

Students who bully are found everywhere – in neighborhoods, in small towns, in large cities, in churches, in homes, and in schools across the United States. The Katy community is not immune from such behavior. However, Katy ISD is committed to engaging employees, students, and parents in creating a safe and orderly learning and working environment for each student and employee. The purpose of this brochure is to help parents understand what bullying is and what they can do to help prevent it.

### **What is bullying?**

The Texas Education Code defines bullying as follows:

Bullying means engaging in written or verbal expression, expression or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the district and that:

- has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

The conduct described above is considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
2. Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

### **What are the components of bullying?**

- It's mean and intended to cause harm.
- It involves repeated exposure to negative willful actions or an imbalance of power.

Conduct at school, to be considered bullying, must have a negative effect on the education of the targeted student or significantly disrupt the school or educational environment.

### **What are some examples of ways bullying might occur?**

- Verbal taunts such as name-calling or racial slurs
- Lies and false rumors
- Threats and intimidation
- Isolation or social exclusion from a peer group
- Physical attacks such as kicking, shoving, or hitting
- Theft or vandalism
- Cyberbullying

### **What is cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of any electronic communication device to engage in bullying. Cyberbullying is also known in some circles as electronic bullying. Regardless of the name used, cyberbullying is bullying at its highest level because of the wider audience, ease with which information can be broadcast, and the fact that it can be done 24/7. People who use cyberbullying may feel less inhibited and freer to be more aggressive since they are not face-to-face with the victim. People who use cyberbullying may also feel more empowered because of the ability to remain anonymous or to disguise his/ her identity.

People who use cyberbullying can be found in a variety of locations on the Internet such as blogs, chat rooms, webcams, message boards, anonymous electronic bulletin boards, and social networks such as Facebook and MySpace. Some of the methods of cyberbullying include pretending to be someone else online to deceive others, spreading lies and rumors about targets, using deception to obtain personal information from others, sending or forwarding mean messages, and posting images of targets without their consent.

### **What are some common characteristics observed in students who bully?**

- Have difficulty following rules
- Lack empathy for others
- Exhibit impulsivity in temperament
- Are often quick to anger
- Use a perceived power differential to gain dominance

### **What are the potential effects of student-on-student bullying or harassment?**

The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education has identified the following list of effects of student-on-student bullying or harassment on a victim:

- Lowered academic achievement and aspirations
- Increased anxiety
- Loss of self-esteem and confidence
- Depression and post-traumatic stress
- General deterioration in physical health
- Self-harm and suicidal thinking
- Feelings of alienation in the school environment, such as fear of other students
- Absenteeism from school

### **What can parents do to help prevent bullying and other forms of disrespectful and hurtful behavior?**

Parents are often the best resource for building self-confidence and teaching children how to solve problems or conflicts. Examples of actions that parents can take include:

- Prevent disrespectful behavior by teaching the skills necessary to establish good peer relations.
- Talk to your child about the difference between tattling and reporting behavior that might be harmful or dangerous.
- Communicate behavioral expectations that demonstrate respect for others and impose appropriate consequences for failure to comply.

- Model behavior that illustrates respect for students and adults.
- Review Katy ISD's Discipline Management Plan and Student Code of Conduct with your child to acquaint them with school rules and the consequences for bullying.
- Instruct your child to report bullying type behavior to a person in a position of authority (i.e. principal, teacher, counselor, etc.) immediately when it is observed or experienced by your child.
- Notify a school official if your child is the target of behavior defined as bullying so that the incident can be promptly investigated. District officials can then analyze the behavior to determine whether it meets the definition of bullying.
- Keep accurate records of incidents so that you can be specific when discussing the problem with campus personnel
- Monitor your child's internet and cell phone usage for any evidence of cyberbullying or inappropriate communications.

**What can the school do in regard to conduct that occurs in the community and outside the school's jurisdiction?**

The District has no jurisdiction to assess disciplinary consequences for negative behaviors that occur in the community or for inappropriate use of electronic communication devices to engage in bullying outside the school setting. However, campus personnel can be available to conference with the bully and the student being targeted

**Books on Bullying for Reference**

**Children's Books on Bullying**

**All by Trudy Ludwig**

- My Secret Bully
- Just Kiddig
- Sorry!
- Trouble Talk
- Too Perfect
- Confessions of a Former Bully
- Better Than You

**Parent Resource:**

Big Book of Parenting Solutions  
**By Michele Borba**



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