

Bullying in school: A Parents Guide

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This information is provided so that we can work together to eliminate bullying. It is our hope that you will thoughtfully review and discuss the information with your children at their own pace of understanding.

It is critical that our children understand that if behavior feels mean to them, it must be stopped. When mean behavior goes unchecked, all three of the individuals involved ultimately are hurt: the bully, the victim and the observer(s).

First, let's define bullying as one child or a group of children exerting their power over another child. Bullying can include making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone on purpose from group activities. The behavior is aggressive and is repeated over time.

Both the children who are bullied and those doing the bullying may be harmed and have serious, lasting problems. It is often not considered, but those observing the bullying are also harmed.

Understanding what is and isn't bullying is important. A certain amount of conflict among children is normal and a natural part of learning. However, when that evolves into bullying there are often other underlying problems to be dealt with.

How learning self-defense can help both the bully and those being bullied.

I have long said that putting either the child being bullied (along with a host of other behavior problems) or a child who is bullying into self-defense training will help.

"Bullies tend to have low self-esteem," says W. Michael Nelson, Ph.D., coauthor of *Keeping Your Cool: The Anger Management Workbook*, which is designed to help counselors who work with aggressive kids. "They lack empathy and have a need to dominate others."

Training in self-defense helps to build the self-esteem of those who participate. Participate being the key word - you must train to get the desired effects.

By putting your children into a positive, fun and friendly training environment where they are learning life changing and saving skills, you are making an investment in their future.

Michael Coffin
Owner, Chief Instructor
Crucible Self Defense

Three types of bullying

Verbal

Teasing someone
Calling someone names
Making sexual comments
Taunting or mocking someone
Threatening to cause harm
Posting rumors online
Instant messaging threats

Social

Deliberately leaving someone out, shunning them
Telling other kids not to be friends with someone
Spreading rumors about someone
Embarrassing someone in public

Physical

Hitting, kicking, or pinching someone
Spitting on someone
Tripping or pushing
Taking or breaking someone's things
Making mean or rude gestures
Taking money under threat

What is bullying and what is not

Most, if not all children, are teased by someone at some point. Sometimes this teasing goes beyond normal thresholds and is very hurtful. When we are talking about bullying we are pointing at behavior that takes something away from someone - their ability to feel in control of themselves and take effective action. Bullies pick on certain people because they need a victim, usually someone who seems emotionally or physically weaker or just acts different in some way. Bullies use their mean action to make themselves feel more important, popular and in control.

The notoriety and attention they receive from adults and students gives them a false sense of importance and begins to substitute for the self-esteem that they should have from simply being themselves.

The effects of bullying

The effects of bullying on everyone are very serious. An entire school environment can become very negative. The victims self-worth, academic performance, and ability to form lasting relationships can be negatively affected. We often see victims become isolated and withdrawn. They may feel physically sick, visit the nurse frequently, and try to stay home often. In severe cases, bullying can lead to the tragedies we see on television where someone takes their own life or results in a school shooting.



1 in 4 students report being bullied during the school year.

MOST students won't report bullying.

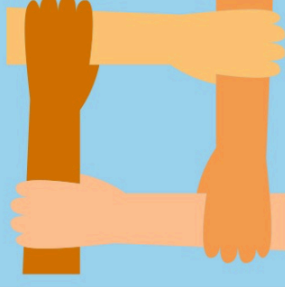


90%

of students who are bullied offline are also bullied online.

64%

of victims don't report bullying.



Looks, body shape, and race are the most common reasons for bullying.

BULLY VICTIMS ARE

4.8

TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN THOSE NOT INVOLVED IN BULLYING TO SUFFER FROM

DEPRESSION



PURE VICTIMS ARE

4.3

TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN THOSE NOT INVOLVED IN BULLYING TO SUFFER FROM

ANXIETY

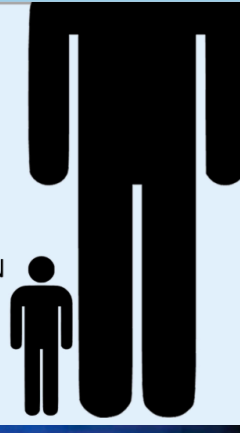


MALE BULLY VICTIMS ARE

18.5

TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN THOSE NOT INVOLVED IN BULLYING TO COMMIT

SUICIDE



STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL REPORT KIDS ARE MEAN MAINLY BECAUSE THEY ARE TRYING TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES AND ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE THEIR SOCIAL STATUS

Practical steps to take if your child is being bullied in school

Have you talked with your child?

