

The Facts

- ⇒ 160,000 children skip school every day because they fear being attacked or intimidated by other students.
- ⇒ The U.S. Department of Justice reports that 37% of all students don't feel safe at school.
- ⇒ The National Institute of Health reports that one-third of all students in 6th to 10th grades nationwide experienced some kind of bullying.
- ⇒ 90% of 4th through 8th graders report being victims of bullying behavior.
- ⇒ Six in ten children who bully will have a criminal record before age 24.
- ⇒ Although much bullying happens where adults cannot see or hear it, it also happens when adults are present. Often adults don't do anything to stop the bullying. Students reported that 71% of the teachers or other adults in the classroom ignored bullying incidents.
- ⇒ Bullying takes lots of forms and bullies keep bullying as long as it works – as long as it makes them feel more powerful.
- ⇒ Many children and teens are bullies or victims of bullies, but the largest number of children and teens are bystanders – witnesses to bullying.
- ⇒ Girls can be bullies too, although bullying by girls is more likely to show up as spreading rumors, leaving people out of social events, teasing about clothes or boyfriends, or threatening to withdraw a friendship.
- ⇒ Bullying begins in elementary school, peaks in middle school and falls off in high school. It does not, however, disappear altogether.
- ⇒ When asked, students uniformly expressed the desire that teachers intervene rather than ignore teasing and bullying.

Resources

The information in this handout was derived from the following sources. More in-depth content and resources can be found on these websites:

www.antibullying.net
www.apa.org
www.bullying.org
www.bullyonline.org
www.climb.org
www.cyberkids.com
www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/Attorney
www.educationworld.com/a_special/bully.shtml
www.girlscouts.org
www.isafe.org
www.jwrc.org
www.k12.wa.us/safetycenter
www.kidshealth.org/kids/feeling/
www.kidpower.org/Articles/bullying.html
www.naesp.org
www.ncpc.org
www.netsmartz.org
www.nobully.org
www.operationrespect.org
www.opheliaproject.org
www.schoolsafety.us
www.stopbullying.gov
www.stopcyberbullying.org
www.teenangels.org
www.wiredsafety.org
www.drugrehab.com/guides/bullying/

Office of Dakota County Attorney
James C. Backstrom
County Attorney



Dakota County Judicial Center
1560 Highway 55
Hastings, Minnesota 55033
Telephone: 651-438-4438

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Bullying and Harassment
A serious problem for kids!

Schools
GET



ON TARGET

Working together to keep
kids safe!

Offered by:

James C. Backstrom
Dakota County Attorney

1560 Highway 55
Hastings, MN 55033
Phone: 651-438-4438

www.co.dakota.mn.us/government/attorney
attorney@co.dakota.mn.us

In the Bully's Eye

Bullying behavior may seem rather insignificant compared to kids bringing guns to school and getting involved with drugs. Bullying is often dismissed as part of growing up. But it's actually an early form of aggressive, violent behavior.

Bullies don't go away when elementary school ends; bullying actually peaks in middle school and continues into high school. It can lead to serious problems and dangerous situations for both the victim and the bully. Statistics show that bullies later have more court convictions, alcoholism and more mental health issues.

Although bullies have many faces, all bullies have certain characteristics in common. Bullies:

- are concerned with their own pleasure rather than thinking about anyone else
- want power
- are willing to use other people to get what they want
- feel hurt inside
- find it difficult to see things from someone else's perspective

Bullies can be categorized as two types: extrovert and introvert.

⇒ The **EXTROVERT** bully may be outgoing, aggressive, active, and expressive; more interested in things outside themselves than their own thoughts and feelings; rebels; rough-and-tough, angry and mean on the surface; get their way by brute force or openly harassing someone; may feel inferior, insecure and unsure of themselves; reject rules and regulations.

⇒ The **INTROVERT** bully may not want to be recognized; reluctant to rebel; conforms to society; controls by smooth-talking, says the "right" thing at the "right" time, misleading, lies, says/does whatever they think the other person wants to hear; deceive others into thinking they mean well; work on becoming "teacher's pet"; get power through cunning, manipulation, and deception.

The Eye of the Target = Victim

Although anyone can be the target of bullying behavior, the victim is usually singled out because of his or her psychological or physical traits.

A typical victim is likely to be shy, sensitive, perhaps anxious or insecure. Some children are picked on for physical reasons such as being overweight or physically small, wearing different or "weird" clothing, having a disability, or belonging to a different race or religious faith. In other words, victims are identified as "different" in the bully's point of view.

The Impact of Bullying

Bullying can have lasting effects on everyone involved – bullies, victims and bystanders. Students who are bullied often develop low self-esteem. They frequently feel isolated – a feeling they carry into adulthood. Grades may suffer because the victim's attention is not on learning. With continued bullying, even "good" students may turn to violence, such as starting fights or bringing weapons to school in efforts to protect themselves or to seek revenge on their tormentors.

Bystanders who witness bullying – both children and adults – are also affected. They often must deal with the lowered self-esteem and loss of control that accompany feeling unsafe and unable to take action. Children and adults may turn the other way when someone else is being hurt because they feel powerless to do anything about it. They, too, are scared.

Ratting vs. Reporting

Ratting occurs when a student tells about an inappropriate act with the idea of getting another student into trouble with school administration.

Reporting happens when a student reports an inappropriate act to protect their own safety or the safety of another student.

What School Staff Can Do

No one solution works well in every situation, but there are a variety of strategies schools can use:

- Do not tolerate bullying behavior.
- Enforce school policies that seek to reduce violence. Develop and implement a *Safe School Plan*.
- Foster an atmosphere of kindness and concern toward others.
- Use every opportunity to build self-esteem.
- Encourage students to report crimes or activities that make them suspicious.
- Encourage children to be part of the solution.
- Teach simple social skills to give children tools to develop positive relationships with others.
- Let students know that you are available to discuss problems or concerns privately.
- Discuss the topic of bullies with students occasionally.
- Teach cooperation by having students work in groups.
- Involve parents – invite them to talk with you about their child's progress and concerns.
- Learn how to recognize the warning signs that a child might be headed for violence.
- Alert school counselors or administrators to any problems so they can refer students to appropriate services if necessary.
- Teach children what to do if they are bullied or see someone being bullied:
 - Hang out with friends - there is safety in numbers.
 - Say "no" to a bully's demands from the start. If the bully makes threats with a weapon, give in to the demands and immediately tell an adult.
 - Tell the bully assertively to stop threatening ("Get a life – leave me alone.").
 - Do not physically fight back: experience shows that this actually increases the likelihood of continued victimization.
 - Seek immediate help from an adult.
 - Report bullying to school personnel and your parents.
 - If you are assaulted or threatened with a weapon or have your personal belongings stolen, report the crime to the police.
 - Avoid or ignore the bully.
 - If safety is at stake, walk away or run if needed.