

Bullying – Information for Parents

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a form of abuse at the hands of peers that can take different forms at different ages. It is targeted and repeated. It involves power, aggression, intimidation and shame. It preys on vulnerability or exposes both children who bully and those who are bullied, to a number of social and mental health problems and lifetime pattern of abuse.



- **47%** of Canadian parents report having a child victim of bullying
- **87%** of Canadian students in Grades 8-10 reported witnessing school bullying in the past year. (Stats Can, 2012)

Signs of Being Bullied

Because bullying is foremost a relationship problem, adults must look for signs of bullying or victimization within the child's relationship.

Emotional and Behavioral Signs of Being Bullied:

- Afraid to go to school or other activities
- Appears anxious or fearful
- Low self esteem and makes negative comments about oneself
- Complains of feeling unwell (headaches and stomachaches)
- Lower interest in activities and lower performance at school
- Loses things, needs money, reports being hungry after school.
- Injuries, bruising, damaged clothes or articles.
- Appears unhappy, irritable
- Trouble sleeping, nightmares
- Threats to hurt themselves or others
- May appear isolated from their peer group



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Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, laptops, tablets, social media sites, text, chat and websites. Examples of cyberbullying include hurtful text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social media, embarrassing pictures, videos, websites or fake profiles.

- Cyber bullying can happen 24 hrs a day 7 days a week and reach a child/youth even when they are alone.
- Cyberbullying can be done anonymously and distributed to a wide audience
- Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages or pictures is extremely difficult once they've been posted or sent.

How Parents can Help

- **Start the conversation:** Children/youth are unlikely to confide in parents about something as hurtful and embarrassing as bullying unless they know they have a receptive audience.
 - Talk often and openly
 - Share any bullying experiences you may have had growing up
- **Encourage new friendships and build self confidence:** Positive friendships in different settings can often minimize the effects of bullying. Encourage your children/youth to enroll in sports, lessons, camps, or other activities away from school so they can experience different friendships.
- **Advocate for your child/youth:** Adult intervention stops bullying. It is a parent's job to protect their child, whether they are in pre-school or high school. Treat bullying incidents seriously – talk with teachers, other adults in their life and other parents.
- **Cyberbullying:**
 - Always be ready to listen to your teen and be their advocate. Cyberbullying can escalate quickly and requires swift adult intervention.
 - Monitor child/youth technology use appropriately and look out for warning signs that your child/youth may be experiencing cyberbullying.
 - Always keep a record of emails, chats, or phone messages that you can take to your Internet Service Provider or the Police.
 - Always report incidents of cyber bullying to your child's school and Internet Service Provider. School boards have Codes of Conduct that include cyberbullying.

Resources/References for Bullying

- Edmonton Catholic Schools Parent Resources: <https://www.ecsd.net/ParentsStudents/ParentResources/Pages/default.aspx>
- Teen Mental Health www.teenmentalhealth.org
- Kids Help Phone @ 1 800 668 6868: <http://kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/InfoBooth/Bullying/What-is-bullying.aspx>
- Bullying Prevention, Alberta Education: 24 hr Bullying Prevention Hotline @ 1 888 456 2323 <https://education.alberta.ca/bullying-prevention/what-is-bullying/everyone/bullying-helpline/>
- PREVNet <http://www.prevnet.ca/bullying>
- www.Stopbullying.gov

Phone Numbers:

- Call Health Link Alberta: 811
- CYFAMH Intake: 780-342-2701
- Youth Addiction Services Edmonton: 780-422-7383
- Mobile Response Team: 780-427-4491
- Call 211 – Alberta Community resources
- Catholic Social Services: (780) 432-1137
- The Support Network, Edmonton Distress Line: 780-482-HELP (4357)