If you have, talk to them again to try and find out what they would like you to do. You want them to feel involved in the solution - after all a key part of bullying is exerting power over someone else. You want them to feel that they are being empowered to help with the solution. Try to take notes of key incidents: the names, dates, locations, and digital recordings where possible.

If you haven't, sit down with them and try to establish what is going on. Just try to talk things through. In a recent study children being bullied said that 90% of the time their parents were unaware. By talking to them, you are making them aware that you know that is happening, want to know what they want to do, and are willing to help them.

Have they talked with any other adults at school?

If they have, who was it and when was the conversation? Have they seen any changes since then? Ideally the school will take care of things on their side and you will not have to step in forcefully. While the outcome may take longer than you want, you should at least be made aware of what is happening. Ask them to keep you up to date on any progress that is made.

If they haven't, you need to make sure that the school is fully aware of what is happening. They WANT to know 90% of the time. They are aware of the serious consequences that bullying can have, and they usually want none of it in their school. Try to determine why your child has not felt the need or comfortable enough with coming forward yet. Have a conversation with your child to decide if they will initiate the conversation, if you should, or if they would like both of you go forward at the same time. Even if you are the one who talks on their behalf, eventually they themselves will need to talk with someone at the school - make sure they know this.

How does the school seem to respond?

If they are responding well, keep in contact with the school. What strategies are they employing? They should be trained on how to handle these situations and often have a variety of methods to try. Some will work fast and you will see changes immediately. Some take longer, but you should be getting feedback that they are happening.

If you feel they are not responding well, identify the most appropriate person in the school to be talking with. This is likely the Principal or Vice Principal. Ask for a meeting with them and be prepared to be persistent in requesting a face-to-face meeting. It is a good idea to research the schools anti-bullying policies (very often online, or ask that one be emailed to you) before the meeting. When you meet with the school, try to get a commitment of a strategy for dealing with the allegations.

The bullying has been going on for awhile and isn't stopping

If there doesn't seem to be any change after meeting with the school, ask for a follow up meeting. You will likely have to demand that action is taken. Check to see what the school policy is for dealing with complaints. All of your notes and be sure that you are documenting EVERYTHING. The next step is likely to contact the local authorities.

Even if the bullying does appear to stop, and the school does appear to be acting correctly, you will need to keep a close eye on your child. In some cases the bully will find more subversive methods that will be less obvious, or take their actions online in the form of fake accounts they can hide behind.

How training in Krav Maga can help to bully proof your child

At Crucible we build people UP

The most important aspect of any training is that it is performed in an environment most conducive to learning. We have been teaching self-defense for nearly a decade in North Dallas and have trained thousands of students over that time.

The key to our success - creating a friendly environment where all students of all backgrounds and abilities can come together to learn. This is the core of WHY we teach self-defense - WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY PERSON DESERVES TO LEARN SELF-DEFENSE. If students are quiet, shy, outgoing, non-athletic, or are just afraid because they are new to this, we are here to guide and help them.

Self-Defense training changes people lives - for the better

I cannot even count the number of true life changing stories we have had over the years. Students that stick with their training see positive changes in their life, positive changes in their physical capabilities, and positive emotional changes from the warm community that we engender. Training in self-defense unlocks their inner strengths, helps to build up their self-esteem, and gives them the real skills to defend themselves should they be put in that position.

Communication is the key

In our anti-bullying workshops we focus on building communication between the parent and child through interactive games and activity. If you haven't taken a workshop, we highly encourage it, even if your child is in daily classes. This is a chance to work directly with your child and a fun way. We have found that communication is often where the breakdown is. Stopping bullying often boils down to your child communicating with you.

What is the key to being successful with your self-defense training?

I get asked constantly: how long does it take to become a black belt? Does the answer matter that much? I can say with almost near certainty that no one that has ever asked that question has become a black belt.

The key to being successful in any type of martial art is consistency with your training. The ranks and knowledge will come with time, and each person follows the path in their own unique way. But there is one constant: those who train more get more out of the training. And those that are black belts train more than anyone else.

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