, a partner, or a peer. A bully likes power and control. "It’s my way or the highway. Bullies can often be found in positions of power.
- Bringing bullies right to our core and we feel disrespected and treated unfairly. We expect adults to act and react with maturity with a total toxic tongue. Bullying behavior is a consistent and intentional pattern of intimidation, harassment, or aggression.
- In a 2008 article on the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center website, Ken Vogler, Ph.D, reported, “Adults are being bullied at levels similar to adolescents, according to a 2007 survey conducted on behalf of the American Osteopathic Association. The online survey of more than 2,000 U.S. adults found that 31 percent of Americans have been bullied as an adult. The survey defined bullying as being subjected to repeated, negative behavior intended to harm or intimidate.”
- Again, I ask the same question. How do we adults hope to prevent bullying among our youth when adults can be bullying bullies?
- And reality TV shows are ripe with bullying behaviors. It appears that competition can bring out the worst in us. Reality TV—spitting, cursing, or attacking physical manipulation. Pathetic producers panderm the performance drama for ratings. Folks, just change the channel.
- Bill Hacker, former Pennsylvania, was lastly fired–he regains the classic bully of the on-air culture of a host bullying guests. “Simple peck-order bullying is only the beginning of the kind of hierarchical behavior that can lead to racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, and all the other ‘isms’ that cause so much suffering in the world,” summed Octavia Butler. As adults, we need to role model change, and teach the Golden Rule to our children. I ask another question. Can we create a world without bullying?

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