

Here at PDE, one of our highest priorities is responding quickly and consistently to all bullying behavior, sending a clear message that bullying is not acceptable. Talking about bullying, building a safe school environment, and creating a safe community requires school staff, parents and community members to educate our children on the dangers of bullying.

BULLYING IS . . .

Unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **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.
- **REPETITION:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once and are repeated over a period of time.
- **BEHAVIORS:** Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

THREE TYPES OF BULLYING

VERBAL BULLYING - Verbal bullying – saying or writing mean things. This may include, but not limited to, teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, and/or threatening to cause harm.

SOCIAL BULLYING – involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships. This may include, but not limited to, leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, and/or embarrassing someone in public.

PHYSICAL BULLYING – involves hurting a person’s body or possessions. This may include, but not limited to, hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking or breaking someone’s things, and/or making mean or rude hand gestures.

CHILDREN AT RISK OF BEING BULLIED

Children who get bullied generally have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Perceived as different from their peers – overweight, underweight, different clothing, new to the school, unable to afford what kids consider “cool”.
- Perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves.
- Are depressed, anxious, or have low self-esteem.
- 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.

REMEMBER, those who bully others do not need to be stronger or bigger than those they bully. The power imbalance can come from a number of sources – popularity, strength, cognitive ability – and children who bully may have more than one of these characteristics.

I THINK MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED . . . WHAT NOW?

- ✓ Recognize the warning signs. Many times kids won’t ask for help, so it’s important to know what to look for.
- ✓ Talk with your child and establish open lines of communication. Discuss what bullying is and what it is not. Prevention begins with educating kids on what to do before it happens so they will know how to respond.
- ✓ Reassure your child s/he is not in trouble for reporting incidents. Listen without blaming.
- ✓ Write down and report all the specific facts your child shares with you. Include location, names of people involved, times behavior has occurred, statements made, etc.
- ✓ Communicate with schools immediately, even when in doubt of severity. Always make sure you speak with administrators, teachers, and/or counselors any time you suspect a potential situation.
- ✓ Once a report is made to the school, the school will immediately investigate all reports allowing the school to take action and issue consequences as deemed appropriate.
- ✓ Consequences can include, but are not limited to, warnings, conflict resolution, ISS, OSS evidentiary hearings, and legal action when warranted.


WARNING SIGNS AND CHANGES

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches
- Feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in habits – eating, sleeping
- Declining grades, loss of interest
- 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

CYBERBULLYING . . . HOW TO RESPOND

CYBERBULLYING CAN CREATE A DISRUPTIVE ENVIRONMENT AT SCHOOL AND IS OFTEN RELATED TO IN-PERSON BULLYING. THE SCHOOL CAN USE THE INFORMATION TO HELP INFORM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE STRATEGIES.

- ✓ DON'T RESPOND TO AND DON'T FORWARD CYBERBULLYING MESSAGES
- ✓ KEEP EVIDENCE. RECORD DATES, TIMES, AND DESCRIPTIONS OF INSTANCES WHEN IT HAS OCCURRED.
- ✓ SAVE AND PRINT SCREENSHOTS, EMAILS, AND TEXT MESSAGES.
- ✓ BLOCK THE PERSON WHO IS CYBERBULLYING.
- ✓ REPORT CYBERBULLYING TO WEB AND CELL PHONE SERVICE PROVIDERS.
- ✓ REPORT CYBERBULLYING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT WHEN THERE ARE THREATS OF VIOLENCE, EXPLICIT MESSAGES OR PHOTOS, STALKING AND HATE CRIMES, AND/OR A PHOTO OR VIDEO HAS BEEN TAKEN OF SOMEONE IN A PLACE WHERE S/HE WOULD EXPECT PRIVACY.



**ACCESS THE HCS DISTRICT'S WEBPAGE
TO MAKE A REPORT
www.horrycountyschools.net/Page/10117
or
download the PDE Bullying Report from
our website and submit to your
child's teacher**