STOP BULLYING

A Guide to Fighting Back

Courtesy of the

San Ramon Police Department

Community Resource/Crime Prevention Division

www.sanramon.ca.gov/police

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Family Safety Guide: Bullying

Dear Parents,

One of our jobs as parents is to protect our kids from harm, whether physical or emotional. Unfortunately, no child can be protected 100% from the hazards of his or her world of school, play, family and friends. But to do the best job we can, we prepare our kids for those hazards.

This booklet is designed to help your child cope with any bullies that he or she might encounter, whether in person or, as increasingly happens, online. By sharing these tips for prevention, action and resolution of bullying situations, you will equip and empower yourselves and your child with the necessary skills to safely navigate these tricky childhood hazards.

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The Best Way to Fight Back!

When you're being bullied, or think that you are, it's OK to seek help! Only an adult can handle a bully who won't stop.

BULLY TALK

Arm Yourself With Knowledge

Talk

A bully acts on an imbalance of power between him or her and the victim, whether because of physical size or strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity.

What Is Bullying? Bullying is behavior among children that involves a real or perceived threat of harm to or control over another. This behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and may include:

Verbal Aggression. Teasing, threats, or spreading embarrassing information or hurtful rumors.

Physical Aggression. Hitting or chasing in a threatening way.

Exclusion. Being left out of a group.

Posting. Harmful, embarrassing or untrue information or pictures online or through text messages (cyberbullying).

Share with your child that none of this behavior is OK and none of it is his or her fault – hurting others should never be tolerated.

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WARNING SIGNS

Be Alert To These Signs

- Does he or she fear going to school? Is he or she avoiding school by claiming to be sick more often than seems normal?
- Does he or she have more than a usual amount of cuts and bruises from active play?
- Have there been changes in my child's social life? Does he or she seem to be spending more time alone than before?
- Does my child seem unhappy, anxious or insecure?
- Does my child seem to lack confidence and have difficulty being assertive?

If you suspect that your child may be being bullied, stay calm! Talk with your child reassuringly, and get as many facts as you can about the bullying behavior. Share the prevention/coping strategies in this booklet and talk about how your child might use them. Encourage them to share their concerns with friends and enlist their friends for mutual protection.

Go to
www.planprepareshare.com/bullying

Copy a FREE template of an e-mail message to help you report a bullying incident. Do it now! Send the e-mail, follow-up with a phone call, keep the pressure on!

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PARENT TIPS

Prepare Your Kids By Following These Tips

Facts

In 2010, about 160,000 children missed school every day out of fear of being bullied.

One in seven students Kindergarten through 12th grade is either a victim or a bully.

Over half of teens have been bullied or engaged in bullying online, and over half don't tell their parents. Cell phones are the most popular vehicle for cyberbullying.

Be Open, Calm and Assertive. Let your child know that you are always willing to listen to his or her concerns. Stay calm. Keep a written record of incidents for use in reporting to your child's school and/or law enforcement.

Avoidance. As much as possible, your child should avoid encountering anyone they're fearful of, even if nothing has actually happened. Taking a different route to school (that you have approved), playing in other areas of the playground, not associating with other children who play with a bully are all good strategies.

Reassurance. Do what you can to instill and foster confidence in your child. Emphasize strengths and abilities; a child who feels good about who they are is more able to cope with or even avoid bullying behavior, since bullies are looking for victims that they perceive to be less powerful. Tell your child that the bully's behavior comes from the bully's need to feel powerful and not from any deficiency in your child.

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ROLEPLAY

Ally and Kyle, best friends and victims **Jenna and Adam, bullies**

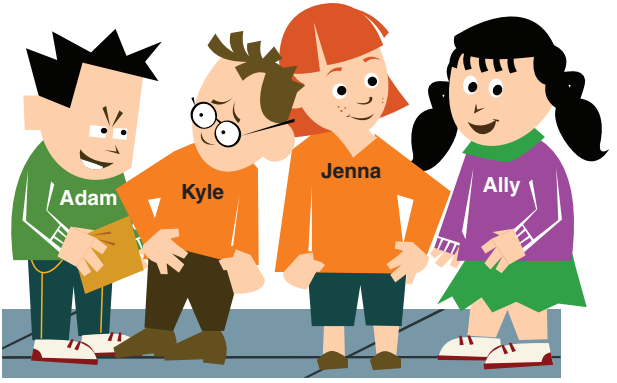
One of the best ways to teach a child how to react to bullying is to "role play" a realistic situation, based on the child's experiences. Here are some examples:

Jenna teases Ally about her pigtails. Jenna calls her a "pig" because she wears her hair in braids; other girls look on but don't intervene.

Ally tells Kyle about the teasing and asks him if she should change her hair to avoid the teasing. He says she could, but suggests that if it happens again, she could either walk away, or could tell Jenna that because her hair is so beautiful, she wears it in braids so that she won't be showing it off. She could also say that she doesn't mind being called a pig, because pigs are such smart animals.

Jenna teases Ally again and Ally responds with her explanation about how beautiful her hair is, and why she likes pigs who are so smart.

ROLEPLAY



Ally and Kyle, best friends and victims **Jenna and Adam, bullies**

Adam tells Kyle that he must want to be a girl because Kyle goes to ballet classes. Other boys strike exaggerated dance poses in the background. Kyle tells Ally about the teasing, and Ally suggests that Kyle can walk away, or he can look Adam in the eye and tell him how strong and quick he (Kyle) is from ballet exercises.

Adam teases Kyle again and Kyle tells Adam that he likes ballet, because it makes his legs so strong and powerful. Also, he likes it when people applaud him when he dances on stage, so others must think he is a good dancer.

Ally and Kyle, smiling, walk away leaving Adam and Jenna and others looking somewhat frustrated.

The Best Way to Fight Back!

When you're being bullied, or think that you are, it's OK to seek help! Only an adult can handle a bully who won't stop.

CHILDTIPS

Prepare Your Kids By Following These Tips

Be Safe At School. You deserve to feel safe at school! It's hard to learn if you're worrying about being bullied. Follow the tips your parents have shared with you from this booklet, and share them with friends.

If you've tried avoiding and ignoring the bully, being brave and walking away, telling him or her to stop, and the bullying behavior continues, it's time to get help! Only adults can handle a bully who won't stop. Tell your parents, and let them take it from there.

Be Safe Online. Be smart about how you communicate online. If you ever receive an e-mail or instant message or see postings that make you feel hurt or uncomfortable, share them with your parents. Don't post hurtful messages or pass them on. Remember that what you put online is never private, even if you intend it to be! Don't worry about losing the use of the computer – your parents have ways to protect you online. But in order to do so they need to know what's going on!

Be Cell Phone Safe. If you have a cell phone – cool! But remember that text messages and photos are never private; both can be forwarded to anyone and everyone! So don't share anything that you don't want the whole world to see or know.

The "Golden Rule". This ancient rule is simple: Treat others as you want to be treated. You will save yourself and your friends from hurt feelings, embarrassment and trouble if you keep the "Golden Rule" in mind in all of your communications and relationships.

More information

www.stopbullying.gov
www.bullypolice.org
www.kidpower.org
www.bullyingstatistics.org
www.planprepareshare.com

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800.288.3344

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