

Bullying Prevention

Bullying hurts.

Volume 1



The Jeffrey Johnston Act

In 2005, at age 15, honors student Jeffrey Johnston died by suicide after he decided he could no longer endure a life of relentless torment by the cyberbully who had targeted him for more than three years.

In Jeffrey's honor, his family made sure that other Florida children now have one of the toughest anti-bullying measures in the nation to help protect them.

Florida Statute 1006.147, also known as The Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up For All Students Act, passed in 2008. It requires all Florida school districts to institute anti-bullying policies that specifically ban harassment and intimidation, including that done online. Districts must create a diligent reporting procedure, require prompt investigation of allegations, and outline consequences for students and school employees who violate the policy.



PREVENTION SERVICES

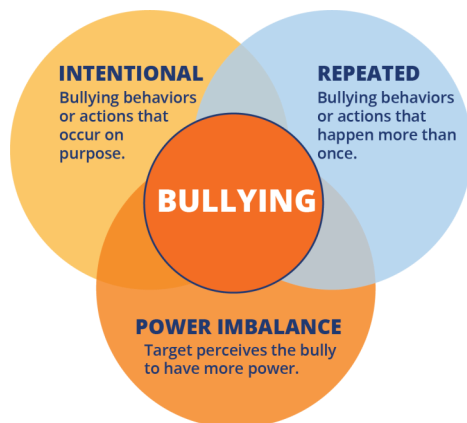
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What is Bullying Behavior?

Bullying involves repeated acts of physical, emotional, or social behavior that are intentional, controlling, and hurtful. Bullying can also occur through e-mail, web sites, blogs, text messaging, digital video, and online chat rooms; this is called cyber-bullying. Be alert and consider the following:

- Bullying is defined by a power imbalance between the bully and the target.
- A bully's power can be derived from physical size, strength, verbal skill, popularity, or gender.
- A bully's target feels tormented, helpless, and defenseless.
- Bullying can include hitting, name-calling, threatening, intimidating, kicking, spreading rumors, teasing, pushing, tripping, excluding someone from a group, or destroying someone's things.



Bullying must include all three criteria:

Intentional - Behaviors or actions that occur on purpose.

Repeated - Behaviors or actions that happen more than once.

Power Imbalance - Students who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others.

CONFLICT	RUDE	MEAN	BULLYING
Occasional	Occasional	Once or Twice	Is REPEATED
Not planned/in the heat of the moment	Spontaneous/often unintentional behavior	Intentional behavior	Is often planned and done on purpose
All parties are upset	Can upset and cause hurt feelings	Can hurt others deeply	Can cause serious, life-long emotional damage
All parties want to work it out	Often based in thoughtlessness or poor manners	Often based in anger; impulsive cruelty	The bully is trying to gain power or control over the target
All parties will accept responsibility	Rude person should accept responsibility	Behavior is often regretted	The bully often blames the target
An effort is made by all parties to solve the problem	Apology	Apology is often sufficient	The target wants the bully's behavior to stop
Can usually be resolved through mediation	Social skill building could be of benefit	Needs to be addressed/should not be ignored	Cannot be resolved through mediation, should be reported



More than one in five students report being bullied.

Typical peer conflict, rude or mean behavior is not the same as bullying.

Source: Adapted from Jennifer Astles, DASA Newsletter, January 2014, TST BOCES and modified by the School District of Lee County, Student Services

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves sending hurtful or threatening text messages and images with digital devices in order to damage the target's reputation and relationships. This form of bullying can be very difficult for adults to detect or track, and almost half of those victimized do not know the identity of the perpetrator. Bullying using digital technology most commonly involves the use of instant messaging, chat rooms, and e-mail. (Kowalski & Limber, 2007)

Cyberbullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

Persistent - Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children experiencing cyberbullying to find relief. The information can be easily and quickly shared, which makes it difficult to contain or stop negative messages.

Permanent - Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.

Hard to Notice - Because teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.

Anonymous - Those being bullied might not even know who is perpetuating the behavior, which makes it easy for one child to hurt another and not be held accountable.

30.4% of Lee County Florida high and middle school students reported being cyberbullied.

13.6% reported cyberbullying others.

2020 Florida Youth Survey

Bystanders and Upstanders



Bullying situations usually involve more than the person who bullies and the target. They also involve bystanders - those who watch bullying happen or hear about it. Unfortunately, bystanders often do nothing to intervene in a bullying situation. This is known as the bystander effect, or bystander apathy, which is a social psychological phenomenon in which individuals are less likely to offer help to a victim when other people are present. The greater the number of bystanders, the less likely it is that any one of them will help.

Teaching students to be upstanders, which are bystanders that stand up for the bullying target and have the power to play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying, is important. Some upstanders directly intervene by discouraging the bully, defending the target, or redirecting the situation. Some upstanders provide an escape for the target. Other upstanders get help, by rallying support from peers to stand up against bullying or by reporting the bullying to adults.

57% of bullying situations STOP In 10 seconds when 1 peer intervenes

80% of bullying situations STOP In 10 seconds when 2 peers intervene

90% of bullying situations STOP In 10 seconds when 3 peers intervene

Is Your Child Being Bullied?

If your child exhibits one or more of these warning signs, he/she may be experiencing bullying.

- Withdraws socially, has few or no friends
- Loses interest in favorite activities
- Frequently complains of illness
- Doesn't want to go to school
- Avoids some classes or skips school entirely
- Talks about running away; talks of suicide
- Threatens violence to self or others
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Brings home damaged possessions or reports them lost
- Cries easily; displays mood swings and talks about hopelessness
- Takes, or attempts to take, protection to school
- Hangs head, hunches shoulders, and avoids eye contact

The reasons for being bullied reported most often by students include physical appearance, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation.

(National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019)

9.2% of Lee County middle and high school students reported skipping school because of bullying.

2020 Florida Youth Survey

SDLC Bullying and Harassment Policy

Bullying is an unacceptable behavior that adults and students have a responsibility to stop. The School District of Lee County will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment between students and/or adults on our school campuses. Our goal is protection of our students, and provision of a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of our students and staff.

The School Board of Lee County's Policy 4.14, created to comply with the Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act, Florida Statute 1006.147, describes what type of behavior is considered bullying, harassment, and cyberbullying. This policy also explains employee requirements for reporting and investigating complaints.

How Do I File a Bullying Report?

There are several methods for reporting suspected bullying incidents:

- You can contact a school by phone and report it to school personnel
- You can make a report in person
- You can complete the Bullying Report Form

The reporting form can be downloaded at <https://www.leeschools.net>, printed, and returned to the school's Administrative Office or to the Lee County Public Education Center - Student Services Department. Your child's school also has copies of this form available for you to complete.